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Applying queer theory about time and place to playwriting

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The University of Glasgow

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Applying queer theory about time and place to playwriting

Abstract

This practice as research contributes a 'queer-place dramaturgy' to knowledge about playwriting by creating an intersection of writing queer site specific performance and conventional dramatic theatre practice. It follows the recent shift of focus from queer theorizing of sexuality as a constructed identity, to thinking about what queer use of time and space might be. This shift proposes queerness that is detached, but not completely separated from, sexual identity. This shift also produces a range of *kinds* of queerness that can be described as odd, imaginative, strange, eccentric, dangerous, threatening wonder-full and abject. I use key works by Sara Ahmed, Jon Binnie, Judith Butler, Michael Foucault and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick to theoretically contextualise these kinds of queer times and places.

I materially investigate the theory that there is such a thing as queer time and place through an exercise of writing on a public bench for a prolonged period of time, called the 'civic couch' exercise. I found that this small resistance to the apparently politically neutral temporal use of a place could (re) author 'me' as queer beyond sexual identity. It also began to (re) author 'identity' itself, so that 'I' became more and more identified by where I was. This led to a queer practice of co-writing self and place with each time and place. When that text was dramatized the audience were invited to co-author each local place through the play and outside after the performance. This series investigates, through a spiraling structure of research the relationship between direct resistance to homophobia and heterosexism through representation of queer lives, bodies, times and places and an indirect formal resistance to a (hetero) normative construction of 'reality'. Asking finally the question: How queer can queer writing for conventional theatre practice be in the UK today?

This project aimed to bring queer theory into practical contact with playwriting to see what it could change in the form of dramatic theatre. I found that I could (re) shape and guide dramaturgical principles but not fundamentally change or break them. I define what 'dramaturgical principles' are in relation to the critical work of Sue-Ellen Case, Elin Diamond, Peggy Phelan and José Esteban Muñoz and argue that ancient concepts of 'dramaturgical principles' continue to circulate in postmodern, queer and feminist theorizing about form in theatre and performance.

I propose that the lineage of queer writing for theatre maps a negotiation between challenging form and content, which changes significantly from the early twentieth century (and the work of Gertrude Stein and Lillian Hellman) to the emergence of the gay liberation movement in the late 1960s, (and the work of Gay Sweatshop, 1974 - 1997), to Performance Art, Live Art and mainstream theatre in the 1990s (and work by Mark Ravenhill, Sarah Kane and Split Britches). I also contextualize this research as practice with contemporary site-specific performance interventions into (hetero) normative uses of public, outdoor places, particularly through the public bench.

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Applying Queer Theory of Time and Place to Playwriting

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Prologue: Neighbours

Imitation,

Mimicry, Representation,

*Likeness, Mirror,
Pleasure, Body,*

Sensuous, Liking, Like,

Learning, Childhood, Play, Human,

Art,

*Analogy, Metaphor,
Metonym, Simile, Symbolise,*

*Paradigm,
Allegory, Synecdoche,
Superimpose,, Connotations, Reflections,*

*Affinity, Parable,
Correspondence,*

Similarity, Simulacrum, Illusionism,

Contiguity, Morphology,

Transcendent, Feeling,

Inspiration,

*Intuition,
Interpretation*

I'm arranging small tinfoil stars. I'm making a constellation of words that are about mimesis. It's actually a constellation in the form of Virgo. The foil stars are misshapen. I like them. I stick them to my living room window. It's a summer's day in spring, and the news this morning told me that the seasons were disappearing like snow from the mountains.

My upstairs neighbour opens the gate to the garden I overlook some ten feet below. She's going to feed our neighbours' dog.

She told me with a disapproving relish that its masters had one of the first 'you know, thingy, marriages' last summer. I'd guessed as much from the bouncy castle and white suits. She doesn't know she knows about us. She doesn't think she would feel so comfortable bringing her homemade jam and borders tarts to a couple of 'you knows'.

Valerie comes to have a look at my constellation. She had heard about the idea in consternation the night before.

'T'es dingue ou quoi?' she'd said. She's French. 'I might be.' I'd said.

We stand in front of the window, looking at Jean and the gay mens' dog.

'Kiss me.' I said. 'Let's show her.'

Valerie laughs. We wave at our neighbour and she looks up, performing a great double take. She laughs and waves as well. I open the window and Virgo ascends a little.

'How are you?' I shout into the sun and wind. 'Yes. It is.' She says.

'Very pretty.'

This scene describes the moment when this research took me literally to a meeting place between inside and outside and when the physical methodology of this research changed significantly. Before this moment this research happened at a desk, facing a wall, inside. After this I began to write outside: to use the emplacement of my writing body in the outside world as part of the process of asking if there are such things as queer times and queer places and if they could be dramatized.

This scene also connects with the political questions my research addresses. The neighbour's homophobic disapproval is open in relation to the gay men and their marriage, but becomes a heterosexist assumption that Valerie and I are 'just friends': She does not 'know that she knows' we are partners and we do not kiss too near to the window, where inside and outside meet. We are all 'good' neighbours and on very friendly terms, not least because we communicate through indirect and un-seen (and perhaps un-seeable) routes.

I could make this scene more dramatic. Valerie and I could kiss and show how Jean reacts with shock, revulsion, but eventually accepts our presence 'as lesbians' in her life. This is the 'coming out' drama through which heterosexism works to make everyone take up a position as either different, or the-same-as, the norm.

Heterosexism uses a binary metaphysics that makes it seem impossible to see beyond hetero/homo sexual, male/female gender and inside/outside normativity. Queer theorizing aims to see more clearly how heterosexism operates, while also trying not to reiterate the binaries it sets up. This requires indirect strategies of resistance. I ask through this research how queer theory about time and place can be applied to

playwriting as an indirect resistance to (hetero) normativity and what value there is in unseen resistance.

Introduction: What is playwriting?

This practice as research creates an intersection with writing queer site-specific performance and conventional theatre practice. In this introduction I will discuss how the research questions that led to this project emerged from my personal and professional life as a playwright and an lgbt/queer youth arts facilitator. I will show how the different methodologies I use relate to each other and are organized into a series of four cycles of research, each with distinct groups of research questions. I then define ‘playwriting’ in more detail as the practice of writing ‘dramatic theatre’ through a set of dramaturgical principles, which can be guided and shaped but not fundamentally or permanently changed. I describe why I see Gertrude Stein’s ‘landscape play’ and ‘spatial dramaturgy’ as a radical model of (re)shaping or guiding dramaturgical principles and an indirect resistance to (hetero) normative constructions of ‘reality’. Finally, as this practice as research took place in small theatres, I define studio ‘black box’ theatres as at the fringes but still part of the conventional theatre sector. This introduction will conclude with an outline of the structure of the whole thesis.

New knowledge

This research created a ‘queer-place dramaturgy’ at the intersection of queer writing for (mainstream) dramatic theatre and site-specific performance. I understand ‘dramaturgy’ to be a method of structuring dramatic action as both written play texts and in live performances. The five Local Reality Expo (LRE) plays, as outcomes of

this dramaturgy, are written texts that were performed in five different theatres. As texts written to be performed as a form of ‘site-specific theatre’ they have a different value from plays using other dramaturgies as, I will argue, they can not reproduce the same effects and affects in performance in different times and places.

The ‘queer-place dramaturgy’ begins with a writing process called the ‘civic couch’ exercise, where I sit and write for up to 24 hours on the same public bench outside the theatre where the play will be performed. The prolonged emplacement of this writing practice opens up a queer connection with place that (re)authors the self and queers the role of the ‘writer’. ‘I’ become ‘queer’ beyond my identity as a queer-lesbian woman. As the writer ‘I’ am co-authored by that place and my ‘identity’ itself becomes a way of being and thinking beyond the human. In this queer place what ‘I’ write about is more and more clearly co-authored *by* that time and place. In turn, the dramatization of this practice on stage encourages the audience to become co-authors of the place in performance and outside in that place after the performance.

I created this process to think queer theory through playwriting; to test Judith Halberstam’s ambitious proposal ‘that there is such a thing as “queer time” and “queer place”’.¹ The practice found queerness in everyday, normatively invisible, places by exceeding normative temporal use of that place. This playwriting process found a way to materially experience the detachment of queerness from identity that Halberstam proposes, as I found I was constructed ‘as a queer subject’ beyond my identity as ‘a lesbian’.² I found through this process that the quality of ‘how queer’ I felt in each place shifted across a spectrum from quite ‘normal’ to odd, to strange, to (dangerously) abject. For this reason I use terms such as ‘odd-queer’, ‘strange-queer’

and ‘abject-queer’ to describe different kinds of queerness that are detached from sexual identity but still resist ‘hard to see’ capitalist and heterosexist constructions of how time and place should or can be used.

My central research question asks: ‘Can queer theory be applied to playwriting?’ The successful ‘application’ of one thing to another implies that one or both objects are intrinsically or permanently changed by the contact. I found that by thinking and practicing queer theory and playwriting through each other, key elements of the *process* of playwriting were changed. My role as an individual writer and author became a ‘co-authorship’ between ‘me’ and each place and also, in performance, the place and the play were co-authored with the audience. However, I did not intrinsically change the dramaturgical principles of playwriting. I aimed to *guide* them with queer theory. In part this relates to the question of how queer a ‘queer-place dramaturgy’ can be in conventional theatre practice today. The most clearly ‘queer’ LRE plays were performed for the least conventionally framed audiences: one being a privately invited audience and the other a queer arts festival audience. My aim to guide rather than fundamentally change the dramaturgical principles of playwriting also reflects my argument, which I expand on in Chapter 1 and in the Conclusion, that these principles can not be broken or broken-away from. I find, both through this practice as research and my professional work as a playwright, if I try to break or throw away a dramaturgical principle then it returns, shifting to a different location.

I will argue throughout this thesis there are dramaturgical principles that define ‘playwriting’ as the writing of ‘dramatic theatre’. In Chapter 1, I discuss alternative frames and forms of performance and how queer writing for Live Art and

Performance Art can be located as part of a lineage of queer writing for ‘theatre’ (as a live art) from the 1930s to the present. I use Lara Shalson’s proposal that theatre *endures* within the context of Performance Art³ and Hans-Thies Lehmann’s notion of ‘post-dramatic theatre’⁴, to argue that dramaturgical principles can be radically shifted and reshaped but keep returning (or enduring) within all forms of performance.

Alan Sinfield proposes in his extensive history of lgbt/queer theatre in the twentieth century:

If one wants to make challenging theatre, the task must be to devise a performance that is likely to disconcert the people likely to attend, but only to the degree that they will be able to apprehend the challenge productively.⁵

This practice as research tested how far content and form could ‘challenge productively’ (hetero) normative constructions of ‘reality’ for different audiences in differently framed venues. I aimed to guide the dramaturgical principles of playwriting with queer theory in the context of conventional theatre practice and found the queerer the writing for theatre, the smaller or more ‘niche’ my audience was.

I propose that the lineage of queer writing for theatre maps a negotiation between direct and indirect resistance to homophobia and (hetero) normativity. I propose that Lillian Hellman’s and Gertrude Stein’s work marks two ends of this spectrum in the early twentieth century. Hellman’s play The Children’s Hour (1934) constructs direct resistance by representing ‘lesbian’ characters who are entirely defined in relation to homophobia through a conventional characterological ‘realist’ dramaturgy. Stein’s ‘landscape plays’ formally challenge the (hetero) normative construction of ‘reality’ to the point that identity itself is put into question. Stein called this ‘entity writing’.

She also wrote ‘identity writing’, such as The Autobiography of Alice B Toklas. Kate Davy describes these two different constructions of reality as a ‘dualistic ontology’.⁶

I propose that from the beginning of the gay liberation movement in the late 1960s, queer writing for theatre has negotiated between a ‘dualistic ontology’: between writing queer content and challenging questions about the normative construction of ‘identity’ and ‘reality’. I propose the balance of form and content is written in response to the changing quality of (hetero) normativity in society. I argue, through my analysis of that lineage, that a formally conventional play dramatising queer identity as ‘a problem’ in conflict with heteronormativity is still the most commercially successful strategy for queer playwriting. This is also evidenced by recent productions of The Children’s Hour and The Killing of Sister George in the West End.⁷

Personal and professional research context

The personal and the professional contexts for this research are closely intertwined. When I began this project, in November 2004, I had been ‘out’ as a lesbian as an important part of my work for about ten years. I had facilitated lgbt/queer community arts projects from 1995 to 2000 and been commissioned to write two plays with central lgbt/queer characters by two mainstream theatre companies, Crossings (2005) for Sgript Cymru (now part of Sherman Cymru, Wales) and A Good Man (not produced) for the West Yorkshire Playhouse.

I began to think about (hetero) normativity in public spaces first through my work facilitating lgbt/queer youth arts projects. The first project was performed outside in

public and drew a number of (I felt) homophobic complaints from the public. After this experience we presented all projects as ticketed events inside. I review queer site-specific performance in Chapter 5 and propose that so little of it takes place outside in public because of the varying degrees of (hetero) normativity and outright homophobic violence in UK public space.

One piece of work the group made illustrates how quickly (hetero) normativity can turn to homophobic violence. We made an interactive installation of video and live performance for Leeds Metropolitan Studio Theatre called Leeds: Night and Day (1998), which explored the question of home and where it is safe to be lgbt/queer. The installation included a looped two-minute film projected onto a wall at the end of a curtained corridor, which was wide enough for one viewer at a time. The film showed a couple holding hands, walking past the two 'gay' pubs in Leeds, in daytime. The film is only of their hands, so the gender of the couple is not visible, but the ambient sound records the verbal abuse this act provoked. The audience could listen to the soundtrack on headphones at the far end of the corridor from the projection. We had not intended to provoke a homophobic reaction while filming the young men holding hands. We had chosen the location because it was the 'gay' part of town and had written text to be used as 'voice-over' for the images. We abandoned our filming after this first 'take', disappointed not to make our film. But we then decided that those two minutes expressed how easily the invisible (hetero) normativity can become directly homophobic.

These theatre and performance arts projects aimed to acknowledge, understand and/or re-frame homophobia both as a therapeutic practice and as a way of sharing

individuals' and the group's vision of 'queer worlds' with friends, family and the communities of Leeds. We always questioned and struggled to represent lgbt/queer identity without reinforcing the limited construction of 'it' as 'the problem'.

There were many different kinds of 'problems' presented by the young people over the five years I worked with them. There was a disproportionately high level of self-harming and suicide attempts in the group. One young person committed suicide and another was murdered. I do not think it is possible to know what (if any) relationship there is between (hetero) normativity and these tragedies, but the lgbt/queer youth group was the context I knew these young people. As a way of understanding and reframing my shock and sadness at these two deaths, I began to write Crossings, as my first full-length (solo authored) play.

Crossings was commissioned and eventually produced. It also led to the commissioning of another play through a Pearson Award called A Good Man. This play is about a transman's relationship with his father and love affair with female neighbour. These were my first professional commissions as a playwright.⁸ It was through these plays I began to see how (hetero) normativity can structure the reading of a play. I found, for example, that Crossings was often read as a 'coming out' play, even though none of the characters 'came out' during the drama. A Good Man was found by some to be a difficult read because it did not dramatise 'the problem' of being trans enough, while others found that trans identity was constructed too much as 'a problem' which 'it' no longer is.

I wrote my first two full-length plays using a broadly conventional form, typically referred to as ‘realist’. I did this because I wanted to understand conventional ‘realist’ form through practice and to ‘prove’ I understood it and I could do it. I was also motivated to use a conventional form because I wanted to communicate something of the world of the lgbt/queer youth group with a wider world. Finally, I wanted to earn my living as a playwright and I felt that a conventional form would be more likely to be commissioned and produced.

As I began this practice as research in 2004/5 I began to wonder if the conventional form I had chosen could have been instrumental in *generating* (hetero) normative readings. What was the relationship between form and content? Could ‘queer form’ be defined or created? How would it be recognised? Could conventional form be ‘broken’ or would it need to be bent, shifted or twisted to be queered? How might ‘queer form’ relate to, or represent queer characters, experiences and worlds? What constitutes a ‘queer world’? Does ‘a queer world’ have materiality? These questions, emerging out of this professional and personal context, led to my central research question: Can queer theory be applied to writing dramatic theatre?

Methodologies and research questions

This practice as research evolved through a methodology that can productively be described as a spiral, where the journey along each ‘loop’ involves a number of different research methodologies feeding each other. As the practice as research comes to the end of each loop, it also returns to the central research question.

The methodologies each loop used included: 1) Historical research of writing for theatre and performance, particularly in the UK, 2) Dramaturgical analysis of canonical ‘realist’ and lgbt/queer plays and performance texts, 3) Theorizing of dramaturgy, sexuality and gender and 4) Devising practical playwriting exercises to test and explore theories and ideas arising from these other methodologies. The practical exercises aimed to generate content for performance, create texts to be performed and find productive ways to direct the plays as performances and/or produce the plays for (mostly paying) audiences. The final, and fifth, methodology in each ‘loop’ involved critical reflection on the practice, asking how it spoke to the central research question.

This research was part-time and mostly funded by my work as a playwright. I think this is a significant background to my research methodology as it forms the assumptions of the practice as research. As ‘a playwright’ my work is often, but not exclusively, a collaborative ‘co-writing’ practice. I have been commissioned to write for Community Theatre, Theatre in Education, Live Art and small to mid-scale touring in conventional theatre sectors.⁹

There were four distinct ‘loops’ of research generated in relation to a distinct group of research questions: (1) Does ‘realism’ dominate conventional mainstream theatre in the UK? Is ‘realism’ a dramaturgical form or discourse? What are the dramaturgical principles of ‘realism’ and how are they different to other constructions of drama and performance? Can ‘realism’ be queered? And why is ‘realism’ a queer problem? I found that I could not queer ‘realism’ either as a form or discourse. I also found that

key dramaturgical principles continued to circulate throughout ancient, mainstream, postmodern, feminist and queer theories of dramaturgy.

This led me to begin a new cycle of research asking: (2) Is it possible for 'real' times and places to be queer(ed) and can particular times and places queer the writer? I found through writing in the same place for longer and longer periods of time that queerer and queerer times, places and potential 'selves' emerged. This led to the next cycle of research: (3) Can these queer times and places be dramatised? I found that I could dramatised the 'civic couch' exercise and I could use it to guide the dramaturgical principles of playwriting. I then began to ask how this playwriting practice related to the idea of 'a queer form' and if 'a queer form' could ever be recognised as such if there was no clear representation in the play of LGBT/queer identity. I conceived of the LRE plays as examples of 'queer-place dramaturgy', where the emplaced writing process led writer and place to enter a co-writing practice. I noted during this phase the LRE plays in performance reframed the everyday places they were performed in, and they also encouraged the audience to co-author the plays and after the performance to (re) author the local place outside.

This led to the fourth and final cycle when I returned to the representation of sexual identity and asked: (4) What is the effect of re-attaching a more direct representation of lesbian-queer identity to a queer-place dramaturgy? I found that the final two LRE plays were more recognisably 'queer'. I also noted that I made one for a small invited audience and the final one for a niche 'queer festival' audience.

The ‘hermeneutic-interpretative spiral’

Melissa Trimingham describes the spiral model for research as a ‘‘hermeneutic-interpretative’ spiral model’. This methodology can accommodate what she calls the ‘disorderliness’ of the creative process, the need for rigorous planning and to acknowledge the interpretative role of the researcher in the process of ordering and re-ordering the disorder that emerges out of creative practice.¹⁰ I returned to the central research question at the end of each loop, with the aim of re-aligning my research direction.

Trimingham argues this model acknowledges the researcher is ‘acutely aware of the accretions of culture, habit, prejudice and so on that cling to the phenomena we investigate and cloud our perceptions’.¹¹ Prejudice first clouded this research in my initial assumption that sexuality is exclusively located in embodied sexual identity. The practical task I designed in the first cycle of research was to write a play that represented queer sexuality. This play aimed to apply queer theory of identity to ‘realism’ as a dramaturgical form. The aim in this phase of the research was to ‘queer realism’.¹² It produced a characterological play engaged with representation of identities that were not essentially lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans (lgbt) and were not heteronormative either. However, I found I could not successfully complete the play.

Still trying to ‘queer realism’, I tried to queer the ‘reality’ of the material world during this first cycle. I began to develop a way of writing about everyday, public, outside places by trying to observe them more closely. I spent time in a specific place, recorded sound in that location and also took photographs. But I wrote the play Fling, which used that place as a ‘realist’ background *mise-en-scène*, inside at home, at my

desk. The second phase of the research developed this practice of writing about a particular place by writing *in* that place for a prolonged period of time.

This phase also allowed me to think queer theory about time and place through writing practice. I found writing outside at night was more dangerous than during the day and the longer I remained writing on the bench, at any time of the day or night, the riskier and more difficult it became. I renamed any bench I worked on in this way a ‘civic couch’ to mark its new place/function in the world.

Judith Butler proposes that the heterosexual imperative can only tolerate human subjects in relation to its organising centre. This then requires a domain of ‘abject beings’, who exist in relation to the abject horizon.¹³ José Esteban Muñoz particularly understands what he terms ‘minoritarian’ subjects in relation to race, sexual identity and gender as similarly engaged in *surviving* the abjection that (hetero) normativity enforces.¹⁴ Sarah Ahmed, working within a feminist, queer and antiracist research framework, adds *wonder* to the range of kinds of queerness that can be found through queer uses of time and space.¹⁵ Queer theory describes a boundary of (hetero) normativity as an ‘abject horizon’ that marks the ‘real’ and possible. Beyond the abject horizon lies the ‘impossible’ as imagined, dreamed, hoped and feared and/or discursively removed to. The word ‘horizon’ is useful as it depicts a boundary that will always shift as the centre shifts.

Thinking my survey of queer theory about time and space through the ‘civic couch’ practice I could see that there is a range of queerness relating to the normative centre. This range can be described to move from the odd, eccentric, and strange, to the

surprising and wonder-full to the surviving and finally abject. I found that writing while sitting on a public bench both found and created a whole range of queerness in everyday places. It created strange-queerness in the way it constructed a different kind of 'me' in that place. It also produced written texts that described the details and material of everyday life as more interesting and full of unexpected life or poetic value than I had thought likely or even possible.¹⁶

The practical task in the third spiral of research was to dramatise queer time and place. I found through the experience of the writing for prolonged periods in public, I could identify what key powers flowed through that place. I then imagined a collision between those powers and used that event as the key action through which I could construct different conflicting perspectives about that place. In this way, textual material from the 'civic couch' exercise was re-written and edited to become a 'queer-place play' where the place was local to the theatre in which it was performed.

The first performance showed this dramaturgy encouraged the audience to go back to the places outside the theatre doors and look at them again. I began to think of the performance as complete when the audience went back to the 'real' world to look at each local place, potentially with a new perspective. I began to theorise that one effect of applying queer theory about time and place to playwriting was that it could send an audience from an 'empty' 'black box' theatre space to a specific place outside with a new curiosity about the strangeness of the small, perhaps even intimate details, of any everyday place.

It became clear that to reproduce this effect through performance, in another time and place, the play text would need to be significantly, if not completely, re-written. I wrote LRE 2 and 3: Hope Street and Market Place as part of this same cycle of research. During this phase I consolidated the new playwriting process as a method of touring a queer effect in performance, rather than touring a queer play. An important addition to the methodology at this point was my assumption of the role of director as well as playwright. This reflected my developing understanding that playwriting is only complete when it is performed for an audience. By taking on the role of director I continued the process of writing those plays.

I interpreted the first three LRE plays as ‘queer-place plays’ because they were guided by queer theory about time and place and encouraged an audience to co-author the performance through their knowledge of the local world outside and to then go and see strange-queerness after the performance in familiar, local places. To tour this effect requires that a new play is researched, written and rehearsed for each new place, which makes these ‘queer-place plays’ financially costly. In this way applying queer theory to playwriting also produced a theatre practice that did not fit easily into the economic logics of conventional theatre production and touring.

In the final phase of this research I tested the effect of re-attaching sexual identity to a dramaturgy organized by a queer place. In LRE 4 I did this by naming that play queer street and by constructing a character in relation to *homonormativity*. I felt that this shifted the ‘queer-place play’ model back to a much more characterological structure, even though I used the same process. The final LRE play, Hope Street at Homotopia, was written for the LGBT/queer arts festival Homotopia in Liverpool. Because this

festival provides a clear resistance to homophobia and heteronormativity, the queerness of the 'queer-place play' resonated more clearly without the direct naming of queer sexual identity. However, I did return, in this final LRE, to a version of the narrative of a woman 'coming out' and falling in love.

Dramaturgical principles and spatial dramaturgy

Through this practice as research I found two dramaturgical principles I could not break or intrinsically change and are embedded in the western philosophy of theatre at least since Aristotle's time. The first principle is drama is created through action. The second is to create a scene the playwright needs to write for at least one actor, who may or may not represent a character, in at least one time and place. Therefore, an actor, a time and a place are the key elements a playwright needs to build a scene. When these parts are made active the scene becomes dramatic.¹⁷ I find it useful to think of the structure of a scene and, by extension, a play, as being like an architectural structure that uses these three parts. However, they are not necessarily mutually supportive or unified. An action is dramaturgically complete when at least one element of the scene has changed.

These principles in part follow Aristotle's analysis in Poetics that plot is the most important element of dramatic structure. Aristotle provides six component parts of tragedy in order of importance, with each being identified as either a mode, medium or object of representation: plot, character, diction (or spoken word), reasoning, spectacle and song (or the sung word).¹⁸ There are three Aristotelian objects of representation: action, reasoning and character. Diction and song are the mediums of representation and spectacle is the mode.

Neoclassical dramaturgy re-ordered and distilled Aristotle's six component parts into 'the three unities' of action, time and space. Each of these three parts were 'unities' because they ideally represented only one object. A play such as Antigone is about one principle action: the burial of the enemy's body. The drama of conflicts, reversals and recognitions within this overarching action happen in the unified time and place of one day. The three unities should also be mutually consistent and supportive in relation to what is possible and probable in the world of the play.¹⁹ But, what the relationship is between the world of the play and the world it seeks to represent, is the extremely contentious question of representation itself.

Any dramaturgical principle takes part in some form of representation or 'mimesis'. The word 'mimesis' is most commonly translated as either imitation or representation. These two different translations highlight the reasons why defining 'mimesis' is so difficult. Malcolm Heath translates 'mimesis' as imitation because he argues it conveys the sense of similarity in mimesis better than 'representation'. He explains that an arbitrary symbol on a map for an airport might be a representation of an airport, by convention, but it is not a mimesis of the airport. A scaled plan would be a mimesis of it, because of the similarity between referent and image. Heath also argues that 'imitation' conveys the continuity that Aristotle discusses between mimesis in art and life.²⁰

Alternatively, Stephen Halliwell translates 'mimesis' as representation because, he argues, the word 'imitation' has been devalued in modern usage so that it simply means copying. He writes that 'imitation' 'cannot begin to do justice to the difficulty

of the issues about artistic representation and expression'.²¹ It seems that neither translation works completely because 'mimesis' itself can be more than one thing at the same time. Jacques Rancière writes mimesis is: 'a relationship between two terms: a *poiesis* and an *aesthesis* – that is, a way of making and an economy of affects'.²² I find it particularly useful to remember that, although I use dramaturgical principles inherited from an ancient tradition of theatre, they are not underpinned by a single, simple or stabilising rule.

In broad agreement with western dramaturgical tradition, I understand that action, human subject, time and space are each objects of representation that can be structured in different ways to represent different ideological conceptions of the world. The conventional reading of post-Enlightenment western dramaturgy is that it is structured primarily around character. Even modernist attacks on the value and unity of character can also be argued to keep dramaturgy characterological. Elinor Fuchs and Elin Diamond both argue that postmodern dramaturgy is organized more around time and space than character. I found applying queer theory to playwriting produced a kind of spatial dramaturgy, which can more specifically be described as a 'queer-place dramaturgy'.

This practice as research has brought me very much into dialogue with the 'landscape play', a term coined by (lesbian icon) Gertrude Stein. Fuchs, with Una Chaudhuri, defines 'landscape' as between space and place, where landscape is inside space but not as specific as place.²³ The LRE series investigates organising dramaturgy around and through queerness created or found in specific *places*.

‘Spatial dramaturgy’ is particularly critically identified with ‘postmodern theatre’. It can also be seen to develop at the same time as ‘realism’ in the late-1800s. Fuchs outlines in The Death of Character how the Aristotelian primacy of plot shifted to character from the eighteenth century, and how the Symbolists then began to organise dramaturgy through space rather than character after 1890. Maurice Maeterlinck wrote The Blind (1890), as what he called a ‘static play’ and what Fuchs identifies as the first ‘landscape play’. Fuchs describes a ‘landscape play’ as primarily concerned with a kind of pastoral space in that it focuses on the natural, rather than urban landscape and that it is elegiac. Fuchs sees the ‘landscape play’ as mourning the loss of a natural world but, rather than longing like Walter Benjamin for an urban utopia, the ‘landscape play’ ‘hint[s] at the possibility of a post-anthropocentric stage’.²⁴

The relationship between queer place and a ‘post-anthropocentric stage’

The LRE series was profoundly influenced by Benjamin’s theorising about different ways of being and looking at modern urban space, which is typified by the *flâneur*. The wandering male *flâneur* is characterised as watching, almost spying on, the city and its citizens, from a (safe) distance. However, when I write in and about a public place people look at me. I am perceived and responded to differently as I occupy the same place for longer and longer. At times my prolonged use of a public bench makes me vulnerable and/or seems to threaten the place I am in. I find and create a range of queerness through this work. It also makes me appear as ‘a stranger’. I therefore contextualise my position writing on a public bench for prolonged lengths of time as ‘a (queer) stranger’ rather than a *flâneur*.

I make this distinction between the *flâneur* and ‘the stranger’ particularly in the context of Janet Wolff’s theorising of the invisible *flâneurse* and Sally Munt’s practice and theorising of the lesbian *flâneur*. Wolff connects the exclusive gendering of *flâneurs* as male with the process of normatively gendering the increasing separation of private and public space in the nineteenth century. This separation normatively gendered the private, inside and domestic as ‘female’ and the public, exterior as a ‘male’ space of work and politics. This, Wolff writes, excluded female experience from descriptions of modernity and she calls for it to be addressed by a feminist sociology of modernity. The women who figure in Benjamin’s critique of *flâneurs* are sexualised and are out, at night, in the city, typically because they are working as prostitutes.²⁵ My experience of writing, as a woman, alone at night and in public, reminded me that public space is still normatively ‘male’, especially at night.

This writing process also makes me strange to myself and pushes my sense of self to the peripheries of my consciousness. My relationship with *where I am* takes up the central place in *who I am*. Each place becomes a co-author of my identity in the practice of writing there. As the LRE plays aims to dramatise the queerness of each local place, this queerer construction of identity is translated into a displacement of my authorship of the play. As a result, each place becomes co-author of each play. The audience also enters a co-authorship of place through the play and after the performance, when they go back outside the audience have the potential to create a new relationship with that place and perhaps themselves in relation to that place. The LRE plays thereby begins to approach what Fuchs calls a ‘post-anthropocentric stage’ by working on (re)structuring collaboration between human subject, time and place in the construction of ‘identity’ and ‘the play’.

Theatre space and outside places

Plays are conventionally performed on stages and in theatre buildings. I aimed to use the traditional separation of audience and actor, of stage and ‘real’ world outside, as part of a dramaturgy organised around a range of queerness in the familiar local world outside. I developed a dramaturgy and performance that is similar to site-specific performance as each play would have different meanings and effects in performance if it were performed in a different place. However, the LRE plays are different from what is usually understood as site-specific because they take place *in* a theatre at a significant distance from the local site they are about.

Place is usually understood to be a specific location and space as a more abstract concept: a way of collectivising a number of similar kinds of place, such as ‘performance space’. Queer and feminist theorists critique the opposition between the global and local written into space and place, particularly because this mechanism puts the body and the personal, with the local, as an improper frame of reference for theorizing about space.

I used the theatre performance space inside, to represent a specific place outside through words, sound and action, but with no (or very few) properties or set. The bare stage aimed to invite the audience’s imaginations and memories onto stage and into the performance. This aimed to create a kind of ‘doubling vision’ where it was also clear that different members of the audience saw local details on the ‘empty’ performance space differently to each other. I theorise these different ways of seeing as different authorships of the play and place.

This practice as research took place predominantly in ‘black box’ studio theatres. The small studio space was designed to be an experimental and radical place to make theatre in the late nineteenth century. The radical experiments of André Antoine at Théâtre Libre in Paris, Otto Brahm at Frie Bühne in Berlin or August Strindberg at the Intimate Theatre in Stockholm continue to influence contemporary theatre. Constantin Stanislavski’s experimental studio where he worked with Vsevolod Meyerhold in the Crimea is also a profound influence on western mainstream theatre and film through institutions such as the Actor’s Studio in New York. However, studio theatres are now often perceived as conventional and even conservative places to make theatre.

David Wiles describes the ‘black box’ theatre space as ‘the quintessential ‘empty space’ [...] It purport[s] to be a neutral environment, allowing any desired configuration of seating. Its walls being invisible, lighting could make the space seem as tiny or expansive as the director might desire’.²⁶ My research aimed to use that ‘purporting’ of neutrality in a studio theatre to write the queerness of the place that stage was in, onto that specific stage. I also wanted to use the flexibility of a studio theatre and its ability to occlude the outside world theatrically so that I could manipulate the perception of space and represent some things that would be impossible in the ‘real’ world outside.

The ‘black box’ studio theatre design is perhaps so popular because it is conceptualised as an ideal version of Peter Brook’s influential articulation of theatre as an ‘empty space’. Brook wrote in 1968:

I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged.²⁷

This was a challenge to what he called ‘deadly theatre’, which was strongly aligned with the commercial theatre spaces of the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods. Brook’s subsequent experiments with performing in so-called ‘empty spaces’ across the world revealed how problematic this concept is. Even in this famous quotation Brook’s assumption that an actor is a man demonstrates how culture and habit construct apparently neutral or empty space.

My practice as research uses ‘black box’ or studio theatre spaces precisely because they are not neutral or empty spaces. Queer theory examines how the discourses that construct sexuality and gender are present, but usually unseen, in the normative constructions of ‘everyday’ times and places. I applied this theoretical idea to playwriting by developing a practice that looks for the uniqueness, strangeness and ‘queerness’ of the place within which each ‘black box’ studio theatre space is located.

Structure of the thesis

Part 1 of this thesis is concerned with the theoretical context of the research. Chapter 1 argues that ‘realism’ is the dominant discourse framing mainstream theatre in the UK since the 1880s. Following Butler I outline the problem of ‘realism’ that situates materiality as the neutral ground rather than object of ontology and epistemology. I explore ‘realism’ as a dramaturgy in relation to works by Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, George Bernard Shaw, Antoine Chekhov, John Osborne, Mark Ravenhill, Sarah Kane and Split Britches. I then describe a lineage of queer writing for theatre from the 1930s to the present beyond the conventional discourse of ‘realism’. This

particularly focuses on lesbian-queer writing and its different status to gay-male queer writing. Chapter 1.2 contains a brief reflection on the outcomes of the first phase of this practice as research and includes the first act of the unfinished play Fling. The attempts to write Acts 2 and 3 of Fling can be found in the Appendix.

Chapter 2 focuses on the theoretical context of queer theory of time and place. I discuss how I used queer theory about time and place to construct a creative writing task that would find, create and record queerness in everyday, public, outdoor places and on public benches.

Part 2 contains the main body of practice as research and my reflection on it. Chapter 3 begins with the text written through the first ‘civic couch’ exercise. I ask, in relation to that practice and text, what the effects and affects are of a playwright writing in and about a public place for a prolonged period of time. I argue it is an effective way of revealing a range of queerness (the odd, the strange, the wonder-full and glimpses of the abject) within, beneath and ‘in the cracks’ of the familiar. I argue this is also an affective practice, which can make anyone become ‘queer’ in relation to the heterosexist capitalist normativity of an everyday place.

Chapter 4 reflects on the LRE plays as outcomes of the research. LRE 2: Hope Street and 3: Market Place are located, with DVD documentation, at the beginning of Chapter 4.1. This is followed by reflection on how I applied queer theory about time and place to the dramaturgical principles and processes of playwriting. LRE 4: queer street and 5: Hope Street at Homotopia are located at the beginning of Chapter 4.2.

These are followed with reflection on what the effect was of re-attaching sexual identity to the ‘queer-place dramaturgy’ I had devised.

Chapter 5 contextualises this research in relation to site-specific performance. I discuss how this research has brought me to the door of site-specific performance and the key artists who make queer site-specific and site-responsive performance. I note that most queer site-specific performance happens indoors and propose that this reflects the continuing power of heterosexism in public space. I also contextualise this research alongside work by four artists, from different disciplines, who have recently made work about public benches: Alex Kelly of Third Angel, Dr. Lena Simic of The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home, Jenna Watts, an independent performance artist and Paul Harfleet, an independent visual artist. Kelly, Simic, Watts and Harfleet are not playwrights in the broadly traditional context that I outline for this research, however, we share a concern to make creative interventions into (hetero) normative uses of everyday public time and place.

My conclusion addresses the question: How queer can you go in the context of a conventional theatre practice? I propose mainstream stages reflect the (hetero) normativity of the public sphere and that (hetero) normativity is a powerful and invisible force profoundly tied to capitalism in the UK today. I propose it is unlikely there will be a ‘landmark’ ‘lesbian-queer’ play until lesbian-queer women are much more familiar to the public sphere. I also note that through this research my identity as a ‘lesbian-queer playwright’ has shifted beyond my sexual identity. That detaching sexual identity from queerness has also led to a detaching of humanness from identity as the ‘self’ is co-authored with place and time.

Part 1: Theoretical Framework

Chapter 1: 'Realism' is a queer problem

In this chapter I will argue that 'realism' has been the dominant discourse in British theatre since the late nineteenth century. I will outline 'realism', particularly in the context of Judith Butler's discussion of performativity and the sexing of materiality, as a queer problem. I will question if there is such a thing as a 'realist' dramaturgy and discuss the role of *mise-en-scène* in key, canonical, early 'realist' plays. I will compare this with the use of *mise-en-scène* by Sarah Kane, Mark Ravenhill and Split Britches as authors of canonical queer writing performed in theatres but which Split Britches most often presents within the framework of Live Art and/or Performance Art. I conclude this chapter with an outline of the lineage of queer writing for theatre, asking how the author, the subject matter, the form and the audience can define the queerness of the writing.

Critics writing from such divergent political positions as Christopher Innes, Stephen Lacey, Lee Baxandell, David Edgar, John McGrath, Michelene Wandor, Michael Billington and Raymond Williams each argue that 'realism' was the dominant theatrical form through the twentieth century. Lacey argues what he terms 'naturalism/realism' maintains its dominance in Britain by reworking the tropes of the form and by absorbing new formal elements developed by the avant-garde into the mainstream: to 'be realist (...) frequently *has* meant in the twentieth century – that it is necessary to challenge the dominant theatrical and dramatic conventions associated, historically, with realism and naturalism'.¹ In this way Lacey also argues 'naturalism/realism' dominates key 'experimental' works of the mid-twentieth century 'new wave' of British drama.

It is also a well-rehearsed observation that the discourse of ‘realism’ is told in bellicose terms of attack and dominance. George Bernard Shaw attacked the formulaic ‘Sardoodlism’ of Victorian theatre, because it simplified the ‘rules’ of the ‘three unities’ in the form of the ‘well-made play’. Shaw attacked Eugène Scribes and Victorien Sardou’s dramaturgical principles because he was positioning his theory and practice as part of a ‘realist’ *revolution*, which was ‘sweeping’ across Europe, into Russia, America and Britain. Shaw produced, with Harley Granville-Barker, a season at the Royal Court from 1904-8 that is said to have established Shaw’s dominance over British theatre until his death in 1950. The narrative of the dominance of ‘realism’ then points to 1956 as the moment when the formal principles of late-nineteenth century ‘realism’ were reasserted by John Osborne in Look Back in Anger (1956) again at the Royal Court. The ‘new wave’² then sought to denigrate the bourgeois complacency and queerness of Noel Coward, Terence Rattigan and John Whiting.

Dan Rebellato carefully examines the discourse of ‘realism’ surrounding Look Back in Anger’s first night on the 8th May 1956. He shows how that moment was constructed as a revolution against theatricality and its associations particularly with homosexuality.³ Lara Shalson has also recently summarized the ‘anti-theatrical’ impulse implicit in the ‘realist’ theatre project.⁴ I will return to the framework of Live Art towards the end of this chapter.

The narrative of ‘the dominance of realism’ in British theatre has been argued to ‘storm the barricades’ again with the wave of ‘brutalist’ plays in the 1990s, particularly Blasted (1995) by Sarah Kane and Shopping and Fucking (1996) by Mark

Ravenhill. Rebellato, in his introduction to Ravenhill's Plays One, notes that the title of Shopping and Fucking 'has entered the public consciousness in a way that no play has done perhaps since Look Back in Anger 40 years before'.⁵ Shopping and Fucking has also been constructed by Aleks Sierz as 'revolutionary' as, he writes, it 'takes the audience by the scruff of the neck and shakes it until it gets the message'.⁶ Sierz's rhetoric is remarkably similar to Shaw's declaration that 'Ibsen may hunt you down from position to position until you are finally cornered'.⁷ Also, as Blasted was famously derided in the first newspaper reviews as 'filth' this could be read as an echo of the reception of Ibsen's Ghosts described as 'sewage'.⁸

Kane's and Ravenhill's work is also read as queer because it represents lgbt/queer sexuality/gender and/or challenges formal conventions of conventionally (hetero) normative 'realist' dramaturgy. So, what is the relationship between queer writing for theatre and 'realism' both as a discourse and a dramaturgy?

The problem of 'realism' as a discourse

I see 'realism' as a queer problem in two senses. It is an odd-queer problem because the term 'realism' claims a direct-straight relationship with the 'real', which can never be simply straight, as any mimetic relationship is complex, twisting and doubling. As Elin Diamond writes, mimesis 'is impossibly double, simultaneously the stake and the shifting sands: Order and potential disorder, reason and madness'.⁹ Dramatic 'realism' is also a problem *for* queers whose 'realities' are excluded to varying degrees from what is or can be conceived of as 'real' within the (hetero) normative regime.

Judith Butler explains how the term ‘queer’ is used to construct not only a particular kind of human subjectivity but also heteronormative reality. I quote Butler at some length here to introduce the complex concept of performativity and its place in theorizing what it is to be constructed as queer and to play queer on stage:

The term ‘queer’ emerges as an interpellation that raises the question of the status of force and opposition, of stability and variability, *within* performativity. The term ‘queer’ has operated as one linguistic practice whose purpose has been the shaming of the subject it names or, rather, the producing of a subject *through* that shaming interpellation. ‘Queer’ derives its force precisely through the repeated invocation by which it has become linked to accusation, pathologization, insult. This is an invocation by which a social bond among homophobic communities is formed through time. The interpellation echoes past interpellations, and binds the speakers, as if they spoke in unison across time. In this sense, it is always an imaginary chorus that taunts ‘queer!’¹⁰

Butler describes here a process of reiteration, which forms a seemingly flawless surface of heteronormativity in social and psychic spaces. Normativity is constructed through performativity and there are many different ways that people are constructed as at or beyond its realm. Individuals and social groups are interpellated as strange or as strangers, through invocations of shame particularly, but not exclusively, in relation to class, health, gender, nationhood, race, religion, sexuality and wealth.

J.L. Austin introduced the term ‘performativity’ in 1955 with a series of lectures at Harvard University about how language and words make things happen. These lectures, published as How to Do Things with Words, are foundational to queer theory and queer performance theory. Austin wanted to keep the stage actor’s utterances separate from the use of language in life. But Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Andrew Parker argue that homophobic constructions of theatre lie inside his fear of infecting lived performativity with theatre. They write: ‘Striking that, even for the dandyish Austin, theatricality would be inseparable from a normatively homophobic thematics of the “peculiar,” “anomalous, exceptional, ‘nonserious’” [*sic*].’¹¹ Parker and

Sedgwick show how Jacques Derrida countered Austin's position with his argument that there is a 'pervasive theatricality' shared by both stage and life.¹²

One of Butler's key concerns is how the concept of performativity might resist the ideology of 'biological essentialism' and uses some of the functions of theatrical performance to examine sexual and gender identity. She controversially argues that gender is 'an imitation without an origin'¹³ revealed through (theatrical) gender parody.

Trans-theorist Stephen Whittle challenges Butler's argument in her first publication, Gender Trouble, that gender is performative, because it makes the reality of gender identity 'always ultimately about something else'.¹⁴ In Bodies that Matter Butler extends her application of speech act theory to sexuality and gender theory by exploring the 'sex of materiality'.¹⁵ This is not to deny the 'reality' of bodies, biology or even the embodied experience of gender identity, but to warn against making easy assumptions about the neutrality of the materiality of sex. She argues that materiality should be the object, rather than the grounding of feminist inquiry.

Butler's discussion of materiality itself as an object constructed by performativity became very useful to me as a way of re-reading 'realist' dramaturgical use of *mise-en-scène*. It provided a theoretical tool to apply to the representation of an actual piece of ground and to de-naturalise materiality as the neutral and stable foundation of epistemology and ontology.

Butler notes that the Greek word Aristotle uses to describe ‘matter’ is *hyle*, meaning both the wax and the stamp which shapes the wax. The latin for matter (*materia*) is derived from ‘*mater*’ and ‘*matrix*’ which means womb. Gendered roles of human reproduction are therefore invoked in the word and language of ‘matter’. But the classical understanding of matter is as both substance and form. The womb is both ‘ground’ for the seed and active in the *materialization* of new life. Butler shows how Foucault develops Aristotle’s notion of the different modes of material and materialization: ‘Power operates for Foucault in the *constitution* of the very materiality of the subject, in the principle which simultaneously forms and regulates the ‘subject’ of subjectivation’.¹⁶ But, she asks, ‘does Foucault’s effort to work the notions of discourse and materiality through one another fail to account for not only what is *excluded* from the economies of discursive intelligibility that he describes, but what *has to be excluded* for those economies to function as self-sustaining systems?’¹⁷ Butler argues that the contemporary dualistic figuration of form as masculine/shaping and matter as feminine, ‘raw’ or neutral can be productively destabilized. Butler asks how female penetration of female, or masculine of masculine, or feminine of masculine disrupts the metaphysics of matter and form: ‘If it were possible to have a relation of penetration between two ostensibly feminine gendered positions, would this be the kind of resemblance that must be prohibited in order for Western metaphysics to get going?’¹⁸

Butler follows Luce Irigaray’s argument in Speculum of the Other Woman in her analysis of how western metaphysics must make exclusions to ‘get going’. Irigaray writes: ‘A man minus the possibility of (re)presenting oneself as a man = a normal woman’.¹⁹ Irigaray argues that western metaphysics and its theatre is constructed out

of a foundational exclusion of the female and that women can not exist because 'woman' *is* the theatre apparatus. 'She' is the metaphysical material of representation and therefore a kind of 'womb-theatre', who only exists in the 'elsewhere' beyond a phallogocentric world.

The phallogocentric world presents an irresolvable problem for women writers, which is: How can women, or any identity excluded by the logic of white, masculine privilege, create or find representation if they are always already excluded from what is 'real'? Diamond cites Robbie McCauley's desire to 'follow a tradition that heightens the connection of art to life'²⁰ in order to explain why it is important for feminists to keep working on the problematic relationship between art and 'real' life. Diamond admits that her book Unmaking Mimesis is partly written in response to artists such as McCauley in order to keep mimesis 'circulating' as a political question.²¹

Split Britches provide a highly critically recognised example of lesbian-queer theatre writing and performance that is both about and enacts queer theorizing about the performativity of gender and sexuality. Peggy Shaw, Louis Weaver and Deb Margolin perform the gendering of bodies with their gendered and performing bodies. Shaw and Weaver particularly address the performativity of their identities as 'butch' and 'femme' in 'real' life through theatrical inventions of 'butchness' and 'femme-ness' on stage. This is also framed by the live moment of the performance with an audience framed as lgbt/queer and therefore outside or resistant to the heterosexual imperative. Therefore Split Britches' response to the metaphysical problem of 'realism' is to continue to focus on the representation of queerness *as identity* but queer essentialist

notions of identity by representing it as simultaneously material, embodied and constructed.

Peggy Shaw and Lois Weaver, the two permanent members of Split Britches, also make solo work. Elin Diamond describes Shaw's work, alongside former Split Britches member Deb Margolin and the work of African American playwright, Robbie McCauley as '*imaged exoterically* in a force-field of conflicting temporalities marked by the detritus of consumer culture'.²² Margolin, McCauley and Shaw, Diamond argues, give audiences access to their particular experiences of racism, homophobia and sexism through re-framing familiar cultural objects from the general public sphere. Diamond's critical analysis of these artists' queering of matter helped me to ask if it would be possible to queer matter beyond the framework of queer identity.

Exoteric objects can be accessible to the general public in a number of different ways. They might be well-known cultural objects such as an artists' haircut or a product brand. They might be big events such as the Olympics or an economic crisis. They might also be familiar things shared by most people in everyday life such as a park, a light bulb or the vibrations of a train passing. I understand Shaw's Menopausal Gentleman (1996) to be 'imaged exoterically' because she refers to globally famous African American musicians Tina Turner and Barry White and describes her encounters with the everyday world. She simultaneously locates her performance both in the present on stage and among objects that could be found in the *mise-en-scène* of 1950 and 1960s American working class culture. As Shaw looks at her father's suit, her own large hands and a bandage wrapped around her breasts, through her gender-

queer sensibility, she draws the audience to question the stability of the materials that construct the sex-gender identity she performs. She contests the political neutrality of familiar objects by using them to reveal some of the ways her identity was constructed. It seems she begins to queer materiality itself through the framework of sexual-gender identity. Performance is always material not least because it is always in the present and in the presence of a live audience. Shaw's use of familiar and publicly accessible objects is one model of reframing the neutrality of materiality through performance and helps to contextualise my question if it is possible to queer *matter* outside the frame of queer *identity*.

What defines 'realism' as dramaturgy?

'Realist' dramaturgy is commonly understood to make character, place and time dramatic through the actions of a central character rebelling against social norms. This characterological dramaturgy aims to make the three structural elements of the drama (character, time and space) as mutually load-bearing as possible, as a method of persuading an audience to imaginatively 'enter' the world/environment of the drama as if they were looking at 'real' life in a quite specific place in the world. However, when looked at closely 'realism' is much more difficult to define, even in relation to the most canonical of 'realist' texts. Also, the terms 'realist' and 'naturalist' are used confusingly, both synonymously and to make different distinctions between form and content in different historical eras.

The Cambridge Guide To Theatre states: 'What realism and naturalism share is an allegiance to an art of representation or imitation of unheroic everyday contemporary life'.²³ Stephen Lacey uses the term 'naturalism/realism' to accommodate the way

‘naturalism’ and ‘realism’ have been used historically, to distinguish between philosophical intent and formal use of stagecraft in different ways, at different historical moments. In the late nineteenth century ‘naturalism’ predominantly referred to a characterological dramaturgy that located each character as part of his/her natural (material) environment rather than in relation to God. This followed the revolution in mainstream thought brought about by scientific naturalism and the publication, by Charles Darwin, of Origin of the Species (1859).

‘Realism’ in the late-nineteenth century was most commonly used to refer to conventions of stagecraft. ‘Realist’ stagecraft particularly replicated the ‘real’ world by designing sets that used lots of everyday objects and created the convention of the fourth wall. This aimed to reframe the present time and place of performance as distanced from the action of the drama. This ‘realist’ stagecraft supported its dramaturgical aims, but was not necessarily definitive of it. August Strindberg, for example, defined ‘realism’ pejoratively as *only* obsessed with surface details, ‘the grain of dust on the lens of the camera’.²⁴ However, ‘naturalism’, for Strindberg, indicated the dramaturgical and philosophical aim of revealing the hidden truths of ‘real’ life. For Strindberg ‘Naturalism’ ‘seeks out [...] what you do not see every day’.²⁵

In the mid-twentieth century ‘realism’ became more commonly used to refer to philosophical and dramaturgical content and ‘naturalism’ to style and stagecraft. Lacey, writing about theatre in the mid-twentieth century and following Bertolt Brecht, states that ‘realism’ is concerned with ‘ideology and politics rather than dramatic method’.²⁶ Brecht argues that if the detail and ‘freshness’ of ‘naturalistic’

acting trick the audience into believing that the actor is ‘really’ in the dramatic moment it implies that human nature is both unchanging and unchangeable. The paraphernalia of objects in the ‘naturalistic’ *mise-en-scène* and the fourth wall convention invite, as Bert O. States argues, the audience to invest in the material world as an end point.²⁷ Brecht argues that it is in the representation of theatre *as theatre* that ‘reality’ can be represented as alterable: ‘Reality, however complete, has to be altered by being turned into art, so that it can be seen to be alterable and be treated as such’.²⁸ As Diamond has argued, a Brechtian theory of representation has much to offer feminist, post-modern and queer representation in theatre.

Elin Diamond and Elinor Fuchs have also shown that ‘realist’ plays do not have to be read or produced according to the logics of unity or stability. Claude Schumacher also argues that it is ‘dangerously reductive’ to separate ‘realism’ from ‘expressionism’ or ‘symbolism’.²⁹ This echoes the practices of ‘realist’ playwrights themselves, such as Strindberg, who wanted The Father to be presented as what he called ‘naturalism’ in 1887, but in 1908 wanted an ‘expressionistic’ interpretation.³⁰

The new technology of electric lighting and sound in theatres allowed stage spaces to be manipulated in an infinite number of ways. The Savoy Theatre installed the first complete electric theatre in 1881.³¹ Lighting technology had the potential to create the drama of the relationship between the character and his/her environment more visually than ever before. An example of this can be found at the end of Ibsen’s Ghosts (1881), when the rising sun lights up the landscape of mountains behind “Oswald Alving’s” back as he sinks into a coma. The tragedy of this scene is that Oswald loses his language and consciousness and thereby becomes more animal than

human. The material world is represented as unchangeable and the human subject is an organism within it.

The most common 'realist' set represents a domestic interior and is often a single unified set for the whole play.³² The action of the drama comes from a character's relationship with an unchangeable world. Dramatic 'realism' commonly uses the *mise-en-scène* dramaturgically to represent fixity. However, Darwin's theory of evolution was about the infinite variety of possibilities for change and difference in the natural world. So the 'realist' dramaturgy can be understood as a particularly pessimistic, if not nihilistic, interpretation of the re-structuring of the character of 'man' in relation to 'his' environment and of 'woman' (as a reflection of 'man') in relation to the domestic interior. Time is organized in 'realism' to support this pessimistic interpretation of evolution. Human life is predominantly represented as ruined by Darwinistic cause and effect, rather than freed by it.

One strategy for creating the impression of unified 'realist' place is to write scenes that represent the same amount of time it takes to play them, so the scenes are performed in 'real time'. But this strategy often has to be put to one side so the action does not 'drag'. The first act of Ghosts, for example, takes place over one day but has a running time of only approximately 30 to 40 minutes. However, the way this seems to blur time can also be read as an expressionistic effect. We can read the way a whole day slips away in only 30 minutes as a form of pathetic fallacy that is poetically echoed by the landscape of constant rain outside, which hides the rising and falling of the sun and which might symbolise a lost and dead world.

Creating a unity of time is very challenging to the playwright and canonical plays do not often achieve it. Strindberg criticised Emile Zola's unity of narrative time in On Modern Drama and Modern Theatre (1889):

Zola commits the error of letting a year elapse between the first and second acts. Presumably he did not dare offend against the prevailing law about a year's widowhood, otherwise a day between the acts would have been enough and the play would have made a more unified impression.³³

Strindberg allows here that it is possible to have some gaps within the sequential construction of time, but only as long as they are hidden within the overall 'unified impression'. But Zola had justified an artist making such lapses, at least eight years previously by saying:

We are not the creative force which governs the world; we are only second-rate creators who analyze, summarize by trial and error, who are happy and acclaimed as geniuses when we can disengage one ray of the truth.³⁴

Here Zola acknowledges that although it might be an artist's aim to represent 'truth' it is also an ambition that is impossible to realize. Zola aligns 'truth' with the 'creative force' that governs the world and its measures of time. He uses the sun both literally as the 'creative force that governs the world' and metaphorically with its 'rays of truth'.

It is not inevitable that 'realist' dramaturgy represents 'the truth' of the stability of materiality. But it might be unavoidable that a discourse that calls itself 'realist' reproduces the (hetero) normativity of society. Zola writes: 'L'œuvre d'art est un coin de la nature, vu à travers un tempérament'.³⁵ This describes Art as a dramatic scene where the artist looks at an object of representation and translates it into an art object. Each part of this scene is part of a process of continuous change. The 'corner of

nature’ if we take the phrase to refer to any amount of matter (no matter how small) is always changing because it exists in time. Each artist also has a different ‘temperément’ and will see and translate objects differently. In the first phase of this project I aimed to represent a particular corner of nature as the *mise-en-scène* for a characterological dramaturgy. Although this failed dramaturgically, it was the first step towards applying queer theory to playwriting by focusing on representing a queer *relationship* between human subject and material reality, rather than on the queer *identity* of that human subject in relation to heteronormativity.

Blasted and Shopping and Fucking are plays that can both be understood to represent a queer sensibility. Shopping and Fucking represents same-sex sexuality on stage both explicitly and in a deliberately unapologetic or ‘anti-assimilationist’ way. Blasted and other plays by Kane can be read as queer particularly through their representations of shame in relation to sexuality³⁶ and the fluidity of her representations of gender identity.³⁷

It is possible to read Shopping and Fucking and Blasted in relation to ‘realism’ both as a discourse and dramaturgy. They both represent a ‘postmodern’ material world that is less unified than early or mid-twentieth century ‘realism’, but this world still represents the ‘human animal’ as trapped. Postmodern instability still represents a fixedly oppressive world. The stage directions in Blasted indicate a detailed *mise-en-scène*: ‘*A very expensive hotel room in Leeds – the kind that is so expensive it could be anywhere in the world*’.³⁸ The directions go on to list the furniture and smaller objects. However, the detail is there to suggest that there is nothing different about a hotel in Leeds to an expensive hotel environment ‘anywhere in the world’. This *mise-*

en-scène aims to represent how a lack of local specificity makes a subject's relationship with his/her place meaningless. This detailed, interior *mise-en-scène* creates an environment that represents the effects of the globalization of capitalism as a process of making generic, meaningless places. As the play progresses the unity of this dislocated place is broken, as the time and character elements of the play stop supporting it. The trajectory of the drama makes the stage more and more specific to the central character of "Ian" through what he does to it.

The *mise-en-scène* of Blasted is unusually full of material detail for the 'brutalist' plays of the 1990s, which were usually much more scenographically bare. The scenes were usually created by single properties, such as a chair, a knife or blood. These materials are used to bring onto stage the environment of contemporary life. This might look like a 'Brechtian' 'alienation' of objects from everyday life, however, to adapt Bert O. States distinction, the objects are not so much extensions of the characters as encroachments upon them of the environment.³⁹ The characters are placed somewhere in the 'real' everyday world through the object, rather than using the object to articulate a relationship with that world.

The scenography of the 'brutalist' dramas can also be seen to question what 'reality' is. The sofa in Shopping and Fucking might not only signify a domestic interior. This particular sofa is detached from the everyday details of 'reality'. It is described as being in a: '*Flat – once rather stylish, now almost entirely stripped bare*'.⁴⁰ This 'sofa', given the history of the chaise longue in 'drawing room realism', could be understood as a meta-theatrical question mark over our belief or investment in the 'reality' of that world and those characters beyond the stage. This sofa, could also

indicate that the present time and place of performance is *not* distanced from the action of the drama.

The dominance of ‘realist’ discourse in British theatre criticism can be seen in the reception of these plays. David Edgar wonders why the ‘brutalist’ plays were not more experimental and it is the *mise-en-scène* of Shopping and Fucking and in particular the sofa, which for him typifies this lack of experimentation.⁴¹ States identifies the chair as the ‘single most important property’ in ‘realist’ theatre.⁴² The chair is clearly extremely important for a characterological dramaturgy because it can place the actor’s body on stage and in relation to his/her environment in a way that reveals and dramatizes character. The type and style of a chair can also indicate social or psychic space. However, the use of a chair on stage does not necessarily mean that a play is characterological, just as the (unavoidable) use of materiality on stage does not necessarily cite that materiality as politically neutral. ‘Realism’ as a discourse confuses the dramaturgical and scenographic use of everyday materials, such as chairs, ‘kitchen sinks’ or ‘cups and saucers’ on stage, with an ideological assumption that materiality is the neutral and stable ground of epistemology and ontology.

Case wrote in 1996 that Split Britches, ‘more than any other group [...] has set the stage of lesbian and feminist performance in the United States’.⁴³ The visibility of the lesbian and queer concerns in their work and the longevity of their practice, since the early 1980s to the present day make it arguably the most iconic of lesbian-queer writing presented in UK theatres. It is rarely discussed in relation to ‘realism’ or even ‘theatre’, but rather predominantly framed as ‘performance’ and ‘live art’. However, their writing offers a key context and model of practice for my research because of the

way they negotiate queerly with dramaturgical principles. I will discuss in the final part of this chapter how the terms of ‘performance’ and ‘live art’ create and claim a discursive space for queer writing beyond conventionally (hetero) normative ‘realism’, so closely associated with mainstream theatre.

Split Britches shift the focus of their dramaturgies in different shows. The focus of their artistic attention is primarily identity and the dizzying connections of performativity and stage performance through the (at least) double playing of actor and character. Belle Reprieve (1991) uses this representation of character/actor, but is not characterological. The action is not primarily organized around/through character or actor’s body/identity. The drama of the play happens between the present and the past and between the original text of Tennessee Williams’ A Streetcar Named Desire (1947) and their dramatic intervention into it.

Belle Reprieve is identified by Case as the beginning of Split Britches’ embrace of queer theory, particularly as their first theatrical collaboration with gay/queer men. Belle Reprieve deconstructs the classic American ‘realist’ play A Streetcar Named Desire. The collaboration between Bloo Lips and Split Britches explicitly addresses and deconstructs the complex subtextual wranglings of queer identity, which from a late-twentieth century perspective can be read to be ‘closeted’ in the play. The four performers and writers do this by breaking and investigating the dramaturgical traps of ‘realism’ for those excluded from heteronormative economies of representation. As Case writes:

The episode of Bette’s outbreak from the scene, begging to do a ‘real’ play in a ‘nice frock’ ironically leads directly to the rape. Playing a woman can have frightening consequences. So can realism.⁴⁴

Belle Reprieve works because it also uses the canonical play and film of A Streetcar Named Desire (1951) to access the rigidly enforced heterosexism and homophobia of the 1950s as an exoteric 'reality'. In this way the action of the drama in Belle Reprieve is created between the 'what and who we are as queers' in the 1990s of the present and the 'what and who we thought we were then' of the 1950s. This dramaturgy therefore puts cultural historical time at its organizational centre, in relation to the construction of queer, lesbian, gay, working class and female identity.

Split Britches create dramaturgies that are significantly different to what is conventionally understood to be 'realist', because they remove the primacy of the principle of the unity of actor/character, time and space. Alongside removing the principle of unity goes the nihilistic fate of the queer actor/character. Cause can be detached from effect for longer periods of time, as the layers of different possible meanings of an action are explored.

In Dress Suits to Hire (1988) written with Holly Hughes, Weaver and Shaw play versions of themselves, use butch/femme role playing to play the characters "Deeluxe" and "Michigan", who seem at times to be deconstructions of the "Servant" and "Master" roles from the 'drawing room drama' genre and versions of 'Chandleresque' detectives. The action takes place between the 'real' actors and the characters they play. The attempts and failures of these actor/characters to leave the stage, or to establish understanding of where they are and what their relationship is with the world, creates a cyclical plot of coming together and breaking apart between the characters/actors. The overarching dramatic question is 'Will they leave, either each other or the stage?' The final answer is 'no' as they remain on stage facing away

from each other, both together and independent. The dramaturgy of this plot is Beckettian except, that instead of the nihilist vision of ‘reality’ in Waiting for Godot (1948), it was accompanied with a bitter sweet, surreal and feminist image of time:

You asked about the future. Here’s the deal: it’s gonna be just like the past. In the past the heart of the world was filled with carbon and water and that is why we had life on earth. [...] Carbon and water into diamonds. And in the future, women will replace the world. In a woman’s heart there is rice and water and that is why there is life on earth. But in the future, women will start collapsing the world thick with babies who can’t talk and only daughters who live alone on Oreos. And rice and water will be crushed into tears. But no one will cry.⁴⁵

This monologue is delivered by “Little Peter”, a character played by Peggy Shaw’s right hand and so theatrically brakes up the unity of the actors’ bodies.

I saw Split Britches perform for the first time in 2007 at Lancaster University. The sense of expectation in the audience was quite different from any other theatre event I had been to. I experienced then, what has been theorized as the way Split Britches’ performance invoke a lesbian-queer community into being, through the way they address their audience: by the way they produce themselves as butch/femme/lesbian in performance with the audience. This is, as Case argues, partly through the performance of desire which, as Teresa de Lauretis argues, produces the lesbian as visible against a heterosexist landscape. Geraldine Harris has also written about the effect of what the audience know, or think that they know about Shaw and Weaver in ‘real’ life to a Split Britches performance.⁴⁶

The modeling that Shaw and Weaver do for lesbian and butch/femme visibility in life takes part in the performance. This is exemplified by their practice and process in creating the WOW café in New York as a lesbian separatist space. They created

WOW for a female and lesbian audience and thereby created that ‘audience of lesbians’ at least in part by creating that framework. This made the locality implicitly central to those performances at WOW café, although this is not particularly marked in the scripts.

I saw Split Britches perform Lost Lounge in 2010 at the People’s Palace in Mile End, London. This performance put the specific local place of the performance outside the theatre doors more central to the structure of the dramaturgy than in their other work that I have either seen or read. Lost Lounge was written to be performed at People’s Palace in London on the Mile End Road and at La Mama E.T.C on East 4th Street in New York City. Details of those specific places, local histories and the performers’ memories of those places were quoted in the performance.

In the People’s Palace, an old East End musical hall theatre, the audience and the performance were put together on the large stage, which was curtained off from the main auditorium, where the audience had gathered before the show began to be greeted by Shaw as she also gathered material about things the audience had lost, which was used as part of the show.

I saw in this performance the same destabilizing practice that was previously located in the multiple, doubling versions of actor/character. In Lost Lounge the theatre space was also present as a particular place. The audience were invited through the performance of place to recognize that they were in and experiencing that particular theatre. I wonder if this attention to locality in Lost Lounge in some ways recreates the specificity of the WOW café as a place that is able to frame the time and space of

the performance as queer and lesbian: the WOW café might be that ‘lost place’ where lesbians once lounged.

Case’s introduction to the Split Britches’ anthology gives a very useful description of their process. I experienced some of these techniques and performance strategies when I took part in their workshop at Lancaster University in 2006. These workshops demonstrated through practice how dramaturgical principles are inseparable from the processes of making performance.

Case notes the separatist principles that were the material conditions of Split Britches’ early work and how the ‘kind of poverty of space and material goods’⁴⁷ shaped their processes and performances. She writes about the collaborative processes used by Weaver, Shaw and Margolin, which allow for each artist to contribute in different ways. It is facilitated by a ‘cut and paste’ process of creating the performance script and performance itself through collage. This process supports a dramaturgy that organizes the action of the drama as always in relation to the actual performance because it is always being originated in performance, in a rehearsal room and through shared knowledge between the performers of its embodiment in that space. A collaborative process can also be seen to facilitate a more cyclical and discursive structure of action than the process a single writer would be likely to use on their own at a desk.⁴⁸

I tried in the first phase of this research to apply queer theory to what is normatively proposed as ‘realist’ dramaturgy. I will show in the final section of this chapter that the outcome of this research *as a play* was unsuccessful. However, without this phase

of research I would not have seen the potential for the ‘realist’ use of *mise-en-scène* to be queered, nor would I thought about developing a way of writing about queer place by writing outside in specific places.

The lineage of queer writing for theatre

In this section I will ask how queer writing for theatre can be defined, in order to map its lineage and a context for my practice as research beyond the dominant discourse of ‘realism’ in conventional theatre practice. I will propose that queer writing negotiates the extent to which ‘difficult’ form and content can challenge conventions in order to achieve either critical and/or commercial success. Comparing the commercial success of Lillian Hellman’s A Children’s Hour (1934) with the enduring influence of Gertrude Stein’s ‘landscape plays’ (1922 – 1946) I will propose these authors use two opposite dramaturgical strategies for challenging (hetero) normativity. I will then discuss how different queer writing for theatre, post-Stonewall⁴⁹ and, in particular writing produced by Gay Sweatshop, experimented with relationships between these two approaches. I will reflect how Live Art and Performance Art are frames of discourse that create and claim space for queer writing both in and beyond (hetero) normative mainstream theatre culture. Dominic Johnson writes that Live Art in the UK today is a sector whereas Performance Art is a formal tradition.⁵⁰ This definition helps me to see how Live Art offers queer writing for performance *in theatres* an alternative frame to Theatre and the dominance of ‘realism’ within that conventional framework. Focusing on lesbian-queer writing for theatre, I will note the different status women’s writing has in relation to men’s queer writing in and beyond mainstream theatre.

Four Saints in Three Acts (1928) is arguably Stein's best known and most performed play.⁵¹ It is an opera libretto written for Virgil Thomson, which opened on Broadway in the same year as The Children's Hour (1934). Hellman's play ran for two years and has been adapted into two films: These Three (1936) and The Loudest Whisper (1961). The Children's Hour premiered in London at The Gate (1936) but was banned outside of club performance because of its lesbian content. It was more recently produced in the UK at the National Theatre in 1994 and in the West End in 2011.

Four Saints in Three Acts had a mixed critical and commercial reception. Wiley H. Hitchcock and Charles Fussell note that Four Saints in Three Acts was in some cases criticized 'maliciously'. However, it also extended a two-week run to four weeks in one of New York's largest Broadway theatres, the 44th Street Theatre, before selling out The Empire Theatre for a further two weeks.⁵² Stein wrote 77 plays in total but so few have been produced that Hans-Thies Lehmann writes, 'one would have to attest her unequivocal failure as a theatre author'.⁵³ However, Lehmann also cites Stein alongside major figures in the history of twentieth century theatre such as Bertolt Brecht, Gordon Craig, Antonin Artaud and Vsevolod Meyerhold. Kate Davy also shows the importance Stein held for the avant-garde movement of the whole twentieth century, particularly as a key influence on 'experimental' theatre directors such as Richard Foreman and Robert Wilson.⁵⁴

The Children's Hour is an early example of what can broadly be termed 'the problem lgbt/queer play'. The main characters, teachers "Karen Wright" and "Martha Dobie" are forced to face trial to prove they are not in a lesbian relationship. "Karen" leaves

her fiancé and “Martha” becomes tormented with horror at what she now identifies as her ‘lesbianism’ and commits suicide. The Children’s Hour uses characterological dramaturgy and constructs “Martha” and “Karen” almost exclusively through the drama of their conflict with heterosexism. Hellman’s play is an example of direct resistance to heterosexism and homophobia, which thereby also reinforces it.

Writing is arguably most easily recognised as queer if it represents queer content through character-identity. The Children’s Hour is almost exclusively a ‘content-queer’ play and is arguably still one of the most well-known plays that represents lesbian-queer characters. But how queer is this writing if those characters represent an exclusively heterosexist world? In contrast, Stein’s plays formally represent the human subject in a way that questions normative constructions of ‘identity’: whoever ‘speaks’ in her plays they can barely be described as ‘characters’. There is no direct representation of lesbian-queer content in Stein’s plays and, perhaps because of this, Stein’s plays are not always included in histories of lbgt/queer theatre.⁵⁵

It could be argued that Hellman’s play is not queer writing because it reinforces the heterosexist norm. It could also be argued that Stein’s writing is not queer because there is no clear representation of queer-lesbian desire or identity in it. I propose their work illustrates two ends of a range of possible relationships between queer content and form. These two different strategies mark the borders of what constitutes queer writing, defined by a resistance to (hetero) normativity that can be direct, indirect or a combination of both.

An audience can also queer writing, as can a production. Sinfield notes a pub production for a lesbian audience of The Killing of Sister George (1965) in the 1970s that was ‘rewarded by cheers, laughter and applause’.⁵⁶ It is easy to imagine that this audience and production read the representation of lesbians very differently to West End and Broadway audiences, critics, artists and producers: that the laughs came at different moments.⁵⁷ The recent West End productions of The Children’s Hour and The Killing of Sister George demonstrate that the strategy of ‘taboo breaking’ representation of the ‘problem’ of lesbian-queer identity, within a conventional characterological dramaturgy, is the most commercially successful strategy for lesbian-queer writing for theatre, probably because it offers the least challenge to (hetero) normativity.

Stein’s playwriting is typically described as ‘difficult’. I read it as queer because that ‘difficulty’ represents for me an indirect resistance to the normative construction of lesbian-queer identity as a paradoxically ‘visible-invisibility’. Stein and Hellman were writing at a time when discourse about female sexuality beyond the patriarchal norm was generally excluded from the public realm. As Catharine R. Stimpson notes, ‘no-one spoke openly of (Stein’s) lesbianism until after her death in 1946’.⁵⁸ But Stein’s life partnership with Alice B. Toklas was also very public. Stein’s The Autobiography of Alice B Toklas (1933) secured their international fame. The ‘visible-invisibility’ of lesbian identity can also be illustrated by the banning of The Well of Loneliness (1934) in the UK and its publishing success in Paris and the US. In response to the ban 40 writers publicly supported the book in an article in *The Times*.⁵⁹

Hellman and Stein both represent the heterosexist ‘visible-invisibility’ of lesbian-queer sexuality in their work. In The Children’s Hour a child whispers her accusations of ‘lesbianism’ to her grandmother so the audience must infer what the unspeakable crime is. Stein addresses women in her plays often with eroticism and adoration but with the non-gendered ‘voice’ either of an ungendered human subject or ‘author’. Stein thereby both creates the space for the representation of lesbian desire *and* occludes it.⁶⁰

Stein states in her lecture Plays (1934) that she structured her plays ‘to tell what could be told if one did not tell anything’.⁶¹ In part, this reflects her aim to create ‘entity writing’ through a dramaturgy of the ‘continuous present’, where the present is the object of representation in performance. Nothing ‘can be told’ of the present because it is always changing, it is also materially ‘real’ *and* perceived differently by every individual. Davy describes Stein’s notion of the ‘continuous present’, as her ‘most significant’ theory.⁶² Stein’s application of this theory in playwriting practice displaces character from the dramaturgical centre. It also challenges the audience to interpret its own meaning, as one might with an actual landscape. Through this provocation the reader enters co-authorship with Stein. The audience must decide what the present of the performance means to them. In this way they also construct something of ‘who they are’ in that moment. To engage with Stein’s plays is to enter a collaboration with her, creating the present and its meaning with her. I think Stein’s plays queer the shared present of the audience in a far more radical way than my LRE series attempts and that this is also the reason her ‘landscape plays’ are performed so rarely. As I discuss in the conclusion of this thesis the LRE plays are more accessible because they primarily offer place as the object of co-authorship. I give the audience

much more information about action, time, actor/characters and place in the LRE plays than Stein does in the ‘landscape plays’. Each LRE is also about one place, which is literally accessible because it is just outside the theatre.

Stein’s plays use many different formal tactics to create this provocation to co-authorship. For example, she does not use commas to indicate where a breath or pause might come in a line. There are often no stage directions to indicate who is speaking or to whom, although there might be occasional oblique stage directions, which can also be read as lines to be performed. It is tempting to read these plays as poems, but the simple tactic of naming them *as plays* radically questions what a play is through the series of questions each play demands to be answered if it is performed. Her plays are described as ‘difficult’ arguably because of the work they demand of the reader and/or production in authoring them into performance. This is illustrated by the fact that in order to produce Four Saints in Three Acts Maurice Grosser wrote the scenarios (with Stein’s approval) and these scenarios are still published alongside her text.

Davy writes that Stein had a ‘dualistic ontology’. Alongside the ‘entity writing’ such as the ‘landscape plays’ she also wrote ‘identity writing’, including The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas.⁶³ Stein’s ‘landscape plays’ deconstruct the ontology of ‘identity’ and ‘authorship’. For me, this speaks to the paradox of constructing ‘other’ identities (such as ‘lgbt/queer’) in order to exclude them from public space and discourse. It also speaks to the paradox of what Michael Foucault described as the ‘reverse discourse’, which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 2. Following Butler I read in Stein’s stated aim, ‘to tell what could be told if one did not

tell anything', that 'anything' as *everything* western metaphysics needs to exclude to constitute the 'real'.

Stein had a private income that meant she and Toklas could live in financial security all their lives and it is difficult to imagine how Stein would have been able to write if she had depended on the commerciality of her plays. Stein and Hellman represent two extremes of the relationship between form and content in relation to lesbian-queer writing for theatre. Hellman shows that it is possible to have critical and popular success representing lesbian-queerness in relation to heterosexism and especially in terms of 'it' as a 'problem'. Stein shows that it is possible to question the inevitability of (hetero) normative 'reality' through form and achieve a profound influence on theatre in general. But it is extremely difficult to do both and find a mainstream audience or financially viable career. This returns me to Sinfield's proposal that:

If one wants to make challenging theatre, the task must be to devise a performance that is likely to disconcert the people likely to attend, but only to the degree that they will be able to apprehend the challenge productively.⁶⁴

Post-Stonewall, the biggest challenge to queer writing for theatre is precisely who is likely to attend any particular theatre venue or performance and what assumptions can productively be made about their tolerance of the challenge of queer form and/or content?

Post-Stonewall: Negotiating the relationship between 'difficult' form and queer content in and beyond the mainstream

Gay Sweatshop played a key role in the lineage of lesbian-queer writing for theatre from 1975 until 1997. It supported, commissioned and/or produced almost every woman playwright engaged in queer writing in the UK. This includes Jill Posenor,

Michelene Wandor, Jackie Kay, Bryony Lavery, Pyllis Naggy, Stella Duffy, Clare Dowie and Split Britches. The minutes also show that Sarah Kane had been approached and ‘was happy’ to write a ‘two hander’ for the company.⁶⁵ Sarah Daniels Maureen Duffy and Valerie Mason-Brown seem to be the key omissions from this role-call of lesbian-queer writing for theatre in the last quarter of the twentieth century.⁶⁶

The minutes for the third Gay Sweatshop board meeting (15th June 1975) state:

Gay Sweatshop’s objective is to discover and present plays and entertainment with truthfully gay themes. Gay Sweatshop wants to explore in theatrical terms the nature of gay life, to investigate the roots of gay oppression, gay self-oppression and sexism and to expose media misrepresentation: and thereby not only to help gay people come out, but to increase general awareness of the oppression of sexuality, both gay and straight.⁶⁷

This reflects the challenge of negotiating between direct and indirect resistance to heterosexism. The company aims to oppose heterosexism directly by representing ‘truth’ therefore helping ‘gays’ to ‘come out’. But there is also the more indirect opposition to (hetero) normativity in the recognition that ‘the oppression of sexuality’ affects ‘both gay and straight’. As social taboos shift and change post-Stonewall, queer writing has to continually negotiate a balance between direct and indirect opposition to heterosexism and (hetero) normativity. This is reflected in the relationship between queer form and content in plays written for both mainstream and ‘niche’ audiences.

Jill Posener’s Any Woman Can (1975) was produced by Gay Sweatshop and toured to 38 venues in the UK and Eire in 1976. Posener reflects that her play had a unique relationship with its audience:

The most exciting and I think the most pleasurable memories are of the women outside London, who, perhaps, lacking the support of a big city community, would come to see our shows with an enthusiasm and generosity that I have rarely since encountered in the relationship between a theatre company and its audience. After seeing our show, women would literally come up to us and say ‘I’ve never met another one...’. And it’s for those women Any Woman Can was written. And for them it was vital that we didn’t turn round and say ‘Sorry love, I’m just playing a part’.⁶⁸

Gay Sweatshop aimed to serve a gay and straight audience but Posener’s comments here show the particular value of Gay Sweatshop for lgbt/queer audiences. In saying ‘I’ve never met another one’ these audience members identify as lesbian and claim the play and company ‘for them’.

The play presents an autobiographical account of ‘coming out’ and can be understood as an lgbt/queer ‘problem’ play because of its focus on heterosexism. The play has the energy of ‘agit-prop’: it is short, shifting quickly between monologue and dialogue, it illustrates issues and situations and comments on them directly rather than dramatizing them through action or a unified representation of time and space; it uses the direct address of the author’s voice, as “Ginny”, with other character monologues, some of which are delivered from the audience. For me the play is less closely aligned with the (hetero) normative framework than The Children’s Hour because in content and form the play claims ownership of ‘the problems’ of lesbian experience, rather than allocating them exclusively and safely to other fictional victimized characters. Posener’s comments above reflect how the ‘present-ness’ of identity on stage is appreciated by the audience who appear to connect at least as much with the actors as with the characters they play. The play speaks to a niche ‘lesbian’ audience who felt profoundly misrepresented and under-represented.

Cloud Nine (1979) by Caryl Churchill can be seen as an example of a perfectly 'productive challenge' in both form and content for a mainstream audience. It was produced by the left-leaning Joint Stock Theatre Company and was a mainstream and critical success that represented lesbian-queer characters within a formally experimental dramaturgical structure. It can be seen to challenge the oppressive structures of sexuality for 'both gay and straight' within the mainstream rather than for a niche lgbt/queer audience.

The first act of Cloud Nine is set in the colonial era of the British Empire. The second act is set in the present of the 1970s and in relation to the legacy of Empire. However, the characters are only a generation older, rather than the 100 years they would 'realistically' be. Formally it uses action to lead the dramaturgy and there are recognisable characters, times and places. However, the relationship of time, place and character is organised primarily in relation to the logic of the thesis of the play: that in the late twentieth century we are still culturally 'the children' of Victorians. This is achieved through a comedy of revealing and deconstructing white, patriarchal 'Victorian' values, at a time when the audience was eager to be entertained and provoked by re-evaluating those values.

Bent by Martin Sherman makes an interesting comparison with Cloud Nine: set in Nazi Germany it also primarily represents the oppression of sexuality in the past in relation to a brutal nationalist regime. It was produced in the same year as Cloud Nine and was initially offered to Gay Sweatshop to produce. The Artistic Director, Drew Griffiths, felt that Gay Sweatshop's audience was too small and directed it to mainstream producers.⁶⁹ It became a commercial success in the West End and on

Broadway. Both Cloud Nine and Bent set up a structure of direct resistance to the oppression of past colonising regimes while also, I think, attempting more indirect resistances to present day (hetero) normativity.

Chiaroscuro (1985) by Jackie Kay is more formally experimental than most earlier (published) lesbian-queer writing for theatre in the UK. The Theatre of Black Women commissioned Kay to write the play and it was read as a first draft at Gay Sweatshop's ten year anniversary in 1985. Kay's postscript for Davis's publication of the play focuses on the process and challenge of negotiating between what she calls: 'an unhappy combination of realism and symbolism'.⁷⁰ Kay describes how she developed character and plot through workshops with Theatre of Black Women and this second version toured for three months. However, after seeing the show in performance Kay records her realisation that there was tension between the 'flat and heavy naturalism' of the scenes and the poetry of the text: That it 'jarred'.⁷¹ This led her to redraft it for publication.

She writes she feels most satisfied with the published version because dramaturgically the four female characters are *present*: they use their presence in the play as their process of living and telling their stories: 'the idea grew upon me that all of these four women had invented themselves and together they made up the play'.⁷² Kay's dramaturgical aim to use the present of the play as the reality that the characters dramatize, and her sense of the 'realist' form jarring, for me, echoes Stein's aim to make the present the object of the play to avoid the jarring of nerves between dramatic action and audience interpretation.⁷³ The present as object of representation

was also a key concern in the emerging field of Live Art and Performance Art in the UK.

Kay notes how Ntozake Shange's for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf (1974) influenced Chiaroscuro.⁷⁴ Shange's introduction to the publication of her play also describes a long process developing the poetic performance, or 'choreopoem', in relation to different kinds of audiences. Shange's description shows how it was first performed in a small 'women's bar' in California and over two years was redeveloped for a 'New York audience',⁷⁵ eventually selling to 6,000 people a week.⁷⁶

Chiaroscuro did not have the same level of mainstream success as Cloud 9, Bent or for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf but it has significant influence because it was published, first in anthologies of lesbian plays and, more recently, in Lynette Goddard's Methuen Book of Black Playwrights.⁷⁷ Both Sinfield and Davis speculate how much lesbian-queer writing disappears from the lineage of queer writing because it is not published. However, I cannot help but think that the (often unpublished) work of small companies such as the Theatre of Black Women, Women's Theatre Group and Gay Sweatshop still develops the mainstream for work such as Bent or Cloud Nine.

Gay Sweatshop closed in 1997 for many complex reasons. By 1997 the quality of heterosexism and (hetero) normativity had been revolutionised. At the penultimate board meeting for Gay Sweatshop the minutes record Mel Kenyon saying: 'Part of it's not only (about the) reappraisal of Sweatshop but Sweatshop in context. When

Sweatshop was first born there weren't lesbians on television, not necessarily gay plays like Beautiful Thing'.⁷⁸ In 1997 The new Labour Government had a mandate to reform lgbt/queer civil rights.⁷⁹ Also, approximately a decade after the first years of 'the AIDS crisis', mainstream (hetero) normative culture was ready to reassess the homophobia and heterosexism the crisis revealed. Plays such as Tony Kushner's Angels In America Part 1 and 2 (1990, 1992), Neil Bartlett's Night After Night (1993), Jonathan Harvey's Beautiful Thing (1994), Kevin Elyot's My Night With Reg (1994) and Ravenhill's Shopping and Fucking (1996) could almost be seen to dominant the mainstream.

Sinfield writes that 'gay presence in the mainstream can be complained of as disproportionate'.⁸⁰ I think this is much more true of queer writing for theatre by men than by women. Sinfield argues that lesbian identity has not historically tried to define itself through theatre in the same way as gay/queer male cultural identity has. In this way, the high profile plays about gay-queer men in the 1990s reflects a 'coming out' of a previously hidden centrality in theatre writing. Sinfield argues playwrights such as Oscar Wilde, Noël Coward, Terrance Rattigan, Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee are part of the reason 'theatre and theatricality have been experienced through out the twentieth century as queer'.⁸¹

I see Angels in America as the most formally challenging of this raft of queer writing by men in the 1990s. Lesbian-queer plays of the same era, such as Naggy's Butterfly Kiss (1995) and Lavery's Her Aching Heart use a similar level of challenge to formal conventions. These three plays all use a characterological dramaturgy that also

challenges normative representations of time and place and thereby some of the boundaries of what is 'real'.

Lavery's playwriting is perhaps the most critically *and* commercially successful lesbian-queer writing for mainstream theatre post-Stonewall. It seems to me her writing always challenges conventional form in some way to reflect the challenge it is also making to (hetero) normativity. The queer-content of her plays shifts significantly both as (hetero) normativity changes through the 1990s and as she writes for different audiences.

Her Aching Heart is a funny, positive representation of lesbian queer identity that pokes fun at the way the lesbian characters construct identity and romance. I think it is the closest thing lesbian-queer writing has to compare to the 'feel good' popular success of Beautiful Thing. Nothing Compares to You is perhaps her most formally 'difficult' play. It represents a network of relationships, though short scenes with intense poetic drama and the Norwegian mythic and unexplainable creature "Fylgia". The form of this play does not challenge its audience in the radical way that Stein's do. Dramatic scenes and images are sewn together almost like a landscape, but actions are completed and these create a skeletal plot which audiences can follow.

Lavery most celebrated play is Frozen (1997). It dramatizes the question of the identity of 'the psychopath' and could be read as indirect resistance to (hetero) normativity because it questions how identity is constructed. However, the success of Frozen for me reflects that a lesbian-queer writer will be better off financially if they write (really good) plays with no lesbian-queer content and just enough formal

challenge to feel ‘fresh’. I will reflect further on Lavery’s negotiation of how queer it is possible for lesbian-queer writing to be today in the conclusion of this thesis.

Michael Wilcox records in his introduction to Gay Plays 5 that in ten years of editing the series he has only received ‘one play about lesbians’.⁸² Sinfield notes that in surveys taken in 1985 and 1994 only one-fifth of new plays produced in the UK were written by women. In 2006, Sphinx Theatre found that 17% of new productions were written by women.⁸³ However, there was arguably a bias towards mainstream theatre venues in this survey. It included ‘Off West End’ and fringe venues that present experimental work often within the frame of ‘Live Art’, such as Battersea Arts Centre and the Shunt Vaults. But other ‘Live Art’ venues such as Alsager Arts Centre, The Arnolfini, The Baltic, The Bluecoat, Camden’s People Theatre, Chapter Arts Centre, Chelsea Theatre, The Drill Hall, The Lowry Midlands Art Centre and Theatre in the Mill Bradford, were not included. Women’s writing is arguably better represented under the frame of ‘Live Art’ than ‘theatre’ and it is perhaps not a co-incidence that venues programming Live Art and Performance Art are significantly less funded than mainstream theatre venues.

‘Live Art’, as Dominic Johnson writes in the recent special issue of Contemporary Theatre Review, is ‘a contested category, not least because of the historical, disciplinary and institutional ambiguities that the term often tends to conceal’.⁸⁴ Live Art and Performance Art create and claim discursive spaces in opposition to Theatre as a tradition, as the mainstream sector for performance in the UK and as a set of formal conventions. In the same special issue of Contemporary Theatre Review, Lara Shalson⁸⁵ considers Beth Hoffmann’s⁸⁶ characterization of the history of Live Art as

repeatedly ‘breaking’ theatre. To frame this history Hoffmann uses Tim Etchells’ 2008 definition of his company’s work as being akin to the way a child breaks a toy.⁸⁷ Shalson argues Live Art is not necessarily about destruction or ‘breaking away’ and that it can also be about the curiosity of a child who breaks their toy through trying to understand how it works.

The shifts made in Performance Art and Live Art in the UK, during the 1990s, can be used to frame another contributing factor to the closure of Gay Sweatshop. Peter Ride notes in the penultimate Gay Sweatshop board meeting: ‘There’s also a whole new branch of experimental theatre (...) which means we get located in the more conservative end of the scale’.⁸⁸ Lois Keidan, co-founder and Director of The Live Art Development Agency states in interview with Neil Bartlett, ‘I would say that performance and Live Art have been crucial in terms of shifts in and around identity politics: queer, gender and race politics’.⁸⁹

Johnson points out that many artists ‘move easily’ between the Live Art and other sectors of performance and theatre.⁹⁰ Neil Bartlett in part reflects this ease when he states, ‘If what we wanted was the right to make art on whatever scale we saw fit, we’ve won’. But he also goes on to say, ‘I’m not saying that there are no barriers – I’m not naïve’.⁹¹ Bartlett discusses how he understands that audiences go predominantly to *venues* rather than to see a particular show or artists. His description of his production Or You Could Kiss Me (2010) at the Royal National Theatre shows transition between different sectors, venues and audiences is not necessarily ‘easy’ in practice.

He describes how Or You Could Kiss Me took time to find its audience at the National Theatre. He says the pre-booking audiences ‘were mortified, basically because it wasn’t really a play, or because it was gay, or South African, or because the collision of performance styles in the piece was just too weird.’⁹² But as the run continued another audience came to see the production either because they had heard about it or were intrigued by any of the things that were not appreciated by the pre-booking audience. What is key here is that the Royal National Theatre as the producer wanted to risk queer writing for theatre that was ‘difficult’ both formally and in content, as Bartlett states, this show would have been made at the Battersea Arts Centre in the 1980s.

Johnson argues that ‘Live Art’ is not a particularly useful term as a ‘concrete description of actual practices of performance’. If Live Art is an alternative sector to (mainstream) conventional Theatre, are there any performance practices that signify a ‘live artist’ who may work both in and beyond the mainstream?⁹³ Queer writing for performance in the UK today by female artists such as Split Britches, Curious, Marissa Carnesky, Claire Dowie, Valerie Mason-Brown, Nic Green and Dianne Torr crosses sectors and forms. However, each of these artists are known as performers of their own writing, which could signify a shared Live Art performance practice. In part this also reflects the smaller scale of funding in the Live Art sector. As Holly Hughes writes in O Solo Homo. The new queer performance:

Why are so many theater artists choosing to explore these issues (queer families, HIV and AIDS, breast cancer, race relations, the role of the arts) by making solo performance pieces rather than creating ensemble works or even plays? (You remember them, right?)⁹⁴

She answers that the reason is ‘75% economic’.

Another reason for the predominance of performer-writers in Live Art and Performance Art is their shared focus on the present as the object of representation in performance. Shalson quotes Tim Etchells' describing his work as: 'It is the thing it is the thing it is the thing'. In this way 'performance' opposes conventional theatre's pretense to be something else. I can not help but notice the striking resemblance between Etchells' phrase and Stein's famous line: 'Rose is a rose is a rose'.

The focus on the present in performance can be clearly located in the materiality of the body, and even more clearly in the endurance of the body. Shalson reads Spectacular by Forced Entertainment as the performance of the endurance of 'Theatre' in 'Performance'. She describes Claire Marshall's 60 minute performance of a melodramatic death, which contrasts with and accompanies Robin Arthur's more 'rational' performance.

Shalson reads drama into this performance finding a gender conflict in the hysterical performance of the female performer challenging the rational performance of the male performer. She uses dramaturgical terms to describe Robin the actor, as "Robin" the character and also as "The Hero". The drama of gender conflict and its alignment with concepts of melodrama and performance are not resolved in the production and the 'characters', such as they are, are not significantly changed.

I see Forced Entertainment's 'performance theatre' as a kind of 'landscape play'. I think this work plays with dramaturgical principles until they reach breaking point. It also seems to me that at the point of 'breaking' the audience must step-in to co-author the drama, (as Shalson does in her reading of it) or they will want to leave.⁹⁵ Shalson

notes Hans-Thies Lehman's use of his term 'postdramatic' to refer to key Live Art and Performance Art works in the UK such as Forced Entertainment. She defines 'postdramatic' dramaturgy as a 'dismantling and deconstruction of drama from the inside'.⁹⁶

I see queer writing for theatre in the UK today as engaged in negotiating a balance between how a 'difficult' form that challenges (hetero) normative assumptions about what 'reality' is, can or should directly represent 'lgbt/queer' identity. Queer writing always happens in relation to producers, programmers and directors who both develop and assess their audience and how far they want to be challenged. It is therefore a useful strategy if a queer writer can direct and produce their own work as most artists do within Live Art.

Chapter 1.2: Reflection on first phase of research as practice: Fling

The first phase of this practice as research applying queer theory to playwriting focused on queer sexual identity. I aimed to construct characters who did not think of themselves as minoritized and who were challenged by sexual feelings beyond a simplistic construction of 'homosexual' identity as simply defined by attraction to the same gender. I decided to construct a dramatic situation where opposite sex attraction could be queered when experienced by an identified lesbian and gay man. Although this phase of research was ultimately unsuccessful artistically, it was vital in clarifying my research questions and methodology. It directed the research away from queer sexual identity and towards time and place; it facilitated the first steps towards a practice of writing outside; and it developed the use of a 'wonder-full' voice in relation to everyday and unseen places.

I began this phase of research in the framework of characterological and ‘realist’ dramaturgy partly because, as an ‘apprentice playwright’, I was quite uncritically aligned with the conventional discourse of mainstream theatre culture.⁹⁷ But this choice was also guided by the focus of my reading about queer theory on sexual identity. It is logical that applying queer theory to questions of sexual identity to the production of a new play would produce a characterological play. After attempting a first draft, I reflected this was a more or less uncritical choice and decided I would try again. The next time I aimed to apply a queer theory of sexual identity to ‘realism’. The first act of this version of my attempt, the play Fling, is located at the end of this chapter. The attempt to write Act two and three are located in the appendix, labeled ‘A’.

I aimed to construct a ‘realist’ interior environment, a room that oppressed and trapped a central character, who drives the action of the drama. I also aimed for the action of the drama to be played in ‘real time’. I decided to locate that room in a specific place so that I could investigate ways of ‘rooting’ character in the *mise-en-scène*. Although ‘realist’ dramaturgy emphasizes the importance of place, it is unusual for ‘realist’ plays to specify road names or even towns. It is more common that places in ‘realist’ plays are defined as types of place, for example, a town or village, near the sea or in a particular city. The choice to locate a very specific place (Eltham High Street) led me to start to research this quite mundane place in some detail. Also, I chose this everyday place simply because it happened to be where I was when I began this phase of the research.⁹⁸ So a methodology for writing about queer place began through a method of creating a *mise-en-scène* for a ‘realist’ character.

I researched Eltham High Street by spending time walking up and down it and taking photographs. I tried to look for characteristics that made it unique and that might be oppressive. On this street most of the shops have occupied flats above them and there are a number of public telephones within hearing distance of these homes. I chose to only include this one environmental factor of Eltham High Street in the Fling script. I used the ringing of the public telephone box outside, off stage, as a way of interrupting the flow of drama inside the flat. I tried to construct it as an environmental oppression of the characters that was initially barely perceptible, but became increasingly irritating.

The interrupting telephone also played its part in the dramaturgical construction of 'real time'. I marked this 'real time' in Act 1 by showing that an episode of Friends had begun as the drama of the play begins. As each episode is 30 minutes, including advertising breaks, this would visually demonstrate that the time of the play, which the characters would often refer to, would be the same as an episode of Friends, with advertising breaks.

I chose Friends because it is on television everyday and also aims to represent a 'happy' interior, domestic world. This heteronormative happiness I aimed to contrast with the pessimistic and even nihilistic interior domesticity of Fling. I also constructed the action of cutting "Kate's" long hair to emphasize the 'realness' of time in the performance of the play.⁹⁹ The action of cutting the hair is delayed through the first Act, with the aim the audience begin to wonder if it is the actor's real hair, or

if perhaps it would not be cut, because it would be impossible to cut the actor's hair every night.

"Annie" is the active central character. The action of Act 1 begins with "Annie" in a wretched state because her period has arrived and therefore she has just discovered that she has failed to get pregnant for the second time. She screams three times during this Act. This violent behaviour dramatizes the extremity of feeling that "Annie" is experiencing and it affects everyone around her. "Annie", in the tradition of 'realist' dramaturgy, makes things happen because of her unhappiness. Her screams affect the other characters. She also bullies and seduces "Callum", her best friend, to have sex with her, pushes "Kate" to confront her and then uses this event to leave the relationship and home.

I found that I could not apply queer theory about sexual identity to 'realist' dramaturgical playwriting because I could not create a nihilistic end that I could find creatively satisfying. Canonical 'realist' plays end with a convincing tragedy. The tragedy is usually 'convincing' in terms of the question: 'Could it happen in real life?' However, although Shopping and Fucking and Blasted are often discussed in terms of 'realism', the endings of both of these plays are not convincing (or meant to be) in terms of their reflection of what is probable in life. The 'realism' of the endings of these plays can be understood in poetic terms. Both plays end with the killing of a child, a baby in Blasted and a teenager in Shopping and Fucking. Both of these brutal events also close with an image of feeding, which I interpret to represent a form of resignation and even acceptance that capitalist consumption always continues and 'life goes on'.

The tragic denouements of ‘realist’ plays have traditionally been critically shamed, described as dirty and at the same time impossible or ‘unrealistic’. This is arguably the process that Ibsen refers to at the end of Hedda Gabler when “Judge Brack” says of “Hedda’s” suicide, ‘But, Good God! People don’t do such things!’¹⁰⁰ However, this line is ironic, implying that these things *are* real and *do* happen. Kane also cited the ‘reality’ of the extreme acts of violence that took place during Bosnian civil war (1990s) as the referent for the violence in Blasted.¹⁰¹ However Graham Saunders notes Kane’s ‘wariness’ to define the moral message of the play.¹⁰²

As “Annie’s” desire to become pregnant is the engine of the dramatic action in Fling it is logical that the death of a child could produce a tragic end that would mark it as ‘realist’. I tried to construct a plot that would deliver this event and I tried to guide it with my reading about heteronormative representation of women and lgbt/queer characters.

The killing of a baby by a lesbian mother seemed to be a plot that would obviously reinforce homophobic and sexist stereotypes of lesbian sexuality and women. But, I thought that it might be possible to create an event where a man kills a baby in a normatively ‘feminine’ way: a gay man and father might tragically kill his baby, out of love and mercy, if he believed it would be worse for the baby to live. In order for a character to believe this to be true, I felt they would need to be brutalized. It then seemed to me that the rape of that male character, by a female character, would both be an event that brutalized the character and also reversed the ubiquitous representations of rape of women by men. I constructed the outline of this plot and

tried to write it, but could not make it work. I found that I could not enter imaginatively into the events fully enough. I think that this was most obviously because I had constructed a creative research exercise to follow the dramaturgical rules of ‘realism’. It is easy to see, in retrospect, that creating a research task to ‘follow rules’, particularly when trying to apply a theory of sexual identity about resisting rules, is at least oxymoronic.

I also want to reflect that I struggled to imagine these nihilistic events because the exercise in applying queer theory to explore sexuality and gender through ‘realist’ dramaturgical rules forced me to imagine events that are not putatively ‘real’. This put me, as the writer, into a position of trying to imagine terrible events that are not obviously part of the tragedies of ‘real’ life. I did not find a putatively ‘real’ referent for the violent acts in Fling and I also failed to convince myself that these characters would do these things. Peggy Phelan’s insights resonated: “The paradox of using visibility to highlight invisibility is complex and quite often misfires.”¹⁰³

One unexpected outcome of the process of writing Fling was the discovery of the optimistic character “Jake”. “Jake” is a young Australian and still new to the London suburb. He sees it as interesting and even exotic. “Jake’s” position as a stranger allows him to be open to the new world he finds himself in. I realized that I had found in “Jake” a way of using a hopeful voice to access the normative construction of an everyday place as boring, or worse, without reiterating that understanding. “Jake” was the first time I constructed a comic character through twisting or crossing normative assumptions of what value a specific place has. I used this optimistic voice often as a part of the ‘tone’ of “The Stranger” role in each of the LRE processes.

I have kept the reflection on this phase of research brief, as its primary value was in the way it re-directed the research away from identity and towards place both in queer theory and dramaturgy. In the next chapter I will discuss queer theory of time and place in detail and address how I used it to develop the process I began through Fling of looking at, being in and eventually writing in public, everyday places.

Fling

Annie	40 years old. From Edinburgh originally. It's the day of her 40th birthday party. She and Kate have been together for ten years. They have their own catering business, which that they run out of the back of Kate's fruit and veg shop on Eltham High Street in South East London.
Kate	Is 31 years old and has lived in Eltham all her life.
Jake	19 years old. An Australian traveller and hairdresser.
Callum	40 years old, also from Edinburgh originally. He is a lawyer, now working in New York.

Scene one.

Jake is carrying a worm room.

Jake They're coming along nicely.

He exits and then comes back in and finishes preparing his travelling hairdressers kit. The room above the shop is a cosy mess, with quite a few cardboard fruit boxes stacked in one corner. They've spent a lot of money on the most up to the minute TV and stereo equipment, but there is a slightly run down feeling. The wallpaper isn't very fresh, there aren't any flowers, there are cheap posters in frames on the walls. There is a closed door in one corner, which leads to a kitchen. Kate is drying her hair underneath a towel and standing behind another door down stage. This door leads to the landing. There is a door behind where there is a bathroom and at the end of the landing there are stairs. The stairs leads to the shop or back door. There is a television in the corner showing an episode of 'Friends', the opening credits are at mid-point. Annie comes in through the door and hits Kate with it.

They don't say anything to each other.

Jake Yer slack moll. Annie.

The public telephone outside starts to ring. Annie turns down the volume on the tv, but leaves the episode playing. A dog barks.

Jake Bet that's annoying when yer trying to get some kip.

He begins to brush Kate's long blond hair.

I'm supposed to be going to Uni next year. Animal psychology. Don't laugh. Everyone always laughs when I tell them...I know it sounds funny...but animals have psychology don't they? We're animals too, you know. You don't often think about that. I didn't. And then I did. I thought we're just these apes at the top of the food chain...that's all we are...and I was a bit depressed...at first...coz I sort of always felt that I was more than that...and then I thought if I'm an animal and I don't feel like that's all there is...maybe...actually, apes don't think that's all there is as well...or other animals...and that's when I started watching how Tinker behaved when he thought nobody was watching...Tinker's my dog. Do you ever do that? Do you ever watch animals without them knowing about it? You should try it. It's amazing what you find out. I set up a doggy cam...It was sort of like a home project... and also coz I love Tinker...he was the only one who really understood when Dad died. So I sort of wanted to find out a bit more about him anyway. It's not big stuff...it's not like he's a sexual terrorist or Bob Geldoff. It's mostly arse and bone. It was the way he did the arses and bones, when he thought he was alone. He was more doggy. More

in his own doggy world. More focused. He had a routine as well. I was worried for a while that he was an obsessive compulsive. He does this thing...He turns around three times, every time, before coming back into the housebut only if there wasn't somebody with him...I mean what is that about? But then I thought, he aint off his grub so...it can't be serious.

So...yeah...I'm looking forward to it. I reckon it's gonna be top.

Kate 'ow d'y git 'ere? 286?

Jake Do you want a card?

Kate A card?

Jake Got 'em yesterday. My numbers. Mobile and landline. But mobile's better.

Kate D'y want me to give it to Callum?

She is being knowing.

Jake If you like. You can have one too if you want.

Kate D'y come from Lewisham? That 21 is rubbish these days. Shame it don't go all the way no more. If you're gonna have one fare no matter what the journey, you've got to at least 'ave the option of a long one.

Don't y fink?

Jake I walked

Kate 'king kidding me!

Jake Na mate. Love these back blocks/

Kate /Shit.

I want it all off.

Jake You sure, Moll?

Kate 'king calling me that!

Jake When did you last have a trim?

My love.

She looks at him. He smiles sweetly.

Kate Nor that niver.

He gingerly pulls his fingers through her long hair.

Kate One hundred and four weeks.

Annie Two years...dry as toast.

 She's celebrating.

 I'm celebrating.

 We're all celebrating.

Jake Style?

Kate Just short.

Jake How short?

Kate indicates the first portion of her little finger.

Jake Ok.

 Hoxton?

Kate Fuck off. Just short. Same length, all over. None of that Northern Line ponce.

He lifts up her long hair and twists it into a high pony tail. He takes his scissors to make the first cut.

Jake I always enjoy my trips to Eltham. So much to see and do.

He raises his scissors.

Kate Wait. I'm not ready.

Telephone rings again. This time a Scottish male voice answers.

Callum Yeah. That's right. Keep going. And the more shit and pointless you're aborted suicide of a life becomes, the funnier it is.

Jake Other cunts in London need their hair cutting too. You know.

Kate When I'm ready.

 Are you alright, my love?

Annie puts a pair of knickers in Kate's lap.

Annie Look.

Kate looks. There is a stain of blood in the white pants.

Kate Oh.

Annie That all you can say?

Kate Not now. Not with/

Jake I don't mind. I've heard it and seen it all. Just let me get on with the fucking cut.

Pl...ease!

Kate Make you're self scarce doll.

Jake I'm going at 6. Even if you're only half done. I've got a meeting. You're on a warning ...

Kate Three sugars.

Jake goes into the kitchen. Annie screams.

Kate Calm down.

Annie I'm running out of time here.

I can't see blood...not again.

Kate We'll get there.

Annie We'll not.

Kate I promise.

Annie Fuck you.

Kate Don't take it out on me.

Annie Who else.

Is it *my* fault?

Kate No.

Annie Make it better.

Kate What do you mean?

Annie I mean. Make it better.

Kate It will get better. I/

Annie I hate you.

Kate You don't mean that.

You're upset.

Do you want your present? I ain't wrapped it yet. I could just pop out. Get the paper...from Rosie...she's been keeping it for me in case you found it...why don't you have it now...your present...It's a setback. I know. But we'll get through it.

Annie Are you getting your hair cut or what?

Kate Yeah.

Annie For the party?

Kate Be myself again.

Annie Good.

I...

She screams again.

Two miscarriages and *(She counts)* three false alarms.

Kate Calm down.

Annie Nice birthday present. Just what I've always wanted.

Kate We'll get there.

Annie You don't have to go through this...you don't know.

Kate Love. You don't actually have to...

There ain't no law that says...

Callum enters. Senses the mood and walks to the kitchen. Opens, then shuts the door again.

Callum Who's the totty in the kitchen?

Annie Guess what.

Callum What?

Annie Oh fuck off!

Callum What have I done now?

Kate You been drinking?

Callum I might have had a few beverages with a few old pals. Who put a bug up your ass?

Annie You're not going to be a Dad.

Callum Oh.

Annie Sorry.

 Again.

Callum I thought you said.

 I

 Right.

 Fancy a drink?

Annie Is that all you can say?

 What you got?

Callum opens up the Selfridges bag he is carrying and pulls out a bottle of champagne.

Callum No point wasting it.

Kate Don't open that in here please.

Annie Don't tell me what to do.

 Jake stop hiding out there. Come and do her hair.

The telephone rings downstairs.

Annie I get up in the dark every day, even in summer. I used to like that. The only time in the day its quiet. The whole world belongs to me. Now I imagine what the sun's leaving behind. A desert, a bloody city, melting ice caps and I just think, not another bloody day.

Someone picks up the telephone

Outside Voice Wanker.

And puts it down.

I'm glad I've never had children. It would be so selfish to bring a child into this. What kind of world is this to inherit?

Callum /Jesus Annie. Perhaps if you relaxed. Come here, let Daddy give you a big huggy wug wug

Annie I've managed to turn into my mother, with out even the pleasure of screwing up my own kids.

Callum We can try again.

Annie Oh but we see 'Shelia' and 'the boys' every Sunday night. I visit, with baking. Sunday evening in Shoreham. It's sooo lovely. We all watch a nice Sunday night murder together. The boys sleep off their hangovers. I talk with her mum. About her knees. It's all knees. Knees and fucking knees at the moment. Though that's not always the case, sometimes it's other joints. Wrists, knuckles, hips. She's a martyr to her ligaments. 'Bedroom gets so bleedin' damp'. She says. But it's not. I've checked. She just likes what she calls herself, 'a good moan'.

And I don't mind. That's the worst thing. I don't even mind anymore. I just accept. I don't even really listen. A few stock phrases, 'oh dear', and 'perhaps you should go to the doctor', work. And all the time I'm thinking. Nothing. Not a sausage. Ding dong. Any one home. Ring ring. Pick up. *(It's like she's trying to shake an insect out of her head.)* Blah blah blah. Grrrrr. WWWrrreh!

Sometimes I imagine folding you all up like dough and putting you all in the freezer. Yes, I mean you.

Kate I know you want to take it out on someone. But/

Jake enters

Callum Hallo Jake. You're very cute. I'm Callum. I'm a lawyer. We're having a bit of a...well...

Jake I've only got 25 minutes then I've got to go. And your hair is getting dry.

He picks up a water spray and damps Kate's hair again.

Jake So. What's the big occasion?

Kate Annie's having a birthday party.

Jake That's nice.

Annie /Sometimes I picture myself on a boat. A big boat that smells of diesel and tarpaulin and fish guts and big coils of rope as thick as my arm. I hate London. Pavements and buses. And everyone saying, 'Yeah'. and 'innit' (*She does a south east London accent.*)

I 'ate it.

I want to go home.

She laughs. Thinking and that's funny because it's not there anymore.

Jake You mad? It's bonza. There's so much to do. Everyone's really smart. You can do anything you want 'ere. Nobody gives a shit.

Callum You know what we need.

He opens another bottle. They have one each now.

Annie (*Finishing her glass.*) Innit!

Callum Just like old times.

D'you remember how pissed we got the day we got our exam results?
I saved your life.

Annie Bollocks. I knew what I was doing.

Callum You were totally standing in the wrong place. If you'd have jumped in there you'd have actually killed yourself. Crippled. At least.

I've been chucked. Really. It's not all about you, dear.

Annie You're in a relationship?

Callum He believed in God. Can you believe that! I'd never met anyone my own age, who really believed. Like Adam and Eve. Literally. It was a shame for him. He felt like such a bastard every time he got a hard on. Brilliant in bed. They know what they're on about, those fundamentalists.

Annie Did you want to be the father of my child?

Callum I was defending a member of his church who'd shot his wife. Ross was buddying him. He actually believed he was innocent.

Jesus, Annie. I can't believe I was dating someone who thought gravity was controversial. *(He laughs.)* Daft twat. Sorry. What did you say?

Annie What did he think kept him down?

Callum Love.

Annie laughs.

Then he dumped me for his pastor. Bastard. God it was/

Annie /Did you ever want to be the father of my, our child?

Callum Last October.

Annie Last year?

Callum Year before. When we split up.

Annie I go to church.

Callum Get out of town.

Annie Like old smells, they're comforting and the words you can talk with out thinking...I like that sometimes and just the space to...not think.

Callum I did. *(He is referring to her question about being the father of her child.)* Really.

Annie It's keeping me sane.

Callum I thought it might mean something.

Jake *(To Kate.)* I love Eltham.

Kate It's home.

Jake I know.

You should adopt.

If you don't mind me...you know...I obviously have heard what you're all talking about...being in the same room and all...

I'm adopted. That's why I'm here. Looking for my real mum. Or birth mum...biological mum. That's it.

Then I'm going back to be a zoologist. Like I said.

Kate Thought you said psychologist.

Jake Same difference.

Annie I had this terrible dream last night. She had to wake me up cos I was screaming.

Kate /I *am* here

Annie I think I thought I was like Doctor Who or something. I was doing this, this thing where every seven years I'd change into someone else. You know. When they want to change the actors. And I was going back to my funny old flat. I was living in Victorian times and I couldn't turn on the gas light, so I tried to strike a match and it kept blowing out. And I turned round and there was my new self, waiting for me on the sofa. The match went out again so I got out another one and walked over and in the tiniest flash of light I saw it was me and I was really old and dead and cold like a fish and I realized that this was hell, because I was so dead and still, and at the same time, terrifyingly awake.

 That's when I woke up screaming.

Callum I dreamt that we were walking across the Meadows together last night. Do you remember? The way to dance class?

 Legwarmers and spiky hair.

Annie You had long hair.

Callum What was your girl's name? Tick? Wiget?

Annie She's an MSP now.

Callum Good for her.

Annie More booze.

 I just. I miss you. When you're in New York. Stay here. With me.

Callum Aye. I miss you too.

Annie And I miss home.

Callum Aye.

Annie My folks moved into a residence.

 I think that's desperate.

 Stay here in sunny London. We got room.

Callum Imagine you two living out your twilight years in Eltham's deluxe farm for the mad and incontinent...fun!

Annie I'd rather die.

Kate My family'll always look after us.

Annie Your family.

What about me? What about my family?

(She turns to Callum.) I really am really sorry. I love you. You do know that don't you?

Callum It's not your fault.

Do you want to try again?

They hug tightly and meaningfully.

Annie No.

Maybe.

Kate What are you doing?

They loosen their grip in order to look at each other and kiss.

Annie It's just a kiss.

Annie walks out.

We just lost a baby.

Again.

The telephone rings outside on the street.

Jake I've got one.

He exits. There's the sound of water running, a shower. Annie sighs heavily while she is showering.

Kate I think we were happier when I was drunk all the time.

Callum She loves you.

She sends me long emails about how great you are. How proud she is. How great the business is doing.

She loves you. I know it.

It's a cruel irony...I read that...And I'm telling you that I read it because I do not want to suggest in any way that I might have any subtly or emotional intelligence or depth, so don't quote me, but I did read, somewhere, that it's a 'cruel irony' that the ones you love the most, are the ones you treat the worst. You know. When times are hard.

Kate It's really important I get my hair cut today. I've done it.

I can live again.

From off stage we hear Jake's voice. He puts on a posh school girl voice.

Jake I'm wearing my school uniform. I'm lifting up my skirt. Do you want to see my pants. You do? How did you know that I would answer? Where do you live? Shall I come round and *(he reverts to his normal accent)* and bite off your tiny dick?

Kate I used to be bad.

Callum I'm sure that's not true.

Kate Does stuff to yer.

I've learned to forgive myself.

I had to ask for a lot of forgiveness.

Callum Not me. I've always been able to hold my drink.

Kate That must be nice for you.

Callum Annie? You alright baby?

Kate Don't call her/that.

Annie *(False note)* /I'm fine. Just getting out the shower.

Callum Ok.

She'll be alright.

Kate I know.

Jake enters pleased with himself.

Jake Did you hear me?

Kate 'ear what?

Jake Nevermind.

He begins to spray her hair again with water, then twists the long hair again into a pony tail. He's just about to cut it when Annie enters in her bra and pants, pulling a toweling dressing gown around her and with wet hair brushed back.

Annie Stop.

Are you cutting it for me or for yourself?

Kate I know you don't like it.

Annie Aye. But that's not the point. I want to know if you are cutting it for me or for yourself.

Kate Both. 'spose.

Annie Don't do anything for me. Eh?

Kate What do you mean by that?

Annie If you fancy a drink, help yourself.

Kate Don't you

Annie I would hate to be the reason you do anything.

Kate Why don't you go out for a walk?

...

Or eat an oat cake?

Jake Does that work?

Callum/Kate Yep.

Kate Every time.

Annie I think I might need a bit more than an oat cake.

Jake When I'm feeling a bit down a nice Mars Bar normally does the trick. My mum says bananas are the thing. It's the potassium. Or an alligator pear

Annie I am not 'a bit down'. (*Screaming.*) I'm at the end of my tether!

Kate Just wait here, Jake, for ten minutes. I'll be back. I'm just popping out.
Back in a jiffy. Ok.

Jake Ok. But I'm out of here at 6. Ok.

Kate Ok.

Jake And I'll still want paying!

Jake looks at his watch.

Kate takes off her towel and exits, long wet hair flying behind her.

Callum Where's she going?

Annie Fuck knows.

Callum You were hard on her.

Annie You don't know the half of it.

Jake She's alright your Mrs.

Can I 'ave some of that.

Annie gestures towards the floor where the champagne is.

Annie I am empty.

Callum Have some more.

Annie That's just not going to do it for me.

Callum What can I do?

Annie Hold me.

They embrace. Annie tries to kiss Callum.

Callum What you doing?

Annie Kissing.

Callum Why?

Annie Because I want to

Callum I don't think that's a very good idea. Do you?

Annie Why not?

Callum I don't want to kiss you. Sweetheart.

Like that.

Annie You sure?

Callum Yes.

Annie Just one kiss. That's all I want. Can't you pretend? Just for a minute? Pretend I'm Jake. That you really want me. I know. I'm your God boy from Alabama and you're in love with me.

Callum Brooklyn.

Annie Can't you just pretend, for a moment that you really love me?

Callum I um...Annie. /Why don't you sit

Annie I just miss, that feeling. That first kiss feeling.

It's a game. Isn't that what you always say. It doesn't mean anything. It's all just a game.

But I'm losing. Cal.

I just want to imagine that I am winning, just for one kiss. Is that alright?

It's just a game.

Callum Uh huh.

He kisses her very quickly.

Annie Come on. Don't be a spoil sport.

Just one long kiss. Hold it for at least 10 seconds.

Jake. Do you want to kiss me?

Jake Alright.

Annie Yeah. Well. I don't want to kiss you.

I want to kiss my best friend Callum.

The Daddy.

You won't say anything. Will you Jake? You're not going to rat me out, are you?

In fact, I know, why don't you go and feed the dog. If you go into the back yard there's a nice big doggy you can play with there. His name is Beth. There are some biscuits by the back door.

Jake Is there really a dog?

Annie I promise.

Annie takes a hand mirror from a handbag and looks at her eyes. She stretches the skin around them. She takes Callum's hand and brings his face opposite hers. Making him look at her.

Annie You've got gold streaks in your irises.

Callum Really?

Annie At least they're natural.

Here. Look.

She gives him the mirror.

Annie See.

Callum Yes.

Annie You're very beautiful.

Callum I know.

Annie I am. Don't you think?

Callum Yes.

Annie I used to be so ugly. Do you remember at school? All that spikey hair, NHS glasses, braces, skin and bones.

I blossomed in London.

And I made the most of it.

Callum About last night.

Annie Why is it that when you sleep with hundreds of men you think it's great, but when I slept around I just got depressed?

Callum Perhaps you're a better person than me.

Annie I don't think that's true. Do you?

Callum No.

Annie *(To Callum)* What did your god boy from Alabama look like?

Callum Brooklyn.

Annie What did he look like?

Callum Tall. Dark red hair. Very short. You know. Army style. Fair skin. Blue eyes.

Annie Nice.

Callum Yes.

Annie Oh my God!

Callum What?

Annie Did you 'like fall for him'?

She laughs. Callum laughs.

Callum No.

A bit. Maybe.

Annie reaches out and touches his hand and then moves up to touching his face.

Annie I know. I understand you. If anyone does. I do.

She kisses him.

Callum I don't think that's a good idea.

Annie Why not?

Callum Err. Well. For a start Kate will be back, any second,

Annie Exciting isn't it? Bad.

Callum And Jake's only just downstairs

Annie Yes.

Callum And I don't fancy you.

Annie I can make you want me.

Callum And you don't really fancy me.

Annie Yes I do.

Callum It'll be a disappointment. I promise.

You're having some kind of breakdown.

Annie No. I'm having some kind of coming up.

Up for air.

Callum Let me get you a drink.

Annie You don't think I'm beautiful?

Callum Yes. I do. You're gorgeous. Just not my thing.

Annie I didn't realise you were so conventional.

Callum Is this a joke? It's a joke. Isn't it?

Annie Uh huh.

What about Suzy McTalbert?

Callum That's not admissable evidence.

Annie Like riding a bike...I hear.

Callum It's hot.

She puts her hand between his legs.

Callum It's a perfectly normal reaction.

Annie Don't you like it?

Callum No.

She's just outside.

Probably.

She might be listening.

Annie You hate her.

Callum Yes.

Annie Do you remember your first time? Do you remember you came running round to tell me. You were so proud.

You were strutting round my room like a fucking cockerel, just because that dirty old man wanked you off.

Who says firsts have to stop happening just because you're grown up? This is just another first. Just like that one.

I've got to be true to how I feel.

So do you. See.

You want me to stop?

Callum No.

They start to have sex.

Annie Did you know I followed you one day? I followed you after school. To the dunes.

Callum Shit Annie.

Annie I saw you meet up with Mr Fitzpatrick. I saw him giving you money. I saw you wiping your mouth, down in the dunes. You were my boyfriend. You weren't supposed to go to the dunes. You could have at least taken me with you. Don't you think? Since we were pals. But at the same time. You looked so beautiful, in your drain pipe jeans and long hair. I looked more like a boy than you, then. I could have gone with you.

I want you so much. I've wanted you ever since you got here. As soon as I asked you to be the daddy. You know, last night, you kissed me. I'm pregnant. I said. And you kissed me. And I felt so whole and so did you.

They stop moving, Annie stays where she is for a moment.

I love you so much.

Then she kisses him on the forehead and laughs.

Annie Don't know why I said that.

Weird. Huh?

Jake *(From outside. Over loud.)* Kate. You're back. Everything alright?

Annie *(She gets off Callum)* Let's not talk about it.

They sit for a moment in silence.

The telephone rings outside. Kate answers

Annie This is our secret. Uh huh?

Kate No, you're not. You're not. Look. This is a public telephone. You've got the wrong number. He's not here.

Callum Sure doll.

 Whatever you say.

Kate comes in. She sees Annie's knickers on the floor. She looks at them. She knows what it means. But doesn't believe it. She picks them up and puts them in a laundry bag.

Kate I know you're upset. But you can at least pick up after yourself.

Annie Yes Kate.

Kate Callum. Could you give us a moment's privacy? Do you think?

Callum Sure doll.

Kate Ta.

Annie You don't have to go anywhere.

Callum Sure.

Callum exits.

Kate gets down on one knee.

Kate I was going to save this for the party tonight. But here.

Kate hands a small wrapped up box to Annie.

Annie You've got to be fucking joking.

Kate unwraps it for her.

Kate I thought...

 I thought that was what you wanted. You've been asking for years.

A Tiffany box is revealed.

Annie What I wanted...you think that a bit of metal from Samuel Taylors is going to make me feel better?

Kate It's from...look...it's expensive...I ordered it from...

Annie I don't care.

Kate Are you leaving me?

The sound of a dog barking from downstairs.

Annie Get your hair cut.

I like it short.

Jake. Put down that dog and get your arse in here.

Jake enters, looking at his watch. Annie exits. He twists Kate's long hair into a pony tail above her head and cuts through it near to the base.

Jake Did you used to have it really short?

I bet it suited you. You've got a good face for short hair. Handsome.

I like working with hair, cos people are so sensitive 'bout it. Sometimes I do a great cut and the client bursts into tears and I'm like Moll what's wrong? Cos I know there ain't nothing wrong with my cut. And they're all *(pretends to weep)* I don't know. I just don't look at myself much these days. Or, I don't recognize myself. Or, like with you, it's more a symbolic thing, ain't it? You're trying to go back to a more innocent time.

I'll clipper it at the back. Nice and tidy.

I think you two would be great mums. Look how you've looked after me.

Kate We ain't done nuffin really.

Jake You've been great. I don't even want to find my real mum anymore. You two have been so brilliant.

So. Are you going on holidays at all this year?

Kate Maybe. We're thinking about visiting Callum, fly to New York, hire a car, drive over to San Francisco, drive down to Mexico, even.

Nice dream.

Always wondered what it would be like to be really hot.

Jake I don't like it.

Prefer the drizzle. Dad always reckoned I was queer like that.

Never liked sitting on the beach, or cooking barbies.

Maybe it's because I'm a Londoner.

Kate But you ain't.

Jake I am. By blood.

Kate No one's a Londoner like that. It aint an 'effnic' thing.

Jake Why not?

Kate I don't know. It just ain't.

Jake I don't see why not. I like fish and chips, I like the rain. I even like eels.

Kate No one likes fucking eels.

You'll be telling me you're a Cockney next.

Jake My mum was born in Bow.

Kate So was I. And I aint a Cockney. Jake. Don't chase after somefing what don't even exist.

Jake Alright. *(He finds himself hilarious)*

Keep your hair on!

He shows her the back and sides with a mirror.

Kate What d'y think?

Jake I think you look great.

Kate Better start ringing people to cancel.

Jake starts packing up his equipment.

Jake What did the phone want?

Kate Jesus Gonzalez

Jake Shame. Init.

Kate She's leaving me.

Jake Naa. She loves you. She's just got to get it outta 'er system. Then you'll be cooking with gas. Promise. I don't reckon all that with Callum means anything.

Kate All what with Callum?

Jake Nothing.

Kate Jake?

Jake She just wants to make you jealous.

Kate What?

He shuts his bag.

Jake Right. That's me. I'm off.

See you eh?

You'll need to have another trim in about four weeks if you want it to stay looking cool.

He gives her a big hug and kisses her on the cheek.

Love you. Mum.

Kate Fuck off.

The titles for the news silently comes up on the TV screen. Kate sits watching it in silence. Annie comes back in dressed for a party.

Annie You ready?

Kate I was just about to call everyone.

Annie Why?

Kate We're not 'aving a party now...are we?

Annie Why not?

I spent all week cooking for it.

Kate But you're leaving me.

Annie No. I'm not. I'm not leaving you. What would I do without you?

I'm sorry. I'm tired. I'm mad. I'm upset. I just want to go to the party, dance, have a laugh, forget all about this shit. I don't need to have a kid. You're right. There's no law that says I have to.

Think of all the freedom we'd be missing out on. We'd have to do all the school thing and the growing pains and it would be a nightmare. Look at our friends with kids. They're all knackered. They never go out and most of them never have sex...most of them don't even like each other any more.

Look at Nancy and Caroline. They're barely speaking to each other except in front of the kids. We'd be better off with out them.

Kate Perhaps you'd stay with me if you had Dustbin lids.

Annie I want to stay with you anyway.

Kate Then why did you do it?

Do you fink I'm fick?

Annie No. But

Kate What?

Annie You turn a blind eye.

Quite easily.

Don't you think?

Annie goes into the bedroom. The telephone rings. Someone picks it up.

Outside Voice No. No. No.

The telephone is slammed down. Annie enters with a plastic bag, with some clothes in it. She has a toothbrush in her hand and a half used tube of paste. She looks at Kate for a moment. The telephone starts to ring again. Annie exits. The door to the street slams. The telephone rings. We hear it being picked up.

Annie's voice off.

Annie Yes. I completely agree with you.

She hangs up the phone.

Chapter 2: Where and when is queer?

I address in this chapter how shifting the focus of queer theorizing from identity to time and space makes it easier to think about queerness across a range of scales of effects and affects in material, everyday places. This shift helps to create conceptual space between the binary, (either ‘in’ or ‘out’) of the closet. It builds on Michael Foucault’s insight that to claim the name ‘homosexual’ is to engage in a reverse discourse that reinforces a heterosexist binary. I investigated this theory in practice by writing in the same place in public for prolonged periods of time and found that queerness could be odd, eccentric, imaginative, strange, dangerous and wonder-full. I will contextualize this spectrum of queerness in time and space theoretically through key works by Sara Ahmed, Jon Binnie, Judith Butler, Michael Foucault, Judith Halberstam and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.

Detaching queerness from sexual identity

Judith Halberstam describes below how queerness can be detached from sexual identity. She shifts towards thinking of time and place as another means to understand the threat of homosexuality:

Queer uses of time and space develop, at least in part, in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction. They also develop according to other logics of location, movement, and identification. If we try to think about queerness as an outcome of strange temporalities, imaginative life schedules, and eccentric economic practices, we detach queerness from sexual identity and come closer to understanding Foucault’s comment in ‘Friendship as a Way of Life’ that ‘homosexuality threatens people as a ‘way of life’ rather than as a way of having sex’.¹

Halberstam suggests that queerness is theorized as *use of* time and space. This frames queerness as an active relationship between human subject, time and place. A queer

use of time and space would resist the logics of normative power in relation to family reproduction and how that supports capitalist structures of time and space.

Halberstam offers a range of kinds of queerness in relation to time and space: ‘strange temporalities, imaginative life schedules, and eccentric economic practices’. The kinds of difference that ‘strangeness’, ‘imagination’ and ‘eccentricity’ represent are often tolerated and even valued by normative culture particularly if they contribute to economic wealth. Artists, for example, are often culturally encouraged to be strange and even to live dangerously, as part of the image that helps to sell their work. But Halberstam only conceives of strangeness *as queer* if it is resisting the normative and mutually supportive logics of family reproduction and capitalist economics.

Strangeness, imagination and eccentricity can be understood to be in the middle ranges of resistance to (hetero) normativity. This spectrum of effects and affects finds its limit and definition in what Judith Butler calls the abject horizon. The abject horizon is a boundary created in relation to survival, life and death. What is beyond the abject horizon is that which (hetero) normativity can not tolerate to exist or be ‘real’.

Sara Ahmed adds to that definition a queer use of time and space that is queerly ‘wonder-full’. Ahmed describes how wonder can dislodge the familiarity of the everyday:

[W]onder directed at the objects that we face, as well as those that are behind us, does not involve bracketing out the familiar but rather allows the familiar to dance again with life.²

Ahmed uses queer-wonder to reveal the potential strangeness of everyday objects and to see how (hetero) normative power smoothes strange-queerness into a politically neutral background. Wonder, like strangeness, is arguably in the middle ranges of queer uses of time and space. Butler's concept of an 'abject horizon' is primarily of a negating boundary of death, survival and what can be tolerated as 'real'. Ahmed's addition of wonder to the spectrum of queer uses of time and space reminds me that something that is not 'real', something that is impossible, can also be framed as magic, fantasy, dream, myth and even as divine.

As queerness emerges across a range of scales (from the odd/strange/eccentric-queerness to the 'wonder-full'-queerness and the abject-queerness) it becomes more possible to theorize how queerness can resist (hetero) normativity in particular places. Michael Foucault argues in The History of Sexuality that power reaches the individual through the most tenuous and barely perceptible paths and routes:

[M]y main concern will be to locate the forms of power, the channels it takes, and the discourses it permeates in order to reach the most tenuous and individual modes of behavior, the paths that give it access to the rare or scarcely perceivable forms of desire, how it penetrates and controls everyday pleasure.³

My 'civic couch' process aims to research in specific material places the description of power in space that Foucault constructs here. Foucault's description of the 'tenuous' delicacy of the ways that power controls the everyday, can be understood to give significant value to small scenes in ordinary places, such as a friend greeting another in the street with a kiss. When he writes of 'scarcely perceivable forms of desire' I think of the way one body's orientation towards another can show togetherness and partnership even at a distance. Through the 'civic couch' process I experienced a specific place in a way that is beyond the normalizing framework of the

‘everyday’ and ‘ordinary’. In this way the process begins to construct a queer time and place where the ‘scarcely perceivable’ connections of power can be seen more clearly.

Foucault suggests friendship as a way of resisting heterosexism, through practice, rather than within the lgbt/queer politics of sexual identity. Perhaps Foucault suggests friendship because its connection to the great routes and discourses of power are not so clearly defined. Friendship offers indirect routes of resistance because it is outside civil, social and legal institutions such as marriage. It takes part in, but is not defined by, the institutions of home and work. Friendship arguably is also located most often in public social spaces, as ‘time out’ from the duties of home and work. Foucault perhaps also chooses ‘friendship’ because he sees the happiness (of friendship) between homosexuals as more disturbing to (hetero) normativity than sex.

Didier Eribon writes that Foucault returns twice to the scene of two men holding hands in a public, heterosexist time and space:

In a 1978 interview [Foucault] states: ‘If people see two guys go off together to sleep in the same bed, that’s tolerable, but if the next morning the two get up smiling, if they hold hands, that’s unforgivable. It’s not leaving to go have fun together that’s unbearable, it’s getting up happy the next morning’. [...] In 1982 [Foucault] says the same thing, but he has replaced the expressions ‘being happy together’ or ‘economy of pleasures’ with the notion of a ‘style of life’: ‘I think that what most bothers those who are not gay about gayness is the style of gay life, not sex acts themselves’.⁴

Eribon very usefully puts these two interviews together to point out the development of Foucault’s terms from ‘happiness’ to ‘style’ as the way a same-sex couple can de-naturalize the invisible, or ‘scarcely perceivable’ operations of power through discourses of sexual identity. If a same-sex couple has sex that fits the normative

discourses of sexual identity because at the definitional centre of sexual identity is 'the fact of sex'. But if a same-sex couple are happy, as in Foucault's example, or have a style, then their queerness is shifted from their private sexual activity as a couple, towards their way of being together in a public (heteronormative) place.

I re-named the public bench I wrote on a 'civic couch' to mark the queer style of this practice. Re-naming it pointed to the potential of the bench beyond being an invisible 'everyday' object. Writing on a public bench for long periods of time often made me 'stick out' as strange in the smooth flow of each place. Occasionally, during the day and often at night, it became more than strange for me to write, or even simply be on a public bench. I sometimes felt it was dangerous for me to be on a bench for too long because I was vulnerable and/or passive. But I also felt that the practice actively turned me against the usual mode of behaviour in those places: my presence was an irritant to the smooth flow of everyday life. This became at times threatening to the normative flow of power in a place and could produce defensive responses from other people in those streets. This process constructed me as having a queer style, not because I *am* queer or lesbian, but because I was not behaving in a normal way, in those specific places. It is particularly strange for a woman to sit on a bench writing on her own at night and in this way it was related to the (hetero) normative construction of my sexuality as a woman.

Judith Butler argues that anyone whose acts put 'civilizing norms into question'⁵ is working material at the limit of what can be known through experience, or the abject horizon. Butler argues this way of working the material limit is 'style', echoing Foucault's proposal that the homosexual 'style of life', rather than sex, is more

threatening to heterosexism. The ‘civic couch’ process shows that a queer use of time in a place, even an act as simple and apparently harmless as sitting and writing on a public bench for too long, can put a civilizing norm at risk. This process began to reveal the construction of the apparent neutrality of everyday places. I began to think that representing this strange-queerness on stage could be a way of creating in performance an indirect resistance to the binary constructions of hetero/homosexuality.

Foucault revealed the need for indirect resistance to the hetero/homosexual binary through his deconstruction of the discourses of sexuality. Foucault’s key argument in The History of Sexuality is that there has been a ‘great process of transforming sex into discourse’.⁶ He analyses sexual identities as historical constructions and thereby destabilizes the concept, or assumption, of an essential sexual identity. The foundation of successful lgbt civil rights campaigns are arguably built on the essentialist argument that ‘we are born homosexual and therefore we have the same rights as any other human being’. Foucault recognizes the achievements of homosexual activists but his objective is to dismantle ‘sexuality’ itself.⁷

Foucault creates the term the ‘repressive hypothesis’ to discuss the paradox of the proliferation of discourses about the repression of (homo) sexuality and the oxymoronic practice of western sexual identity that ‘speak(s) verbosely of its own silence’.⁸ He terms the practice of speaking and acting against a repressive power a ‘reverse discourse’. Foucault cites the 1870 publication by Carl Westphal on ‘contrary sexual sensations’ as the ‘date of birth’ of homosexuality.⁹ It then followed in an almost instantaneous response to the creation of ‘homosexuality’ that some Victorian

men and women embraced the identity of the 'homosexual' as their own. The naming of this identity allowed for the articulation of the injustice done to it. 'Homosexuals' as an identified 'people' now had a language with which to fight their oppression. As Annamarie Jagose points out, it is 'no accident' that the homophile movement of the late nineteenth century began as 'homosexuality crystallized as an identity'.¹⁰ The homophile strategy is *directly* resistant to the repression of sexuality and therefore, Foucault argues, re-affirms the dominant centrality and logics of that power. Foucault's notion of the 'reverse discourse' challenges queer activists (and others) to create *indirect* strategies of resistance.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that Foucault makes an 'implicit promise' in The History of Sexuality to step 'outside the repressive hypothesis, to forms of thought that would not be structured by the question of prohibition in the first place'.¹¹ However, the repressive hypothesis itself, Sedgwick argues, also continues to reiterate that binary in an 'insoluble loop' of ever more abstract theorizing.¹²

A key objective for Sedgwick's two foundational texts in queer theory, Epistemology of the Closet and Tendencies, is to denaturalize binary metaphysics. Sedgwick points to the incoherence in discourses of sexuality that use the term 'homo' meaning same, to describe what is different to the norm. 'Hetero' then, which means 'different', describes what is the same/alike and 'therefore' normal. She argues that the term 'homosexual' as a binary concept is paradoxically minoritizing and universalizing and has not changed very much since it came into use. The idea of homosexual identity is still minoritizing because it proposes 'there is a distinct population of persons who 'really are' gay'¹³ and universalizing because it constructs sexual desire as

unpredictable and influenced by a spectrum of object choices. Foucault's theory of the repressive hypothesis is particularly valuable because it makes it possible to theorize the mechanics of how individuals identify themselves, particularly in relation to where they are in time.

Sedgwick applies Foucault's challenge to see how barely perceivable routes of power construct identity, by deconstructing normative alignments of power in public time and space. Her analysis of Christmas, for example, shows how everyday times and places are created as invisible backgrounds in our lives. At Christmas the church and state are particularly influential participants in an alignment of different institutions that all 'speak with one voice'¹⁴ through legal holidays, school holidays and even special postage stamps. There is also the commercial system which joins advertising, the food industry, the entertainment industry and manufacturers with the stock market fluctuations over Christmas. The news is about Christmas, families are also called upon to be and speak in a particular way at Christmas: 'They all- religion, state, capital, ideology, domesticity, the discourses of owner and legitimacy- line up with each other so neatly once a year'.¹⁵

Sedgwick very effectively de-naturalizes Christmas by listing and thereby separating the different institutions that line up together to deliver the same or mutually load-bearing messages: that families should be together, be happy, celebrate and spend money. The image she uses of the 'lining up' of institutions focuses on an effect of perspective and points to the embodied subject in time and space: if one's eye is aligned with a series of objects, which are also all aligned, then it can seem that you are looking at only one thing. If you step to the side, the objects, although still aligned

with each other, will fan out, separately and in clearer sight for the viewer. In this way the alignment of things (such as a Christmas dinner and ‘being part of a happy family’) can control where the subject is: whether s/he is aligned or not and therefore whether s/he is queer or not in relation to the trajectory of alignment.¹⁶ I find this image helpful for understanding Sedgwick’s statement that ‘there are important senses in which ‘queer’ can signify only *when attached to the first person*’.¹⁷ For Sedgwick ‘queer’ is an embodied and emplaced subject position in resistance to, and ‘sticking out’ from, the normative alignments of things.

Sedgwick also deconstructs the familiar but ‘compromised metaphor of *in* and *out* of the closet of privacy’.¹⁸ ‘The closet’ creates the dichotomous spaces of in and out. That dichotomy is then aligned with other binaries, such as personal/political or homo/hetero. The metaphor of the closet, she writes, ‘dramatiz(es) certain features of linguistic performativity’.¹⁹ If you say ‘I am homosexual’ you act out in your life the performance of ‘coming out’ that the closet metaphor demands and thereby perform the normative discourse of sexuality. Sedgwick argues the binary discourse of the in/out and public/private is so profoundly rooted in western metaphysics that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, not to be orientated by it in everyday life.

Sedgwick addresses Foucault’s aim to dismantle sexuality, as she both refuses to understand sexuality as only organized around opposite-sex object choice and makes space to think about other non-gendered object choices. However, she does not want to ‘displace same-sex orientated sexuality from queer’s definitional centre’,²⁰ not least because of the research she cites about the percentages of teenage suicides related to sexuality. She sees the most exciting work in queer theory arising from the

possibilities to be considered if queer identity ‘spins’ away from the homo/hetero binary of sexuality. In her 2008 introduction to Epistemology of the Closet she reaffirms the power of the binary thinking and argues that queerness must resist ‘treating homo/hetero-sexual categorization – still so very volatile an act – as a done deal’.²¹

I chose to look for queerness in public outside places partly because of the role of those kinds of places in the in/out dichotomy of the discourse of sexuality. In some ways this was an ‘acting out’ of the metaphor of the closet: the writing, which had previously been about identity and practiced in private, was now about space and time and was literally ‘out’ in the street. I also did this because I wanted to create a dramaturgy structured around queerness in a place an audience would be able to easily share and access. I needed the place to be exoteric.

All the ‘civic couch’ processes have, so far, been pursued in urban environments, but that is not because I exclude the possibility of finding queerness in rural or wild environments. I hope these will be the kinds of places my research goes on to engage with in the future.

Queer local places in the world

The local is sometimes constructed as separate or opposed to the global. A specific place, such as a public bench, is usually understood to be in the sphere of the ‘local’. Through the ‘civic couch’ process I explored how local places are *in* the world if, for no other reason, you can go anywhere in the world from a public bench both

materially and imaginatively. The 'civic couch' process also facilitated a process of making connections between a local place and the discourses of global capitalism.

It is arguably through the local that queer theory most productively connects with cultural materialist theorizing about queer sexual identity. Alan Sinfield writes in 2005 of his 'unease about the (queer) project of living without a socially grounded identity'²² and Jeffery Weeks argues that transformation of the global is achieved through local grassroots actions.²³ Material experience on a local bench can be cited and sited as tangible but it is, when looked at closely, always changing and therefore refuses easy returns to the actual ground for ontological stability.

Halberstam establishes in the introduction to A Queer Time and Place that dominant postmodernist thinking regards gender or sexuality as irrelevant to questions of time and space. Halberstam engages with Edward Soja, Fredric Jameson and David Harvey, whom she considers the canonical postmodern geographers. She writes, '[T]he Foucault who inspires the postmodern Marxist geographers is clearly the Foucault of Discipline and Punish, but not that of The History of Sexuality'.²⁴ Marxist postmodern geographers, she argues, 'actively excluded sexuality as a category for analysis' and privileged a Marxist analysis as the '“real” work of activism'.²⁵ A particularly clear example of how sexuality is part of capitalist globalization can be seen in the post-cold war phenomenon of the globalization of the sex industry, facilitated by the reduction of the costs of transportation and the extraordinary advances in digital communications.²⁶

Halberstam draws on Steve Pile's and Anna Tsing's critique of the significance given in postmodern geography to the global rather than the local. They consider it to be a mechanism that puts the body and the personal, with the local, as an improper frame of reference within general discussions of capitalist globalisation. Halberstam also notes that 'the local becomes mistrusted as 'place bound,' reactionary, and even fascist' when discussed exclusively in relation to capital.²⁷

The globalization of capitalism is clearly a dominant practice enacted every day and night in public places in the UK. The 'civic couch' process led me to think that I became most strangely and dangerously queer in relation to global capitalism, because I was writing on a public bench for no obvious reason within that discourse. I was not shopping, or resting, or waiting and, as I was writing rather than drawing, it was not possible for passers by to look over my shoulder and see I was engaged in arts practice. However, if people did ask me what I was doing, I could explain. I always tried to use any enquiry into my activity as a way to find out what they knew or thought about that particular place.²⁸

Geographers who have applied queer theory to questions of time and place address the material consequences of excluding sexuality from debates about globalization. Cindy Patton and Benigno Sánchez-Eppler's book Queer Diasporas demonstrates how effective queer geography can be at troubling normative constructions of globalization through detailed readings of specific cultural and national identities and sexuality.²⁹ Jon Binnie also provides a very useful overview of how normative western sexual discourses extend across international borders and through global time and space. He shows how the globalization of white, western homonormative

identities can also oppressively direct the values and ways of being in local places all over the world. In particular, he shows how certain cities are marketed to western homonormative identities as ‘queer-friendly’.

Binnie recognizes Dennis Altman as the critic who has done the most to put questions of globalization into sexualities studies. He also criticizes him for too simply representing gay consumers as ‘dupes of the capitalist system’³⁰ and offers Nina Wakeford’s work on queer communities in cyber space as ‘a much more nuanced approach’.³¹ Wakeford acknowledges how local or personal economic differences make a difference to accessing technology and how that is making new constructs of intimacy and space and collapsing spatial scales. Fears about a global ‘McPink’³² must be tempered, Binnie argues, with what we know about the local as a time and place; that it is unique and always changing.

Binnie also criticizes the globalization of queer theory because ‘the dominant methodologies of poststructuralism in the United States academy have almost emptied these disciplines of any attention to the histories of colonialism and of race’.³³ As queer theory is applied to geography and questions around race, nation and globalization, theorists must be careful not to be tempted to universalize the queer subject. Binnie very usefully gives the example of how ‘‘progress’ on lesbian and gay rights has become necessary for the admission of the would-be accession countries such as Romania into the European Union’.³⁴

Massey points towards artistic practice as another way to imagine space, rather than through the local/global dichotomy, when she shows that art has historically

outstripped science's ability to confront and accept 'randomness and openness' in space.³⁵ She suggests that we might imagine space as, 'a simultaneity of stories-so-far'.³⁶ The 'civic couch' process confronts, accepts and tries to record the randomness and openness of local space. This is always a partly unsuccessful attempt because there are an infinite amount of stories that can be recorded at any time in any place. The stories and events I do record can also always be followed from the most miniscule objects and textures, in that local place, to other material places on the other side of the globe or even to outer space. They can also be followed imaginatively to other conceptual places or other times in the far off past or future.

How light queers place

I used the 'civic couch' process to experience and think about how the familiarity of the day and night cycles of light takes part in the construction of normative temporal use of everyday public places. Nighttime traditionally makes an apparently neutral place become more strange, more exciting, more fun and more dangerous. Lives lived outside of bourgeois temporal/spatial norms of family, home and financial security make queer use of places, particularly at nighttime.

Outside urban places, at night, are used mostly by clubbers, drinkers, drug users, people who sell sex and the homeless. These are uses of time and space in relation to physical risk. The nighttime is traditionally connected to danger and threat because it is physically more difficult to see objects one might fall off, bump into or trip over. Darkness can also hide people who might be trying to do you harm. The times of 'civic twilight', whether dawn or dusk, are the moments when the sun is between six and zero degrees either respectively above or below the horizon. If there are no

streetlights, this is the time when objects begin or stop being visible. Traditionally, this is when public activity begins or ends. So ‘civic times’ are traditionally defined in civic space by light in relation to threat and safety.

Ahmed uses a small scene in The Well of Loneliness to illustrate how queerness, when located at night, is constructed as wretchedness, in relation to the unthinking happiness of the (hetero) normative subject, who does not or can not see how familiar time and place is constructed. She describes “Adolphe Blanc”, a Jewish man in a Parisian nightclub, during the first world war, talking to “Stephen”, the protagonist of the novel:

[T]here are happy people who sleep the sleep of the so-called just and righteous. When they wake it will be to persecute those who, through no fault of their own, have been set apart from the day of their birth [...] they are thoughtless, these happy people who sleep.³⁷

Ahmed argues that heterosexual happiness can be constructed through the unthinking (unconscious) and therefore naturalized exclusion of its others. Those who are not ‘in’ (hetero) normativity are also physically outside the home, out at night. ‘Outside’ then has to be an abject and unhappy place for the happiness of ‘inside’ to make sense metaphysically. Unhappiness originally meant ‘causing misfortune or trouble’. Later Ahmed goes on to state it meant ‘wretched in mind’.³⁸ Ahmed writes that the historical meaning of the word ‘wretched’ signifies the exile or stranger. Being strange in relation to a place can construct someone as a stranger. But she argues, inspirationally, the political potential of wretchedness might be that it can estrange us from the (easy and unthinking) happiness of the familiar.

Nighttime defamiliarizes everyday places. We do not, for example, often describe ordinary places at night as ‘everynight’. Night and day are ways that we measure time. They are also the effects of the physical structure of the universe: the Earth moves around the Sun. But normative poetics construct those physical effects dichotomously, so that night and day come to signify good and evil, safety and danger, open and hidden, work and play, asexual and ‘sexy’, straight and queer.³⁹

Days and nights are more complex and varied than the light/dark mechanism of a light switch. The in-between time of dusk or dawn, for example, lasts for vastly different lengths of time, at different times of the year, in different places in the world. I would argue the variety of amounts and qualities of light are as varied as there are different places, weather conditions and people to experience them. For example, the ‘average’ human eye needs three to five photons to see in the dark. So different eyes see differently, literally and philosophically. The ability of different animals to see light waves that are entirely beyond the human spectrum also indicates there are many other ways of seeing, and therefore thinking about, how time and space might be measured by light on earth.

Light also has physical effects on the way bodies feel in and cope with different environments. For example, an environment is experienced very differently around 4 am, when melatonin, the light-sensitive chemical that is released in the brain and regulates waking and sleeping, is at its lowest point in the day/night cycle. The destabilization of a melatonin cycle, which is experienced if we miss a night’s sleep or take a long-haul flight across several times zones, can extremely affect someone’s well-being and their sense of what *feels* real, normal or familiar.

My practice as research showed that there are queerer times of the day and night in public and that they lead from one to another. The queerest time and place to write outside on a public bench is arguably 4 am, particularly if it is raining. I chose not to write on benches during the times that felt the queerest mainly for the physical reason that it was too uncomfortable (and almost impossible to write in the rain, even with an umbrella). There was also the biological reason that I was too tired and disorientated to write. Finally, there was the social reason that this was the time of night when there were the least people in that place: there was more risk of being attacked at this time of night because I was on my own.

This practice as research led me to experience a range of scales of queerness in different times and places. Almost insignificant oddness and eccentricity might not be noticed and if it is, can be perceived as charming or harmless. Eccentricity can become strangeness, which has more potential to threaten the familiar. I could see how remaining in the same place for too long would become socially intolerable. This might be expressed through violence and physically making the strange-queer subject leave that place. It might also frame the queer subject as insane and use a discourse of care to remove that person from that public space. It would also be intolerable for the queer subject's own body to stay in one place for too long before they became seriously ill and even died. In the following chapter I discuss this spectrum of queerness in more detail, in the context of the writing that I produced from the first attempt at the 'civic couch' exercise.

My practice as research suggests it is unusual for queerness to appear suddenly, like the flick of a switch, or the metaphorical scene of the homosexual who ‘comes out’ of the closet. In the (hetero) normative society of the UK today I find identifying ‘as lesbian-queer’ is a process of both direct and indirect resistance. I do not always ‘come out’. This is sometimes part of a deliberate resistance to (hetero) normativity and sometimes a pragmatic acceptance that I cannot change the homophobic stance of a person, place or institution. Sometimes I do chose to resist (hetero) normativity and homophobia directly, for example through work with lgbt/queer youth groups or taking part in Pride Marches.

It is possible for a stranger to suddenly appear as queer: to step out into public and shock the normative with the scale of difference between them and what is familiar and tolerable. The normative construction of ‘disability’ is particularly marked visually. Racism and xenophobia are also constructed from the instantaneous visual and aural appearance of difference according to embodied difference and ways of speaking. The flow of power through the dominance of Britishness and whiteness in the social spaces I occupied through the ‘civic couch’ processes was, I felt, always a prominent part of the normalizing discourse and performativity of that place. I am sure my whiteness, Britishness and middle class education all helped me maintain my position on each public bench without more trouble. If I had been affectionate with my partner or worn more masculine clothes on a public bench I would have identified myself more quickly as queer in relation to heteronormativity. I chose (and was able to choose) not to appear suddenly queer so I could reflect on becoming gradually more queer by sitting and writing for a prolonged period of time on the same public

bench. This allowed me to access and work on the barely-perceivable routes to everyday life that power makes.

‘Wonder-full’ everyday places and queer phenomenology

So far in this chapter I have focused on how ‘I’ (as a human subject) could be constructed as queer in relation to an everyday time and space. In this section of the chapter, I will use Sara Ahmed’s framework of queer phenomenology to contextualize theoretically how wonder can queer a place.

Queer for Ahmed is a spatial term. She shows how the word ‘queer’ etymologically means ‘across’, or ‘to twist’ and shows how queer spatiality was translated into a kind of sexuality that did not follow a ‘straight line’.⁴⁰ She is clear about how she uses the word ‘queer’ in two different ways: Someone may identify or be called queer because their sexuality is ‘off line’. But other ways of being ‘off line’ can be understood to inhabit a queer phenomenology. She writes that she is ‘not sure if being mixed race makes me queer’⁴¹ but ‘the presence of bodies of colour in white spaces is disorientating’.⁴²

Ahmed shows how being disorientated is expressed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty as ‘the awareness of our contingency and the horror with which it fills us’.⁴³

Disorientation at the loss of familiar or certain ground can be understood as a queer relation to a time and place. I discovered that writing about the objects and events I encountered through the ‘civic couch’ process made the familiar appear more and more strange and unique. Although this was at times a disorientating experience, it was not horrific but instead vertiginously dizzying. It sometimes produced the feeling

of wonder as familiar objects become more interesting, detailed and expressive through the sustained act of looking at and describing them.

Ahmed's book Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others shows how the familiar or everyday is constructed as an invisible background. She develops her work in dialogue with 'the black feminist writers who have staged the impossible task of thinking through how race, gender, and sexuality intersect'.⁴⁴ Her project offers the framework of phenomenology to see how race and nationhood connect with sexuality as what Foucault describes a 'dense transfer point for relations of power'.⁴⁵

Phenomenology frames the body in time and space as relational. Ahmed uses Immanuel Kant's example of disorientation as walking into a room without light.⁴⁶ In this situation, orientation is achieved from a place of disorientation by establishing what the relationship of the body is to the un-seeable objects in that space. Kant argues orientation comes through knowing the difference between the left and right side of the body so that, as Ahmed writes, space 'becomes a question of 'turning,' of directions taken' and also of the proximity of objects to the body'.⁴⁷ Bodies are therefore 'shaped by their dwellings and take shape by dwelling'.⁴⁸

Ahmed examines the spatial dimension of 'sexual orientation'. Bodies are materially orientated in space. They arrive at and are directed to, and away, from objects. Objects of sexual attraction and repulsion therefore orientate bodies in space both materially and ideologically. This understanding of space (how a body turns, arrives, leaves and how it 'dwells') brings Ahmed to the question of home. Her use of phenomenology is particularly illuminating in the way it addresses the familiar

through her discussion of how her own life experiences as a lesbian, the child of a mixed-race marriage and as a scholar extend through tables.

The critical attention Ahmed pays to tables makes those everyday, apparently neutral material objects surprisingly lively. The home where a (hetero) normative family live, where a migrating family or individual arrives, is also where a writer works, potentially at the same table as the family meals. Ahmed explores how objects in phenomenological writing are ‘orientation devices’⁴⁹ and that the writing table is such a common object found in philosophy because it is where the work is done. So the body extends through the table as the place from which to look at, think about, re-imagine, describe and deconstruct the world. Ahmed writes that she will bring ‘the table to ‘the front’ of the writing to show how ‘what’ we think from, is an orientation device’.⁵⁰ This tactic defamiliarizes the more common use of the table by phenomenologists such as for example Edmund Husserl, who uses the table to immediately relegate it to the background. Ahmed shows that the table is part of an active relation to where she is and therefore how she is orientated physically and philosophically. This queer attention to the background object is what she argues is ‘queer phenomenology’. Ahmed makes ‘the table’, as the familiar and unseen object in the background of philosophy, dance with new queer life through this tactic.

Ahmed turns to look at the ‘Orient’ in ‘orientation’ and the construction of western homes and tables as familiar, unseen backgrounds. She argues that the idea of the Orient privileges the east in the process of orientation as ‘the direction we face unless we face another direction’.⁵¹ It is where the sun rises, Ahmed points out. For me this connects with the work that Halberstam does to read nighttime as queerer than day.

As Ahmed points out, the east is ‘the horizon’ as the origin of a new day. In this way we can understand that the new comes from the east. It is exotic in that it is ‘both far away and that which the Occident wishes to bring closer’ not least because ‘as feminist postcolonial scholars have shown us, the Orient is sexualized’.⁵²

Ahmed argues that the west looks towards the east as other, but is orientated *around* the west as its centre, its home or its norm. In this way the east and west are racialized. The Orient becomes constructed as a place that the ‘body’ of the west extends its reach into, in the same way that a sensuous subject extends into space and thereby changes it. Ahmed shows how that body in the west is normatively white: that ‘whiteness’ also implies Christian, bourgeois and capitalist as the other proximate objects and practices of those bodies. Such a ‘white’ centre is unmarked and marks deviations from orientation around that centre as ‘other’. Through this process of orientation Ahmed argues that, ‘whiteness is ‘attributed’ to bodies *as if* it were a property of bodies; one way of describing this process is to describe whiteness as a straightening device’.⁵³

To further develop Ahmed’s argument that space is orientated around the west, I can see how the west is also constructed as the new and different. It is constructed as a place of the future, as the place where the sun sets before the next day. It is also where the mythical ‘wild west’ of North America is, as the place ‘to go’: To realize the dream of ‘progress’ and capitalist accumulation. I also think that the sexualization and exoticization of the Native American body echoes the same process that Ahmed shows at work on the Eastern body.

Ahmed describes how the alignment of the white western normative extends in straight lines and effects the direction in which homes and individual bodies ‘face’. This therefore affects how disoriented homes can feel. Homes are, Ahmed argues, ‘effects of the histories of arrival’.⁵⁴ Migrating peoples arrive in their new homes as strangers and those homes are experienced as ‘out of line’. However, families also share events, particularly around tables, through meals and stories that bring it together so they share a direction. Ahmed provides an anecdote that illustrates how heterosexuality extends in a straight line from the privacy of home and family into public space. She describes eating in a holiday resort restaurant with her partner and being shocked ‘by the sheer force of the regularity’⁵⁵ of one man facing one woman, couple after couple, in the room. The presence of two women within this pattern inevitably ‘sticks out’. But this uncomfortable sense of being ‘the wrong couple’ is accompanied by a sense of wonder that she had not seen the force of this pattern before. Being queer in this room made something appear that had previously been so familiar that she had not seen it.

Ahmed argues the idea of ‘direction’ implies ‘straightness’, as the word ‘direction’ is formed from the stem ‘direct’ meaning ‘without deviation’. A direction is not only an orientation or a way of facing but also an instruction given and followed. A queer movement therefore goes across normative routes or lines in time and space, perhaps even without direction. A ‘queer wonder’ can be understood as a queer movement that might cross, exceed, circle or zigzag normative lines of attention. In the ‘civic couch’ writing process, my attention crossed over normative amounts of attention given to the ‘everyday’ because of the length of time I did it. The longer I was in, looking at and writing about one small place, the more detail I saw in it. The more

wonder I directed across the lines that normatively constrain the familiar to the invisible background of the everyday, the more meaningful those small details became, in relation to who I was and how I was orientated within that place.

Ahmed argues that a table is used as a norming device. The word ‘table’ is also a mathematical term for arranging symbols, usually within vertical and horizontal lines. In relation to the vertical and horizontal, Ahmed claims the diagonal as ‘queer’. A body that was literally slanted in public would be very queer and also very funny, perhaps because of the same formal reasons that drag and camp can be funny.⁵⁶ But I think Ahmed describes the ‘slanting’ quality of queer phenomenology as a perception: in the way the feeling of being disorientated is *like* being on a slant, as if swaying or falling. Or that it is more literally going across the straight-ruled lines of a grid.

Ahmed argues that the lesbian body is distanced from the objects familiar to heteronormativity that are found both in the home and beyond:

For lesbians, inhabiting the queer slant may be a matter of everyday negotiation. This is not about the romance of being off line or the joy of radical politics (though it can be), but rather the everyday work of dealing with the perceptions of others, with the ‘straightening devices’ and the violence that might follow when such perceptions congeal into social forms.⁵⁷

Ahmed develops Butler’s work on how repetition of interpellations creates gender and sexuality to show how being on a slant can be the starting place to begin to construct a queer time and place:

Yes, we are hailed; we are straightened as we direct our desires as women towards women. For a lesbian queer politics, the hope is to reinhabit the moment after such hailing: such a politics would not overcome the force of the vertical, or ask us to live our lives as if such lines do not open and close spaces for action. Instead, we hear the hail, and even feel its force on the surface of the skin, but we do not turn around, even when those words are directed towards us.

Having not turned around, who knows where we might turn. Not turning also affects what we can do. The contingency of lesbian desire makes things happen.⁵⁸

Ahmed proposes that refusing the straightening devices of normativity and taking a stance against the call of a normative direction is how the sensuous human subject can queer its relationship to its time and space. This might be a small change experienced primarily in that sensuous embodiment. But it seems to me that if one small change is made, others are likely to follow. This however assumes that it is possible to take control of such a moment, which can be much more difficult, if not impossible, in certain times and places.

I read Queer Phenomenology after I had completed the first ‘civic couch’ exercise in the Grassmarket, Edinburgh. I was surprised, in reading Queer Phenomenology for the first time, how I had begun to think along the same lines as Ahmed but through the framework of creative writing. I initially devised the ‘civic couch’ process to gather material about a public space outside at night, particularly because of Halberstam’s theorizing of potentially queer times and places. I began to think during that first process it might be a tiny civil disobedience to sit for no reason on a bench at night, other than to be there and respond in writing to what I saw. Following Ahmed I saw that the exercise of working on a public bench is a way of reinhabiting the moment after being hailed as strange-queer, or a queer-stranger, so that as a sensuous subject one can be affective and effective.

I understood that the process drew me gradually as I engaged with it over the 24 hours, more out of line with the normative. The different elements of my identity such as my race, nationality, familiarity with the place, my class, sexuality, gender, health

and physical ability determined how easy (or not) it was for me to sit and work in that place. In this way my own familiarity with my own self (or subject position) was brought to the fore. I was queered in relation to myself and I was queered in relation to the time and places I worked in. I also saw that the process was drawing the familiar objects of everyday life, such as manhole covers or rubbish bins, out of the background, refreshed and even ‘dancing’ to the front and centre of my perception and orientation. In this way I was queering and being queered by those times and places.

Part Two: Practice as Research

Chapter 3: Queer ‘civic couch’ affects and effects.

This chapter contains the first ‘civic couch’ texts. These were written on two different benches in the Grassmarket, Edinburgh, in Spring 2007.¹ The ‘civic couch’ process is a way of writing about a specific place in the material world, in order to write a play around and through that place. This, in part, follows the practice of the ‘realist’ playwrights, who used a very detailed *mise-en-scène* for their characterological dramaturgy to represent a ‘corner of nature’. As I discussed in Chapter 1 ‘realist’ playwrights do not necessarily secure any ‘corner of nature’ as the stable ontological ground of ‘reality’. Through the ‘civic couch’ process I explore materially how any patch of actual ground can take part in a range of scales of queerness.

The instability of any everyday place is reflected partly in the fact that it is impossible to describe one meaning, of one moment, in one place, before that moment is gone. Trying to describe somewhere, in the present, as it is experienced, necessitates in itself a prolonged length of time writing in that place. I found the prolonged length of time I spent on each public bench produced queerness in that place. Each process constructs ‘me’, as the writer, physically, socially and psychologically as more and more strange, both in relation to myself and my environment. But also, the longer I am able to stay writing about one place, the more interest and value I find there.

Civic Couch: 3rd February 2007. Grassmarket. Edinburgh.

Dawn should have been at 7.48 this morning. The definition of civil dawn being when the sun is 6 degrees below the horizon and objects can be seen and civil life may begin. But there was enough light coming through the curtains at 7.20 to see the arm of the sofa we made our bed on last night. Enough light to find my slippers and pass through the door without stubbing my toe.

I'm here to read the signs that weren't written. I'm here, sitting on the second bench if you're walking towards Cowgate. I'm facing southwest. I see the undercarriages of 20-odd pigeons caught in the same golden light as the Castle. The valley of facades that is the Grassmarket, is over looked by the Castle, in shadow at 8.31 am. I've just realized I have forgotten my mobile phone.

My favourite approach to the Grassmarket is from Home Street. I hurried past the job centre and student flats. I turn to my left instinctively, every time at just the right moment, to see through a wynd the first narrow glimpse of the Castle. It fills me with the satisfaction of the presence of immortality. Not only has the castle been there for so many human lives that it may as well have been there forever, but its structure calls to mind the landscapes of myth and fairytale, making it all the more insistently eternal. And yet I know that oldest part of it, hidden behind those eighteenth century walls is only a thousand years old. The rock it is built on predates humanity though. That's quite impressive.

About 15 minutes ago a beautiful girl walked passed. Tall and thin. In black boots, a mid-length leather coat and green beret. She had short, dark hair,

which curled out of the hat and against her neck. Just as she past the parking ticket machine and stepped up onto the central reservation she turned and looked upward. I thought at first, a romantic gesture to a new lover, who was able to stay in the warm this morning. I turned and saw an elderly woman leaning out of the window of a second floor flat. A mother, perhaps, still could be a lover, or friend. It's an act of love, to watch someone leave. It demonstrates a commitment to the existence of that person beyond your own present. Perhaps parents are the most likely people to want to believe in the objective reality of another human life.

A traffic warden has been standing over a silver car for ten minutes. A blond long haired woman came up to her, said something and smiled charmingly, then dashed off. The traffic warden smiled too but now she's nearly finished writing the ticket and is about to stick it on the windscreen.

A man arrived just one second after the ticket went down. 'Thanks very much'. He said. The traffic warden is standing amongst the five trees now, 50 yards away from the man and his car.

A yellow airport city van has just delivered 20-odd people to the International Hotel. There was a hiatus at the door as they tried to all get in at once.

8.56 am. In the last moments, while I was watching the traffic warden the sun has noticeably risen, catching now the chimney pots, TV aerials and highest

branches. The pigeons are circling, flashing planes of their wings against the light, which is now much brighter.

SN03 OFA Green Machine. *Everything is being cleaned. SNO3 OFA green machine is humming in and out of pavement edges and doorways. There is the deeper vibration of a street cleaner with its manky rotating brush. Men in fluorescent jackets pick up litter by hand. One looked at me a moment ago. It was like one part of the street spotting another. 'What are you doing here?' I thought I saw in that look. In the civil hours there are implicit, invisible rules of existence in civil places. If you work on the street as a cleaner, or ask for money or give out traffic offence notices, if you are in fact a public servant you are as invisible as a Victorian chambermaid...and perhaps just as likely to be hurt.*

9.12 am. The cleaning has stopped, vibrations gone. Behind me, a rattle of building works. The cars roll past to my left. And now the sun is high enough to cast shadows of those top branches on to the facades. And I can hear a bird singing. And a man just whistled three notes, in the way people sometimes do when they're happy.

I'm going to get some breakfast.

I'm having a full British, but without black pudding and no beans.

Tragic, epic, French accordion music sung live is playing in the cafe. Whistles from crowds in another country and I catch every third or fourth word that the operatic rasp gets out. There's the hum of the drinks cabinet on my right. It's on a thermostat, which just cut out.

The recording of these details is soothing, as if the words make the impression permanent. Perhaps castles and words are eternal.

In the cafe there are four single people and one couple. We singles all sit at a table, on our own, facing outwards, so that we can see the Grassmarket. To my left an east Asian young man is eating beans, sausage and egg. He wanted haggis. But when he asked the waitress how much it was, she said at first, 'Nothing', but then she said, 'There's no price' and then, 'Well maybe fifty p' and he became so confused when she said, 'Do you want some?' that he said 'No'. There's a man at the back of the shop on his own with a hunted look.

The couples sit opposite each other. Filling each other's fields of vision

I've been reading Plato's Republic 10 in the café for half an hour. I'm thinking about how comic this insistent pursuit of the nature of the couch might be.

It's 9.58 am. There are three couches, one in 'nature' (and created by 'God'), another one, which the carpenter makes and finally the one the artist makes.

The artist is an imitator at two removes from nature and so 'God' is nature, if God made the eternal form. But. No. God made nature. God made the form and then the nature to copy it. Oh. I'm losing count. Last try. So...the object of my mimesis today, my bench in the Grassmarket facing southwest, is really 'an apparition'. The bench I was sitting on, my civic couch, is just an example of the

one true 'couch'. But the one I'm conjuring now, with words, is an imitation of an imitation.

I've got to get back to my civic couch. I must imitate it as thoroughly as possible.

But I don't need to worry about eternity, apparently, because always beyond even the eternal form, is some kind of God, some kind of creator.

Problem is, who made God? Wasn't it 'man'? Even if I believed (as perhaps I did once) that there is an autonomous, sentient God, I couldn't argue that my understanding of 'Him' wasn't human. It comes to words, again. The words are human, aren't they? In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1) John might not think so. But there's a pattern emerging. If I look at something for a long time, be it benches or words, my thought process returns to its starting point, begins to eat its own tail. John has both God and the word at the beginning. They are for him the same thing. Pluralities are an answer. 'God' is a word and words are my god. Edinburgh Castle seems eternal because it resembles the stories of childhood; stories from a person's beginnings mirror stories of a culture's beginnings. The image and idea of the castle high above the girl sitting on a bench in a market might symbolize a relationship which 'mankind' replays between herself and God, herself and 'Man', herself and herself, herself and the state, herself and birth and death...and

Oh my...

How do we read the signs that are not written? Perhaps we can only laugh at how deep the layers are in the most mundane of objects. And how those layers eventually rejoin the surface.

Clare is now on a bench in the Grassmarket.

It's 10.20 am. I'm going to phone a friend. I haven't got my mobile. I may have to use a public telephone box.

Ring

People say 'I love you' in public thanks to mobile phones

I've heard bluff men from Yorkshire on train seats behind me say 'I love you mum'.

They sound sincere. They sound publicly lost in private moments.

There are still some red telephone boxes left. But they're closeted in comparison.

You'd really have to shout, to be heard by someone on the street.

Oh! Save us from the insidious cable stopping us still to listen!

I'm meeting Valerie by the pancake van at 12.

I'm back at my civic couch. Wishing now that I'd gone to the toilet while I was in the café.

Since I was gone a plane has flown south over the Grassmarket. Trailing a thin, white line across the blue. This is a written sign. Although I suppose it shares unconsciousness with the unwritten ones.

My hands are too cold. I've put on some gloves and although it's not particularly easy, it's possible to write.

The sun has reached halfway down the five trees and is one and a half slabs of pavement away from my feet as I sit on my bench.

So to my bench. It is just longer than I am. It's stained a rich mahogany colour and varnished. Including the front and back, there are seven slats making the seat. I can feel the gap between the fourth and fifth pinching my bum slightly. There are two worked armrests at either end. I am sandwiching my small rucksack between myself and the arm on the left hand side. For some reason it give me a sense of security. Perhaps it mimics a cushion on a sofa?

Cold, I'm beginning to feel that dusk is a very long way away.

Is it going to become about endurance?

The sun now casts a shadow of the CCTV camera all the way to the Thomson's Court archway.

There are 17 vertical slats making up the back of my civic couch.

A moment ago, I felt suddenly scared as a man in his 20s or 30s went past. I noticed the feeling but couldn't quite place it. Then a few moments later another

man in a public servant suit passed and stopped, pointed to the ground and told me I had dropped my wallet there. There it was, lying on the pavement. He was admonishing. He looked at me and then made a quick tilting of the head gesture as if he were trying to point with his eyebrows. 'Foolish' and 'Irresponsible': 'What did you do that for' and even 'Silly girl'. These were how I read the signs of his face. I said, 'Thank you'. I might even have made a little reciprocal eyebrow movement, upwards. Almost as if I had caught the eyebrows he had sent down to me.

My feet are now in sunlight.

'Can you stop pressing buttons till you're told,' says a white, Scottish, bearded man in his late 30s or early 40s to a boy in a red puffa jacket, who is probably about eight years old. 'Why?' he whines.

The buttons are on the parking ticket machine.

My toes are warming up in the sun. But I'm cold through and through. If I think about it great ripples of icy shivers course through my body, despite the layers of tights, vest, jumpers, fleece and coat. But when I concentrate on writing, with creating the representation of this sensation with words, then I don't feel the cold, because in fact I feel myself to be somewhere else.

The little boy and his dad have just passed back past my bench to their car. The man was wearing faded, light blue jeans. He had very straight legs. I always

wanted straight legs. The boy is just like his dad. They swing their straight legs the same way. Dad. Mum. DaDa, MaMa, what would any relationship be like with out mimicry?

Two girls in their 20s with big blond hair and black goggle sunglasses walk past. I think, maybe Italian. Holding their bags on their arms at right angles, inside wrists turned up, studied pose of relaxed consumerism.

There's a plastic fork on the floor at 45 degrees from my knee, it's pointing to the pizza restaurant behind me. There's dirt on the end designed to go into the mouth, the prongs, second one in from the left, as you stand over it, as if it were laid on a table, is slightly bent. Someone had gone to the trouble of designing this fork with a tessellation of arrow shapes in the handles. There are three hairs caught in the prongs, two are dark and one is white. What can I read in such forensic signs?

There is an investigation on this civic couch of the clues left behind by civilization.

I'm in shadow again.

Think of the sun 98,000000 miles away and this object spinning and circling around it. Making shadows.

Civic Couch: 4th February 2007. The Grassmarket. Edinburgh.

I'm back. It's 14.40 pm and I'm eating a Curly Wurly! I've had to sit on a new civic couch because the one I was on yesterday has a dirty chip on it. It's a

strange thing. You would expect a dirty chip on the floor, on the fat, fresh pigeon droppings. But this chip looks as if it has been picked up and placed on the bench. Almost tidied from the floor and onto the bench. Unless the pigeon did it.

All the traffic is at standstill on my right as I face towards Cowgate. There was a man eating on this bench only minutes ago. In the exact spot where I am now. Eating a pie, he was. I measured the little island, island within an island, of the central reservation of the Grassmarket. It is 80 steps in circumference approximately. So although it is not a perfect circle with a radius of 11 steps, the north island of five trees, three benches, one traffic cone, one telephone box and one black plastic bin with gold painted hoops and a gold UK 'litter in a bin' emblem, is 880 steps squared. I'm eating a Flyte now. I like them because they taste like Milky Way used to taste when I was young. When I was a child, I mean. I'm still young.

It's nice that the council still lets you off paying for parking on a Sunday. There's no logic behind it anymore. It's busier today than it was yesterday. I'm sure traffic wardens would work Sundays, given half the chance. You don't see people sitting on the street so much on a Sunday either.

It's much colder today. I've been here only 17 minutes and I'm already shivering.

I was thinking about the man who was sitting here eating. A curious choice. Perhaps he was tired and just needed a hot pie. But why would you choose to eat outside? If he brought it in Festival Stores I suppose he simply couldn't eat it in there. I had a home economics teacher who hated public eating. She said that she would ring our parents if she ever saw us eating fish and chips outside. I didn't say anything at the time. But I remember thinking, the best thing about going on holiday (in Britain) is eating fish and chips outside.

It is really embarrassing to eat on your own outside. It shows a lack of company, shelter, comfort and cash. The only thing worse than eating in the cold, on your own, outside, is eating in the rain. I did that in October last year. I had an interview for a job, which I didn't get and then I had a community meeting a few hours later in the same part of town. I bought a kebab and ate it outside. It immediately started to rain. It was 5 pm and Suits were passing quicker and quicker. I hid behind a memorial statue, practically in the bushes, I looked up and realized that the whole top deck of the number 11 were looking down on me. Wet with cold kebab sauce running all down my coat.

***'All religions have honoured the beggar. For he proves that in a matter at the same time as prosaic and holy, banal and regenerating as the giving of alms, intellect and morality, consistency and principles are miserably inadequate'.
W. Benjamin. One Way Street***

There were cars parked in the central reservation so I couldn't see the man sitting on the floor. When I came out of the pub half an hour later he'd been joined by a girl. They were both about 25. He looked quite ill. She sat on a plastic bag. She had a cover for her legs and a clean Chinese take away packet with about ten two and one penny pieces. She was smoking and trying to talk to

him. He was far away. His skin looked as delicate as ice, taut because he was so thin, but also weak, like an old man's. They sat by a bookstall, which had set up while I was in the pub.

There are different ways of asking for money on the streets. In Turkey I saw men up on their knees as if in church, as if about to be beheaded, head bowed and face entirely hidden, hands outreached. It shocked me. Is asking for money from the ground the limit of acceptable civic behaviour? Defines the standing centre? Not for nothing is penury called queer street. Once there was a woman who lived on the streets. She didn't ask for money. She took what she needed from bins and skips. Who's to say where the edge is? She died by fire.

Lying to strangers in the dark.

I need to get someone to take my photo here on this bench. It seems like such a mad thing to want to do. I didn't realize how mad it was until I tried it. Can you take my picture? You'll need a flash, the woman looks at me, she just stands there. 'What?'

'Erm'. I begin.

To make her feel more comfortable.

It's comforting to hear a meaningless human noise in moments of confusion.

'Erm'. I repeat. Then...

'I know it's a strange thing to ask. But the thing is, this bench is very special to me. It's where I met my partner. I wanted to write a letter on this bench and send a picture of me doing it as well'.

'But I'm all on my own'.

'Would you mind? Thank you'.

'Yes. The flash is on'.

Civic Couch: The Grassmarket. Edinburgh. 18th April 2007.

The sun is 6 degrees below the horizon and although my object, this bench, is distinguishable at civic dusk I can not perform an outdoor activity, like writing on a bench. It will be dusk at 8.55 pm. The couple I saw in January are still sitting on the pavement, by the railings.

The human eye needs a minimum of five photons to see. A human being can't use her eyes to see in the dark.

I tried to cheat. I tried to sit on my own private, comfortable, blue couch and pretend that I was in the dark outside. But it didn't work. I just can't imagine what random detail will announce itself as important. On the other hand, I do intend to tell some lies. See if you can spot them. Sometimes I feel that you deserve a bit of action. A bit of a plot and sometimes I might represent some plausible lie as truth, because, as Aristotle said, 'Probable impossibilities are preferable to implausible possibilities'. What am I doing on this bench? I'm trying to imitate, represent and interpret this bench, until it is transformed. But perhaps it will be me that is transformed by the bench?

As night falls, civilization's ties loosen. What is night? Is it a miniscule civil disobedience to sit for no reason on a bench at night?

It's ten minutes past eight. I feel strangely nervous. I've eaten. But I could still eat some more. Surrounded by all these restaurants. My favourite, Petit Paris's blue awnings are in sight. I approached my bench with tender feelings. It's been a while. Disappointed to see the state it's been left in. I had to kick a chicken bone out of the way so I could sit. There are eight Benson and Hedges gold cigarette tabs and one home rolled, but with filter rather than card, near by, on the floor. A tomato sauce wrapper, a rogue chip stuck on the congealed slightly transparent white paper. The end of a Chinese banana fritter. I don't like those soggy dough ends either. An empty bottle of Gallo syrah, rosé. There's a screw cap near it but it is a cork bottle, the cork is a little further off.

Couples and gangs of lads are around. A single guy and now three women.

Three fire engines storm past full sirens and wails. They've stopped on Victoria Street. Do you remember the fire in 2002? They said it was like sun rising in the night. They did. You can Google it.

The only bird in the sky is a seagull, high up.

The clouds are mottled. No clear sky. No stars tonight.

Only 20.20 pm now, so dusk is still at least 40 minutes away. A woman flanked by two men was looking at me, just then. Am I less invisible as night approaches? Does my presence as scribbling figure in my red hat and shabby coat make me more suspicious? Beyond the near hum of cars waiting in traffic, the passing tinkle of a man in shorts; his bag shaking, something, with his step.

A thin pitch of a brake, voices outside a pub, some whistling and calling from a white stretch limo, they're packing in it like sardines, drunk boy and girl sardines. They sound like a fairground. Beyond their slightly embarrassing hiatus of jammed traffic, I can just hear birds telling each other where they are as night falls.

My nose is cold. There's a young man carrying two dozen eggs. He looks, with his mouth open, like he is elsewhere.

The street lamps are on. I didn't notice them coming on, but now the retina of my eye has a small orange doodle implanted on it, burnt by too many photons going in too quickly. I shut my eyes and focus on the doodle. It shakes, doubles, redoubles and starts to move upwards. I can never tell if this is because I'm pushing it with my eye or whether my eye follows it. The doodle is still superimposed over these words I'm writing.

There's a tree in Thomson's Court, full of white blossom and spring leaves. There's a rock garden or terrace with yellow flowers. There is someone sitting down to my left and behind me. A young man five or six metres away says, 'One of the worst fucking pubs in Edinburgh'.

There is still this rattling and rustling to my left and behind me. Two lads have just had a competition in saying, 'Come on'.

'No it goes like that this'. They say to each other, 'Come on!'

Lots of whistling behind me now. And I don't really want to turn round, because I want to look like I'm writing a letter, or something, rather than spying on folk.

I just turned round, but I did it in a way that made it seem like I was looking for someone.

That's my story. I'm waiting for someone.

I had the feeling that I was going out to the theatre tonight.

The rustling person is a man with long grey hair. He's coughing.

Sky is darker, bluer, less mottled, more opaque.

It's 20.40 pm now, still not dusk but I can see the orange light on this paper now and the ash-blue shadow of my hand holding the pen. It looks like the foothills of a mountain I dream about. Benjamin had a dream when he was staying with Brecht in exile from the Nazi's in Stockholm, 'A wide view of many lands opened up before me. I saw other men standing on other peaks. One of these men was suddenly seized by dizziness and fell. The dizziness spread; others were now falling from other peaks into the depths below. When I too became dizzy, I woke up'. Brecht bullied him. He called him 'sausage'.

Benjamin didn't like that. Valerie calls me sausage. Sometimes. I do like it.

Perhaps it's the way they say it. Form over content. Benjamin's dream always moves me. I dream of sitting on my bench, balanced on the peak of a mountain

like a cartoon character, the stars spin around my head: I'll fall if I stop transforming it into words. Words are the crampons and ropes, routes to the ground.

A man in a tracksuit with his tea swinging in a thin blue plastic bag. The kind that tear easily. You can't hold more than a tin, a pint and an orange, perhaps.

The Castle is definitely lit up now. From where I am on the left side of the bench facing south down the Grassmarket, it sits in its own light, just above the parking ticket machine and flats above restaurants.

It could almost be a castle in the sky. Blackbirds sing. But I can't see any.

I'm sitting under what I think is a poplar tree, the sticky buds are just now silhouetted against the near dusk sky. The sky gets darker and deeper blue and the street more and more orange. People's faces, my notes, the pavement slabs, all skimmed with the glamour of this contrast of blue and orange dusk. There's a slight, cool breeze, the kind of breeze I remember from holidays sitting outside to eat. Feeling relaxed, bones melting into the pleasure of present time.

A police van. Two men. Ear pieces. Bullet-proof vests. Crimestoppers 0800555111. Someone on a carriage pulled by a cyclist says, 'Ahh. Police. Come on the Gestapo'. The bike bell rings. I think, 'Oh a horn'. 'Sing it!' they shout. 'Sing it, the Gestapo. What you doing with your self, just fucking sing it'.

Bicyclists toot horns and ring bells.

Brilliant. 20.54 pm. Pretty much now dusk. Without these street lamps I wouldn't be able to see objects clearly enough to do anything safely. I stood in the dark a month ago. Where there were no street lamps. There's a man in a red jacket and with a red bag doing a Monty Python impression.

'Spit up in your face. You lucky lucky bastard'.

His voice is high pitched, strangled. He jumps around, runs up and down. He seems to be running away but wanting to make sure they know he is. That other someone, shouts, 'Just wait two minutes will ya!'

'Spit up in your face'.

Red coat man has made it from one end to the other in approximately two minutes. He'll be hard to catch. But I think he would come back eventually anyway.

8.59 pm. Seems like night suddenly. There's a lull. A moment of hush.

Blackbirds.

Birdsong is the aural equivalent to the blue in the distance. By the Hot Dogs Burgers van I see a white arrow, pointing ahead, surrounded by blue. It's a One

Way street sign. Everything is connected. If you think about teapots all day, you drink a lot of tea.

I can still see drainpipes and marks on chimneys. So even though the sun has set, there is no real civic dusk. When I was in the country I stood with others in a wood. We turned our torches off. Even when our eyes were accustomed to the dark, we couldn't see anything. Jaine said, 'It's like we're on someone else's turf'. It was true: Seriously risky business trying to literally see in the dark. You tap with your feet along edges, put your hands into the unknown. There is a path I've taken many times in complete darkness. Even so, I make mistakes sometimes, misjudge the turn. Then I fear for a surreal moment that I might be nowhere. No sound, no sight, no smell, only touch, but unless I get down on the floor, there's nothing to touch. I fear that there might be anything, any number of things, which a torch would render impossible. I begin to see any number of impossible things. The complete darkness that I see in the country is magic. The light under the Castle in the sky has gone green, a cold yellow-green against the blue-black sky.

9.14 pm. Time for a fag. A man with take out has just sat on the end of my bench.

My stomach and head feel tight. I'm wanting a drink and a toilet.

Of course I am also watched. To my right there's the CCTV camera.

I'm suddenly scared that I'm wasting my time. It's Friday night. I'm writing down the trivia of the every night. Why have I left Valerie at home all on her own so that I can be here, smelling that man's food? Perhaps I'm kidding myself that there could be anything to learn from transforming something as mundane as a public bench...even if I do call it a civic couch. If I'm going to learn anything it's not going to come in a flash. No flash fire of truth and beauty for me on the bench tonight. Perhaps, it comes gradually. Like years of prayer, might one day lead to a moment of peace. I'm now beginning to feel dizzy and slightly sick. I'm wondering, perhaps I'm seeing in the dark all the time. Perhaps Plato cracked it two and a half thousand years ago, perhaps we're always looking at the shadows of ideas that actually exist in some eternal realm, beyond the beyond: In the thought that created the first god or the first magic; the first thing that there ever was a word for.

The man's phone just rang. It was one of those rings like an old fashioned bakelite phone in old detective movies. 'No', he says. 'I've just been sitting on a bench relaxing. I've just eaten a hot dog. See you later. Love you, mum'.

He gets up and moves off, behind me. Northeast.

9.33 pm. I had another fag and walked around a bit. Behind me had been sitting the man with long grey hair, joined by a much younger woman. In her late thirties. Long, clean straight hair with a thin Alice band. He was drinking cider, she had a bottle of beer. Both smoked. I think I heard her ask him if he was behaving himself. There is a man with his lover, half-wrapped in a white duvet.

Smoking, leaning against the railings. Another man crouched, also smoking, at the foot of some steps in a wynd. Perhaps he's a chef from the Italian restaurant. A man and woman, her carrying a duvet, walk past me. There are many more people now. Music from The White Hart Inn. I'm suddenly overcome with a burping fit.

A couple holding fingertips turn and let go. Hesitate outside Mammass.

A hush voice behind me, a woman says, 'It's like Temple bar is it?' It's getting colder. I can smell fried onions.

21.44 pm. I've missed so much. One more walk around the square.

21.57 pm. Two young girls with a thin blanket over both their legs, another man joins the two on the bench. I'm jealous, I notice, of their sociability.

A flyer, for a strip joint.

Forensic detailed observations but I don't feel like I've come close to seeing anything. And yet it's all so interesting. Part of me could stay forever, watching the theatre of the everynight.

It's just that I want to be at home now with someone I love.

Looking for a queer time and place.

The ‘civic couch’ texts represent the attempt to describe the same, apparently everyday, public place, from dawn until late into the night.² This exercise constructs me as strange and as a stranger in relation to that place. The difficulty of embodying and writing about that position helps me to understand in a more material way what a queer time and place might be, where and how it might be tangibly found.

Theorizing there is such a thing as queer time and space, creates the exciting proposition that queerness could be detached from homosexual identity and from the violent interpellation of ‘you queer!’ As Ahmed proposes, refusing to acknowledge the interpellation of (lesbian) queerness affects what we can do and can make things happen. But Halberstam acknowledges that it might be ‘overly ambitious’³ to claim that queer time or place exists. José Esteban Muñoz even states that queerness is ‘not yet here’. It is still untouchable, a futurity, only a ‘warm illumination of a horizon’.⁴

The longer I write in any place, the more I am constructed as strange in relation to that specific place. This is partly a social construction, built out of the barely-perceivable (and sometimes very obvious) ways people react to my presence. For example, in the Grassmarket I notice that a street cleaner looks at me in a way that is different to how someone working in the street would normally look at me. I also look at that man, and the other people working in the street, differently. I notice that there is a different kind of spatial relationship between myself, as a member of the public, a citizen and ‘them’, as public servants. I am sitting down, watching them work, rather than moving through the streets, with the usual flow of pedestrians. There is the kind of spatial relationship between us that would usually be found inside, between, I

imagine, the owner of a home that needs domestic servants to keep it running. Passers-by look at me out of the corner of their eyes, particularly during the daytime. At night people regard me more directly, as I note in the Grassmarket text.⁵ The strangeness constructed through the reactions people have to my unexplained presence and activity is often wary, sometimes even aggressive: during the process on Sauchiehall Street a young man told me to 'go away'. But it can also be a reaction of concern, curiosity and even a 'welcoming' friendliness, which I particularly remember on Hope Street in Liverpool.

One reason why the exercise causes concern, and why I am read as strange by the society that passes by or works/lives there, is the physical difficulty of it. It is strange for someone to sit on a bench for a long period of time, particularly if it is cold or wet. I found in the first hour of the first 'civic couch' process it was not going to be as easy as I thought it would be. In fact, in this first attempt I stayed on the bench for less than an hour before I went to a café. After three hours, I even gave up for the day and went home when I had expected to stay at least until dusk.

There is a spectrum of physical discomfort, which this exercise helps me to understand more clearly. There is a mild discomfort in writing outside after approximately half an hour in the winter. It becomes painful after an hour and a half and would eventually become actually dangerous. As I become too cold to write, but wait longer and longer before warming myself with a walk and/or a cup of tea, 'I' become more of a stranger to my own body. My sense of self gradually becomes alienated from what my body is 'telling me' it needs. In every 'civic couch' text this is reflected when I wonder why I am doing this, when it is making me tired, cold and

lonely. The experience of physical discomfort in public meant that I began to get closer to abject physicality than is normal in public streets which, I believe, is at least part of the reason some people found my presence strange and even troubling.

Strange public behaviour in relation to physical discomfort might often be understood socially as an effect of mentally ill health. In the street, it seems that strangeness is variously tolerable to ‘the eyes’ of society. I will reflect in the next chapter how representing that same street and some of the strangeness found there to a local audience, encourages it to go and look again at that previously invisible place.

Writing for a prolonged period of time in public constructs me (as the writer) as strange, socially, physically and psychologically. The affect is I *feel* I am a stranger in each place I write about. But the process also puts me outside any social group and therefore *actually* constructs me as a stranger in that time and place. This can be seen, in the Grassmarket text, in relation to the two key communities of people who use that place. There are citizens, people who are spending money in the shops, pubs and restaurants, and there are the homeless, or nearly homeless. There is a homeless couple who sit on the ground during the day and ask passers-by for change and at night other homeless people are wrapped in blankets and duvets sitting on benches, drinking and socializing. While I am writing on the bench I am not a member of either of these groups. Although, it is also clear from the texts I can and do ‘jump’ back into line with the citizens if the exercise makes my life a bit too uncomfortable.

The ‘civic couch’ exercise creates a tiny social lacuna in the capitalist flows of power in the Grassmarket which, as I inhabit it, makes me feel both strange and that I am a

stranger. This exercise enacts a turn against the normative: it is a barely perceptible refusal to literally and metaphorically ‘go with the flow’ of powers in that place.⁶ It is barely perceptible because the performance of power in the street is naturalized as ‘everyday’ and part of the invisible background. Having turned away from the normative way of occupying space, in that place, I find it easier to see the spatial/temporal metaphors of queer theory materially enacted there. For example, I see the fast-moving and upright citizens at the centre of capitalism and those who are both stationary and at ground level at its abject horizon.⁷

I also noticed capitalism flowing through the Grassmarket through objects that are products of globalization, such as mobile phones. The amount of time I have to think about these objects allows me to begin to reflect on what they mean as political and social objects, rather than simply (neutrally) practical tools of communication. I find that spending a longer than usual amount of time thinking about and observing an apparently neutral object in each place dislodges it from the invisible background. Perhaps ironically everyday objects such as mobile phones, cleaning machines, discarded plastic forks or the bench itself become less and less ordinary and/or generic, the more familiar I become with them as specific examples of that kind of object, in that particular time and place.

Spending a prolonged amount of time in the same public place allows me to write about smaller and smaller amounts of matter. The descriptions become about smaller objects, tinier details and textures. The practice of looking closely at something, practically demonstrates that I cannot possibly record *every* detail, of even the tiniest object, as it is in even one moment, before it changes. This reminds me the smallest

indivisible unit of matter is probably still to be discovered and that it is said nothing is stable at the (almost impossible to imagine) subatomic level of matter. By looking closer and closer at objects 'I' as the writer begin to see the matter of objects and it becomes clearer that 'the ground' as a metaphor for stability is not necessarily always appropriate. This exercise helps to show that the actual ground can be more or less unstable, depending on who (or what) is looking, how closely and for how long.

The close and lengthy duration of observation of a specific place sometimes could produce the queer affect of tenderness towards conventionally everyday objects. This can be seen in the way I begin to care about each bench. This everyday object becomes queerly loved.⁸ My affection for the bench is the odd consequence of the length of time I spend with it, writing about it and on it. It is also probably a result of being alone there and therefore a stranger. So I begin to construct the bench strangely as 'my friend'. Friendship, with a bench, as a Foucauldian 'way of life', *might* be a way of touching queerness. But it would also be a way to have a very physically difficult and, quite quickly, unhealthy life.

Writing however provides a temporary escape from physical discomfort and produces another form of strangeness. I notice in the Grassmarket the act of writing can briefly override the physical discomfort of being outside in public for a prolonged period of time.⁹ In 2010, on Market Place I also write:

3rd February 2010.

I feel really happy when I do this process. I miss V. of course, but I'm really happy finding my place, discovering something, being in this dynamic and creative dialogue with the time and space I'm in.

...

Even when I am writing about my body as I am now, with the tendons in my right forearm aching, with an itch in my feet from the rain that got into my trainers when I went to the park, with the uncomfortable roll of squashed fat under my bra and my right leg shaking, as it acts as a table for my little black notebook, which is just running out...even in this most phenomenological of writing moments, I'm also somewhere or something else, in a kind of trance, consumed by the desire to come to the end of the sentence, to finish it, to make it make sense, and still enjoying the ride getting there.

This extract, taken from the text produced in Cardiff, reflects some of the feelings of happiness this exercise can produce. I find that making a connection with the texture and detail of a particular place through writing can at times be almost euphoric. But in the 'civic couch' exercise, such intense moments of pleasure are found by overcoming physical, social and psychological challenges and also by pushing my sense of self to the edge of my internal landscape.

The 'civic couch' exercise can be contextualized as a form of meditation on the present time and place. I begin to perceive ways of engaging with the material world that are not organized around a discrete individual identity. The challenge to continue to write about that place can override, for small periods of time, my physical, social

and psychological wants and needs. I perceive in these moments the relationship I have with where I am becoming more than usually important to 'who I am'.

This is then reflected in some of the close descriptions of the materiality of objects in that place. There is an odd form of pathetic phallacy at work when, for example, I describe the metal of a lamppost leaning towards an organic old age. Odd, because if the external world is reflecting my internal landscape, that inner world is becoming less dominated by human identity:

It's so cold. I'm wearing two hats I've lost one glove, the brown leather one, but I've still got the old grey woolen ones. Why do you always lose the best things, while the ordinary rubbish hangs on?

Are you mad to wear two hats in the cold or not to? There's a good question. At least it's not raining now.

A yellow star on the ground: someone got a gold star and then lost it. There are two telecom covers by the NO ENTRY sign to Market Place. The NO ENTRY sign is old and weather worn. The iron is corroded at its base. Dark brown rust underneath the peeled back, pale metal and an orange stain over part of both the rusted base metal and the alloy covering. It is the same colour as the lichen on a sea wall. It's as if the metal is leaning towards an organic old age.

I wonder if I see the metal *becoming* organic, because 'I' am beginning to perceive that 'I' might (impossibly) let go of that part of my humanness that separates me from

the material of the world I am in. The feeling of ‘who I am’ begins to be less personal, less centred around being a discrete human and closer to the material qualities of that place. I glimpse here what Elinor Fuchs describes in the ‘landscape play’ as a ‘hint at the possibility of a post-anthropocentric stage’.¹⁰

Queerness of the lesbian stranger

The ‘civic couch’ texts are deeply influenced by the work of Walter Benjamin, the way he wrote about small, everyday objects and theorized the practices of the *flâneur*. The ‘civic couch’ texts were written in public and as much as possible on benches.¹¹ But they also describe the experiences of going to and walking around those public benches. I want to address now how the ‘civic couch’ process constructs me as a stranger in relation to Benjamin’s *flâneur* and the lesbian *flâneuse* as described by Sally Munt and Janet Wolff.

Benjamin describes the Parisian arcades as the preferred habitat of the *flâneur* because they are public interiors. He describes the *flâneur* as behaving outside, in the same way that citizens act inside: ‘The arcades are something between a street and an *intérieur*. [...] The street becomes a dwelling place for the *flâneur*; he is as much at home among house façades as a citizen is within his four walls’.¹² The *flâneur*’s way of being in public therefore challenges the normative dichotomy of in/out and private/public.

The *flâneur* looks at details and textures in a similar way as I do writing on and about a public bench. Benjamin describes the *flâneur* as ‘botanizing on the asphalt’.¹³ This suggests that the *flâneur* strangely brings the close and scientific attention to detail

that a botanist pays to organic life, usually in wild or rural places, into the city.

Benjamin's *flâneur* is constructed as a solitary, Romantic, hero who is able to 'really' see modernity from his position outside normal civic life.

However, Benjamin also describes the *flâneur* at one point as a detective or spy: The *flâneur* has 'the watchfulness of an observer who does not take his eyes off a miscreant'.¹⁴ This image of the *flâneur* spying on citizens helps to clarify how this practice is different from that of the 'civic couch'. The *flâneur* appears to be quite safe in his practice of looking at the world, without being looked at *by* the world. Whereas, the way I am looked at on each 'civic couch' is an important part of how I recognised the queerness of this practice. The way I am looked at is part of how I begin to feel that I am using that place queerly and thereby creating queerness and becoming queerer.

Wolff argues that the *flâneur* can only be male and that his status as 'author' of modernity maintains the dichotomous gender alignments of private/public space and thereby writes female experience out of modernity.¹⁵ For Wolff the *flâneurse* can not be invented. But Wolff does propose that a feminist sociology of the modern might consider what modernity was beyond the public sphere. Munt on the other hand reads Benjamin's *flâneur* as not simply male, citing George Sand's practice of walking at night in male clothes.

Munt challenges the essential maleness of the *flâneur* and his scopic possession of modernity and the urban landscape and proposes a cross-dressed lesbian *flâneur*.¹⁶ She uses the male version of the name, perhaps to mark the butchness of her own

practice of lesbian *flânerie*.¹⁷ Munt describes being a contemporary ‘lesbian *flâneur*’ through her own ‘butch’ dress code and way of looking at the public world. I am aware that the ‘civic couch’ exercise constructs me as strange and queer-to- (hetero) capitalist norm but never as ‘a lesbian’. Also, when I feel too uncomfortable sitting on the bench because I am attracting too much attention I always walk away. So, in relation to the ‘civic couch’ exercise I behave more like a ‘*flâneur/se*’ as a response to discomfort or danger on the bench.

It is the visibility of my sexuality as a woman that makes it most difficult to sit on the bench, particularly at night. Men quite often approach me because they (more or less) assume that I am sexually available. At times I wonder if a sideways glance from a passing man means he is wondering if I am a prostitute. The fact that I even think this reflects how I am conditioned (as a woman) to respond to nighttime space as a male domain. I do not mark my lesbian sexuality by dressing either ‘butch’ or ‘femme’ for the ‘civic couch’. But I have to also note I do not notice many women ‘styling’ their lesbian identity in public either through the way they dress or the way they are together.¹⁸ Munt questions the need or desire for lesbian visibility in relation to the lesbian *flâneur*: ‘Being part of a bigger spectacle, being visible as one subculture among many, may not necessarily create empowerment’.¹⁹

Woolf, in her discussion of the lesbian *flâneuse*, makes a distinction between Benjamin’s socially detached, always mobile *flâneur* and Georg Simmel’s description of a stranger.²⁰ Simmel describes ‘the stranger’ as a synthesis (or unity) of both attachment to and detachment from any point in space.²¹ This I think more closely reflects my practice of writing on a public bench than the notion of the *flâneur*. I stay

in the same place for an unusual amount of time but I can leave whenever I want to. This means I look at that place and I am looked at in it. I think of my position on the ‘civic couch’ as that of a queer stranger, rather than a *flâneur/se* because of this different kind of connection with a place.

I have addressed how the ‘civic couch’ process constructs ‘me’, as a writer, as strange and a stranger, through my social, physical and psychological relationship with a specific place. ‘I’ am, for moments, queered through this process in relation to place. In turn, that place is made strange and perhaps even momentarily queer because the prolonged period of time spent there allows me to see it differently. I look more closely and with more tenderness at the objects and actions of seemingly neutral, ‘everyday’ (hetero) normative capitalism. Sarah Shulman’s Girls, Visions and Everything (1986), Gail Scott’s My Paris (1999), and Samuel Delaney’s Times Square Red, Times Square Blue (1999), are key examples of many literary works that describe, in detail, personal experiences of specific places, as a way to address and access spatial and temporal constructions of sexuality. Their work, like the ‘civic couch’ texts, are primarily in the form of prose. Prose and poetry, in the form of printed literature, offers the reader autonomy over how much time they choose to spend reading. The question for this research into playwriting is how to dramatise the prose-text and experience of the ‘civic couch’ into a time-limited theatre performance. I will address in the next chapter if and how the LRE plays represent the strangeness or queerness of a local public place, in the framework of a bare local stage and in live performance.

Chapter 4.1. How do the LRE plays reframe local place?

This chapter contains four LRE play texts. Each play is accompanied with a DVD documentation of it in performance. I will reflect on the process of applying queer theorizing about time and place to the dramaturgical principles of playwriting through these plays and performances. The outcome of this research is a new playwriting process. Through this process I wrote a series of plays that aim to re-frame specific local, public places as stranger, less stable and more valuable than is normatively acknowledged within the ‘everyday’ framework.

The second and third LRE plays, Hope Street and Market Place,²¹⁰ follow this brief introduction. I have placed them together so that I can reflect critically on significant dramaturgical shifts between two plays written using the same playwriting process.

The fourth and fifth LRE play texts queer street and Hope Street at Homotopia follow.²¹¹ In relation to these plays, I will reflect on how I experimented with re-attaching (lesbian) queerness to the LRE process. I read this research as practice in relation to Muñoz’s notion of representing an invisible ‘disidentity’ that disidentifies with identity politics. This leads me to ask if representing a kind of queerness that disidentifies with identity itself allows a practice that is intended as an asymmetric resistance to (hetero) normativity, to be ‘put back’ into ‘the closet’: into a heteronormative and even heterosexist framework.

Hope Street

For the 1st, 2nd and 3rd May 2008 CCA 5. Sauchiehall Street

This text should be treated as an outline for performance. It will need to be redrafted before performance to respond to any changes on Hope Street. It might be useful to think of this text as the rules of a game which is about to be played.

Actors speak directly to audience members and to each other as actors and sometimes as characters. Actions may be demonstrated and repeated if necessary. Actions can be developed as if dance steps. Actors are performing the story of the characters. There are no objects used on stage. There is no miming. The aim is that the language will bring the objects 'into view' for the audience.

Stage directions/suggestions are in italics. Words that are in brackets may be said, or may be instead communicated by a look or action.

All the actors are on stage all the time. There is also a cellist creating sound effects with the cello and playing sound recorded in the street. He also accompanies some of the action with original music.

Characters:

Zippy	Rod
George	Freddy (Rod's Mum)
Bungle	Jane

Jane On a morning like this morning, when I face west towards the CCA from the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope, my thoughts turn to the solar system. The place of the sun in the east, warming the feet of that young man on that bench. He's got a small red bag that he rests his arms on. He's eating a chocolate bar and rests one arm on the other that reaches to his mouth. He has blond, spiky hair and a white suit. His pink face is in sunshine now.

George is 'revealed'.

Then at midday I'm back, looking for my lunch. The bar here (at the CCA) does really fantastic food: we all had the fish for tea. Really fantastic. But I think it's important to get out of the building, away from the screen and into the air.

She sees the street again now at lunch time.

Wow. So many people crossing where Sauchiehall Street meets Hope Street. I love it here.
I love looking at folk here.

A woman with only her eyes showing from her black robes, old man smoking, mother and daughter shopping, large woman smoking, old couple: the woman has a stick and her arm through the man's looped arm. White woman with long hair and sunglasses. Asian student. Bleached hair and jeans with attitude. Black man with long green scarf, listening to his iPod. Bearded white man in an Australian herders hat and cowboy boots. Could be gay. Sinewy hard looking white middle age guy. Fancy him. Three trendy shining girls laughing. Would like to be them. An Asian woman. Dressed for the office. Would like to be her. Another old couple. They don't touch each other. She walks just ahead of him, talking, so he has to bend down as they walk. A queen and her advisor. A butch woman. Behind her a scruffy girl that looks a bit like me when I was young...thin and looking like she is about to cry.

George (*Chewing.*) Ah yeah...but, I love love love where Sauchiehall meets Hope. Sounds dead American when you say it like that. Eh? (*Sings Country and Western meets Lou Reed.*)
'I'm waiting for my bloke
on the corner of Hope'.

I'm gonna go to New York New York one day.
Love it when the sun comes up on Hope: 26 minutes past four this morning. I'm here! I'm here, cheering on the main man; lighting up the 'wind-cheaters for sale' in wonderful WATT brothers; catching random quartz bits, on the edge, of Optical Express. Isn't it ironic that the sun makes them shine like stars? If I relax my eyes and focus just on the spots of light I can make a constellation of...a mouse face...the isle of Islay...a cowboy hat.

The sun caresses the red 'v' in 'Savers' (Health Home Beauty) and throws the shadows of those dead brilliant chimney pots on top of 'The Works' down onto the tiles of my favourite favourite street in the whole whole world: Hope Street. I love the fact that there's always a white trail in the sky, a-going west, by the way. Like a pure line of speed on a pale blue coffee table. Do you remember I made us a pale blue coffee table when I first thought that thought?

Zippy nods.

(*To Zippy*) Want some Double Decker?

Zippy shakes her head at George and squeezes her waist.

Zippy (*To Jane*) Do her.

Jane Who?

Zippy The girl.

Jane No.

Zippy Why not?

Jane I'm scared.

Zippy What of?

Jane Getting hurt.

Zippy It's no good if no one gets hurt. Who's going to care if someone isn't risking something?

Jane But why should it be me?

Zippy I've got a feeling the audience already like you.

Jane I really don't.

Zippy We need someone now. It'll all stop if you don't do her now.

Jane But/

Zippy It's got to be you. You're the best.

Jane Really?

Zippy Brave solider.

Jane 'becomes' Bungle.

Zippy Imagine what would happen if that girl over there. Do you see? The drunk one. Let's call her Bungle. What would happen if Bungle was walking up Hope and tripped, like this ...

The actor playing Zippy demonstrates Bungle tripping, falling into the road and then being knocked backwards by a car. The first time s/he does it quickly, shockingly violently. The second time s/he does it in slow motion and we see in more detail how s/he fell. The actor playing Zippy suggests that Bungle was drunk and tripped over.

She fell into the path of a Jaguar XF speeding up Hope.
 (Vroom Vroom.)
 I'll do it again, so you can see exactly what she did, I'll do it in slo-mo...she staggered...like this...off the edge of the curb.
 You show us Bungle.
 Give us your death.

Bungle very carefully and in slow motion describes with his/her body the impact of the car with his/her body. There is a significant difference with Zippy's interpretation. Bungle suggests perhaps that someone gave her a push and that she fell over a largish object that had been left by the side of the road.

Zippy That's brilliant. Really impressive.

The musician or perhaps the Cello becomes Bungle and the accident is performed again during the next speech.

Zippy Poor Bungle, knocked backwards onto the pavement, flung much further than you would imagine likely from such a little knock. But she is frail. So young. Poor Bungle. Here she lies. And the people begin to gather around her. A black pool of blood plumes beneath her head.

Bungle I like the night. I like Hope Street when it's dead quiet in the middle of the night. At 2 pm it's as dark as it can get. Darkest place on Hope Street is under the bridge. On the left of the bridge, when your back's to Hope, there's two mahoosive pillars. On these pillars is written 'All Greatness Stands Firm in the Storm'. And it's in Greek too. But they don't hold anything up! They just stand firm. Even in the dark at 2 am you can see them. But in blue and yellow from the lights under the bridge.

I stare at the lights when they come on.
If I stare at them, hard, you know, they do like a doodle: a wiggly shape in my eyes that shakes and doubles-doubles when I shut me eyes.

When night time comes it isn't really dark. But there is a different kind of light. Rod says that the council makes sure it's not dark, so we are safe. But I'd like some real darkness...to hide in.

I do love the sound of the drips under the bridge. Sometimes I'm scared that someone'll come and mess with me down there. But my mate Rod says that I look a lot scarier than I really am. I went to his flat last night. But he said he'd have to stop helping Mum with Dad if I did it again. So. If I can't stick home no more. I hide in the darkest place I know, at the bottom of Hope Street.

George The councils got three different styles of green cleaning machines. Green chariots I call 'em. They are brilliant! At 7.03 this morning the man on the smallest one comes round. I do a nod. He has his yellow fluorescent ear protectors on. But he waves anyway (*pause*) when I stand in front of him. I call him Mike. I love Mike the street cleaner on the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope. I don't know if he's actually called Mike. But I like that name. I hope to have a son one day and I'll probably call him Mike and he'll be in a band. HA! There's also street sweepers who just have brushes, which they drag behind them. Mike's got two big brushes on the front of his chariot that turn automatically, motorised they are.

I love the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope because it's where style meets speed. Where feet and wheels are regulated by the firm but fair 'Traffic Lights'.

And I totally love it because there's that awesome bus stop where there's always totally loads of folk waiting for awesome buses to take them to all the awesome places in Glasgow and 'beyond'. And I love it because there's always someone with a suitcase wheeling down to Buchanan or Central, passing through where Sauchiehall meets Hope. What could be more hopeful than going somewhere else? Shows you believe that some-where will be at least as good as here...and it's brilliant here!

Zippy nods.

On the c of S & H.

Zippy Just before the accident ...a beautiful girl crosses the road. Tall and thin, in black boots, a mid-length leather coat and green beret. She has short, dark hair, which curls out of the hat and against her neck. Just as she's reaching McDonalds restaurant she turns, looks back. At first I think it might be a romantic gesture, perhaps to a new lover, whom she walked to the bus stop with. I turn and see an elderly woman on the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope. She's straining to see the girl walking away and trying to keep an eye out for the buses at the same time. A mother, perhaps, still *could* be a lover, or friend. The older woman is wearing a grey plastic mac.

Jane What an act of hope, to watch someone leave. Shows you believe that person can exist even when you're not there.

Zippy You're doing Jane again? In her dead straight suit. Black, with blue.

Jane I just wanted to say that I don't normally drive through. I normally take the train. But today, I have a meeting. An important dinner in the evening.

I stop at the 24-hour shop on Hope Street. I need the Scotsman. It's not allowed. But I'm only going to be a moment and there's loading there. So. And this is why I love Glasgow. A traffic warden came to give me a ticket and three people came into the shop to tell me! The shopkeeper, who is lovely, he says people always try and help you out if your car is getting a ticket. It happens everyday.

George He works in that shop 24 hours a day? Imagine that!

Zippy No. I'm sure there are shifts and/

Jane I just wanted to say that. Do you think that, if I had got a ticket...?

Or if I hadn't had that date? Or/

Zippy I like Jane. But I'm more interested in the girl who looks a bit like you when you were young.

Jane becomes Bungle again.

Splendid.

George My bench is black, with 19 thin round bars. It's got no back to rest on. The tips of my fingers get numb. There is a 45 degree shadow to The Works. I've been watching the sun come up from my bench on the corner of S and H for a month.

At 8.32 am there is the same shadow on the ground in front of me as there is on the Google Earth picture of the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope. One day soon they'll be taking that picture again and then, you'll all be able to see me, sitting here on my bench, wherever you are in the whole world!

It's getting a bit overwhelming with the people all coming towards me. Walking past me, to work. They don't see me. Woohooo there!

Zippy Is that why you're wearing that ridiculous suit?

Bungle I like it.

George It's not ridiculous. It's a statement. It is pure 'style'.

Zippy Really.

George This white suit is pure dead brilliance.

A style - that can be seen from space. You'll just be a grey blob of matter. I'm going to be a star.

Zippy Good luck. You got the rent for this month, *by the way*?

George Did you know there's a Hope Street in New York?

Zippy You gonna go?

George It's my dream.

Zippy I've been to New York. New York is the most totally real place. WATT Brothers is quite like Macy's. Same vibe inside, as you make your way past the perfume, towards the wooden stairs and iron lift. It's cool.

Bungle See that pigeon at my feet? It's doing a dance: two steps in, poke head, turn 45 degrees, two steps back. Then sometimes he does an extra one step in. There's what's left of his Double Decker chocolate bar under my feet. I gave him that Double Decker. I think we might become friends. Poor pigeon. He's scared of feet.

Zippy I don't think the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope Street is that brilliant. Erm...I was sick at the bus stop, when I came for my audition last year.

George I read that all the walk/ don't walk signs are going from the streets of New York.

Bungle That's no fair if you can't read.

Zippy But you could work it out when everyone else was walking...or not!

Bungle I like green man-red man.

Zippy Idiot.

Bungle I'm waiting for Rod.

George I'm waiting for Google Earth.

Zippy I'm waiting for, for my life to/

George Everything is always changing on the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope.

I love the tiny wee shop where they sell hotdogs until 4am, unless 'we've sold out love'.

Zippy I suppose I do quite like WATT Brothers. I like the fact that they've got flag poles above the glass fronts, above the bus stop.

George Wouldn't it be WILD to see flags flying from wonderful WATT's?!

Zippy When I was sick, an old woman came out and gave me two clean white tissues. She asked me if I was 'alright hen?' I didn't understand what she was saying. I'd just got the train into Central from London. Wheeling my overnight up that hill to RSAMD. Make anyone sick.

George I'm a massive fan of the three party balloons outside Cut and Dried. The purple is pear shaped, the green one, round and the red one/

Zippy (*Interrupting.*) A middle aged woman in a grey suit with a wide black elastic waist band just came out of WATT Brothers. Not good.

George Her stomach rolls like totally awesome snowy valleys.

Zippy She lights a fag. There's a lot of smoke in the air on Sauchiehall and Hope.

George Look. How gorgeous is that? There are two black boots, one next door to the other. As if they're waiting to be polished, just on top of the sign in the street in front of my black 19 barred-backless bench.

Bungle Perhaps someone stole someone's boots so that they couldn't chase them?

George Perhaps an artist put them there?

Zippy There's two black orthopaedic boots. Resting in the street. What does it matter? The green machine will take them away.

George Badly dressed smoker puts her cigarette in the bin, just outside WATT Brothers.

Zippy She wears what the Americans call pumps.

George They're on top of the sign set into the pink and grey tiled pavement of Sauchiehall Street. What does it say?

Zippy Read it yourself.

George I can't get up.

Zippy (*Reading.*) Glasgow City Centre Millennium plan Sauchiehall Street Public Realm Project. Part financed by the European union. Supported by Atlas investments, Capital and regional properties Marks and Spencer plc.

George Awesome. I'll even say *splendid* and what's better than that?

Bungle The CCTV camera is pointing down toward Buchanan Galleries. Can I be seen? Right now? The camera is on top of a pole – a police pole. You can tell this because there is a chequered pattern in blue and yellow that has been half picked off and a sign saying Help Point in white on a blue background.

A tall black man in a long wool coat and a scarf that comes down to his knees on both sides has left a bag full of Macky D's on the bench. He got a phone call. He just leapt up, said, 'I love you'. And walked, well, ran off. I reckon there's a burger in there.

George The woman's cigarette has started a fire. There's smoke coming out of the bin outside WATT Brothers on the corner of S and H. Again. If I get up and put it out, Google might take their picture and then I'll just be a blur.

A white smear.

Zippy Like a comet trail?

George Like a plane trail.

Zippy Or last night's coffee table.

George Can you do it?

Zippy It'll put itself out.

George Look at that man. He looks sensible. I'd like to be that man when I grow up.

Zippy Look at him walking down Hope Street in his confident jeans and happy jacket. You could be him when you grow up.

George I'm 20!

Zippy In 20 years. You could. Why not? You could be him.

Bungle Further up the pole there is a notice and a telephone number 0141 2879999. Above that another yellow and blue checked pattern. But that hasn't been picked off.

Zippy Obviously.

Bungle Above the pattern are four grey speakers, they might be loud speakers, but I've never heard any sound come out of them. There's Rod coming down Hope Street on his way to work. He lives in the Flats at the top there.

He doesn't see me taking the bag of Macky D's. He's going over to the smoking bin. He pulls out the plastic bin inside the black metal frame. He looks around. Sees me. I try to look as if I'm not looking at him. 'Got some water?' he says. I look in my new McDonalds paper bag. There is a BIG MAC! But no water. I shake my head. 'Well can you get some do you think?' He says.

I go into The Works to ask for some water. But they haven't got any. I come back out. And there he is. My hero. Rod. He's put out the fire. 'Sorry' I say. 'You alright?' He asks. I nod. 'Go home' he says. I nod. At Rod. I wish he was my Dad.

George I sit between two spindly trees on my bench waiting for Google Earth to take their picture. The trees are set in little squares of stones. Tuft of grass at the foot of the spindle on the left hand side. On the right there are three cigarettes butts. There's always someone with a wheeling suitcase on the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope. There's always an old man who can't pick up his feet properly on Hope Street and so he scrapes the tiles of the street with his slip-on shoes. There's often a fire in the bin on the corner of Hope. Someone normally puts it out. I'm

scared if I move. I'll miss my chance. Once I've done this one. I can go.

Bungle Hope Street has traffic.

Zippy One way.

Bungle But Sauchiehall is for pedestrians. Cars and Pedestrians have to negotiate at this point who is more important.

George Red man. Green man. Don't walk. Walk.

Bungle There's an Evening Times newspaper stand on my right. When they're finished they park their stands behind WATT's opposite the Universal Bar in Sauchiehall Lane.

George There are total ribbons of old plastic caught in the branches of the trees. Suddenly there are three screams, I turn. It's ok. There's a young man, with cerebral palsy being pushed by his parents.

Bungle *(To the others.)* I want to talk to Rod.

Zippy and George look at each other.

Zippy Why don't you do 'Rod'? You can do happy jeans and confident jacket.

George You're the actor. I'm more visual.

Zippy I know. But.

George Not scared?

Zippy No.

Zippy plays Rod.

George Break a leg.

Rod I live at the top of Hope Street. I don't think anyone lives on the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope. My tower is being covered with insulating material. It's the colour of Hellman's mustard. In the sun, it's golden. Like a long Versace handbag or/

George Think Rod knows about style?

Rod Know more than you.

George With those sneakers?

Rod This, from the Invisible Man!

George What?

Rod Too young son.

Bungle Hurry up. (I really need to speak to him.)

Rod The yellow rock wool is getting painted now. From my flat I can see all over Glasgow. At the other end of Hope Street there's a new development of flats. City living, just beyond Hope. Then there's the Casino and then the river. My 'Ma' got off the Derry cattle boat down there 60 years ago. God knows she's still full of hope.

(As Zippy) You do her. You'd make a great 'Rod's Ma from Donegal'.

George Can I stay here? *(On/by the bench)*

Zippy (Yes.)

George Ok. *(Soft, gravelly Glaswegian/Donegal smokers voice of a woman in her 80s or more.)* 'You won't tell' *(Coughs.)*

Zippy *(Coaching George...doing a 'better' example)* You won't tell?

George *(Learning)* You won't tell.

Bungle Stop it. I've got to talk to Rod!!!

Zippy demonstrates Rod putting out the fire. S/he pulls out all of the rubbish in the bin then finds the burning material and stamps on it. Then puts the rubbish back into the bin as Bungle speaks.

Bungle Rod. He pulls out all the rubbish on to the floor. A lottery ticket. A picture of a missing girl. An empty nik-nack packet. A broken high heel. Green. An empty bottle of Buckfast. Rod puts out the fire. He always knows what to do. Although he struggles a bit getting the bin back in. He's there for ages shoving at it.

 'Hi'

Rod You do this?

Bungle As God is my witness.

Rod Get any sleep last night?

Bungle Bit.

Rod You been drinking?

Bungle Bit.

Rod Go home.

Bungle Can I come with you?

Rod I'm going to work.

Bungle Please.

Rod For fuck's sake. Stop this. I can't do anything for you.

Bungle What if I kill myself?

Rod Are you saying that you're suicidal?

Bungle Might be.

Rod If you are saying you're suicidal then. Do you want me to section you?

Bungle Fuck off.

Rod There's nothing I can do.

Bungle Fuck you. You're not my dad.

Zippy *(To Bungle.)* You're right. It is better at night. I do love Sauchiehall Street at night. It's a pure catwalk. I love how everyone looks on a Friday and Saturday night. A hundred thousand shoes sashay down Sauchiehall Street to the corner of Hope to get McDonalds.

Go on...do Rod's mum again.

George *(Playing Rod's mum.)* You won't tell anyone this will you? You'll no?

26 years ago I went to my doctor and he gave me the address of the alcohol council, on Hope Street. I stopped drinking 25 years ago. (This is private. Yes?)

Twenty six years ago I.

I was. I went to my doctor. I am an alcoholic.

But I did always think.

I wasn't ready then. But I did think. When I saw the address.

That that name. Hope. That it meant something.

...

Ok?

Zippy Purely splendid.

Bungle I like her. She's the reason Rod's so nice.

George I love the sound of suitcases rolling down Sauchiehall Street, even when it's nighttime. And you can just smell the sea when a big gust of wind blows up Hope Street from the river.

Rod There was a time when most suitcases didn't have wheels.

Bungle No!

Rod About ten years ago, early nineties really, people started getting wheels on their bags. Even on small bags. Now everyone's got wheels on their bags.

I feel my age on the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope on a Friday night. It's nighttime now. I'm walking home and I just want to stop for a moment and watch. I'm not doing any harm. I'm not doing anything wrong. I don't even really stop. I just slow right down so that I can see what's happening where the ambulance has pulled up, outside McDonalds. I decide to get a bag of chips. So that I see better. I hear a boy's been stabbed in the neck with a McDonalds plastic teaspoon. He has a white dressing now on his neck. There are other more superficial scratches on his neck. There's blood on the floor. Not much really. I've seen worse. The bouncers at the door of McDonalds are moaning. 'Why do they do it? Why cause so much bother?' As if they don't know. They must know why, in their heart of hearts.

Bungle Why?

Rod If you don't know I can't tell yer.

George At 11.45 at night it's really busy in Macky D's. Out of the pubs and into the clubs. Queue stretches for Studio, past 'Priceless Shoes'.

Bungle It's nighttime now. A man who has wet himself is ordering a burger. He is stuffing his pockets with salt sachets. It's not the same old man who's staggered up Hope Street half an hour ago. Up toward the Royal, feet like weights, walking under water, swayed by unexpected currents. Clutching at the scaffolding outside McFees: Fish from the sea.

Zippy It's (*say the actual time*) now. You'll have to imagine that it's actually 11.48. Nighttime. Jane has been out for dinner and is now driving home, back to her garden flat in Morningside. She was careful to only drink water.

Do you want to be Jane again for a bit?

Bungle nods.

Jane Normally I don't think adverts influence me. But I did like the advert for the Jaguar XF. I liked the close ups of the strands of the woman's long hair suddenly dissolved in sparkling-blue light. I liked the minute

inspection of the dark stubs of the man's chin hair. The car spins round, so do they. It's all very exciting in blurry blue, through the mountains, speeding speeding into the night. I realised that not only I had been influenced, but that I was embarrassed by it, when I bought the car and drove it home humming the Jaguar XF theme tune: 'Hush' by Deep Purple.

Zippy Right now (*actual time, probably about 8pm*) it's sunset. Won't even be dusk until 10ish. It's just starting to get dark now. Right now two middle-aged persons make a dash for it across the pedestrian crossing even though the red man is still on. When will they grow up? They were born in the 60s! When will they understand that's why there's a pedestrian zone? To keep people like them safe. As soon as it starts getting dark, everybody starts dicing with death!

George For the past month, I have left my bench at midday. Go to bed. Then I get up after dusk. When the sun is six degrees below the horizon it's called civil dusk. Civilization loosens its grip on reality and so do I.

I draw white plane trails into my system from my blue table. It's (*today's day*) I put on my suit. I go out dancing. Then at dawn I go to what I like to call my civic couch and wait for Google Earth to make me a star.

Bungle Rod! Rod! How was work? Did you have a good day?

Zippy Dancing shoes?!

George You betcha!

Zippy Work shoes.
Walking, fancy, that all look the same from a distance, broken, orthopaedic, jellies, wellies, too big, too small, depressing, red-ruby-witch-killers.
I'm not Rod. I don't want to be Rod.

Rod/Zippy pushes Bungle.

Bungle He only gives me a little push. A friendly little push. It's just this tiny little tap really. But I've been drinking all day. And although I don't really feel it, because I've sort of forgotten what it would be like to be sober now, I'm actually probably quite drunk. I stumble.

George No! Stop. That's not right. I saw what happened.

Zippy In college (at the RSAMD) they tell us about this German writer who died in 1956, called Bertolt. Bertolt Brecht.

One day Bert wrote about an accident in a street. Imagine if that happened now. Imagine what would happen if that young girl over

there. Do you see? The drunk one. Let's call her Bungle. What would happen if Bungle were to step off of the edge of the curb, like this...

Other versions of the accident are demonstrated.

And she fell into the path of Jane's Jaguar XF speeding up Hope on her way home after working a 12 hour day and then having an important dinner.

I'll do it again, so you can see exactly what she did, I'll do it in slo-mo...she staggered...

The musician or perhaps the Cello becomes Bungle and the accident is performed again.

Bungle Boots. Boots! (*Pointing to where they have 'been' since the top of the show.*)

Zippy That's pure dead brilliant darling.

Bungle A black pool of blood, plumes slowly, from underneath my head. It is *exactly* like in the movies. We are one block away from Cineworld. You can see it from here. Someone in the crowd notices this irony straight away. 'It's just like in the film I *just* saw'. She whispers. And there is this wave of 'yeah'. It's so strong that *that* boy, who was going to become my friend, steps forward to actually touch the blood which is now almost by their feet. 'Don't'. says Rod. The woman who did it gets out the car. She says: 'You mustn't touch'.

The actor playing 'George' performs the action of going to touch the blood and being stopped.

And another shiver round the crowd. Of course, Colombo, Tennyson, Rebus, Taggart, if they've taught us anything, they taught us not to touch. Clues could be lost. Must not disturb the scene.

I was down on the bridge last night. I was looking across the water. A young man walked past and said. 'Don't do it'. Well. I smiled at him. Because I didn't have any plans to do anything. I was just thinking. But he turned and looked at me dead serious and then he said again. 'Don't do it', but in that version of an American accent that a dude from Glasgow would do.

'Don't do it'

And now I am dead. Weird. Huh?

Zippy Jane dials 999.

Jane Ambulance. Ambulance and police. Sauchiehall and Hope.

Zippy I love mobile phones. I love that nowadays you hear all sorts of unlikely people saying 'I love you' in public. Bluff Yorkshire sons tell their mums they love them, on trains, buses...in the street. They sound so sincere. They sound publicly lost in private moments. Mobile phones have brought love out...out of the...telephone box.

Jane We estimated on our tenth wedding anniversary, we estimated that on an average day, we kissed twenty times. We kissed before falling asleep. 'Night-night'. Kiss-kiss. Then, 'Oh. Did you turn the heating off?' 'Yes'. Kiss-kiss. 'Night-night then...' Kiss. 'Yep. Night-night'. Kiss.

There's eight without even trying. Then in the morning before I went to work. 'Bye, love'. Kiss. 'What you wearing that tie for? Wait. There. That's better'. Kiss-kiss. What we on now? 10? 12? Another five on entering the house and another one for the dinner he cooked me or two...if it was steak...ha-ha, and a few more because I washed and dried up. 20 easy. Now that makes 140 a week, 7,280 a year. We got married at 18. If we were still together it would have been 247,520 kisses. Approximately. But I only had 174,720. I haven't been kissed by anyone for ten years. Ten years yesterday.

I don't know what would happen if someone kissed me. Might wet myself.

I'm missing 72,800 kisses. It takes an average of 2 seconds per kiss. 145,600 seconds, that's 2,467 minutes...that's 40 hours, so only a day and a half.

It's not so bad when you look at it like that.

I have killed that girl. The girl I saw here this morning. The girl who looks a bit like me.

George Cover her up. Quick.

Jane You can't cover her up. The police will be here soon. Then they will cover her up.

There's a little boy and his dad who pass by. Dad makes boy go on the other side...so he doesn't see the blood. The man is wearing faded, light blue jeans. He has very straight legs. The boy is just like his dad. They swing their straight legs in *exactly* the same way. I used to wish I had straight legs. Now I wish...

Who do I talk to? When I talk like this. In my head? Oh. Please. Let it be alright. Please, please God, make this all alright. Please God.

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to knock you down.

Why don't the police come? Why don't the ambulances come? Why must she stay like this on the floor? And now this boy...this boy wants to touch her. We all know you can't do that. They'll think that *I* tried to cover it up. I don't want to do the wrong thing.

George You can't leave her there like meat.

Jane He takes off his suit jacket and puts it over her, then goes to the bin, finds some rubbish, a white plastic bag, a crisp packet an empty coke can. He arranges these around and on her. He puts two bottle tops on her eyes.

Rod What are you doing?
The police. The police will be here soon. They'll need to collect the evidence.
It was an accident. I hardly touched her. She fell. It was the sh...sho...shoes

Jane The man who the girl was running away from, knocks the objects away. He even takes the bottle tops from off her eyes.

Rod Sh...sh...she wasn't

George It'll all be on camera. What you did. Both of you.

Jane It's pointing the wrong way. Look.

George Everyone looks up at the camera.
You'll no get away with it! I saw.

Rod Come on, mate. Put your coat on. You'll catch *your* death next.

Zippy He appeals to the crowd.

George Please help me to move her. We can't just leave her here.

Rod They'll arrest you, if you're not careful.

George I'd rather go to prison than let my sister lie out here in the street.

Rod She's not your sister.

George How do you know?

Rod Her dad's one of my patients.

George She gave me her Double Decker. She could see I needed it and I couldn't move.

Rod You've eyes like saucers, Son. Don't want the police to catch you with whatever's in your blood stream. Eh?

Jane You stupid stupid boy. You don't understand. She must be left, so that the police can do their job. What would happen if the police couldn't do their job? There'd be chaos. That's what.

George Her spirit is going to get trapped, forever, if you don't cover her up now. At least her eyes. Eh? Don't you think she suffered enough? You want her in pain for All Eternity.

Jane That's not true.

George I'm not a kid!

Jane I'm not...Dear/

George /She has rights. Her spirit has rights

Jane For God's sake. She doesn't have a 'spirit'. And even if she did. I'm sure 'God' wouldn't be so cruel as to make her walk in pain for All Eternity. Isn't 'God' love?

George No.

Jane I'm sure he is.

George God is fierce. /She's

Jane /You're mad
...
We're just waiting a few moments for the police to arrive.

George It's been hours

Jane No...not even a minute.

Rod He's young. He's in shock. We all are, probably. You've never seen that much blood before. It's normal to react

Jane Overreact.

Zippy How you supposed to act?

George Don't pretend I'm not here! I'm here. What do I have to do for people to see me?

Jane Oh, we all know you're here, dear.

George I can't bear it. I can't bear to look, look at her, so drained, so horrific, brutal...dead.
You killed her.

Jane Who are you? Eh? To say what did and did not happen.

I'm standing by the traffic lights where Hope Street passes Sauchiehall.
I've parked my car on the pedestrian bit. The body is just in front of
the black public bench. It's the end of the world. If only this didn't
happen.

I killed her.

If my husband was still alive I wouldn't be here.

If I had had that baby when I was 16 I would not be here.

If I'd not had that date.

If I'd taken the fucking fucking train.

If...If...If...

If I had taken that job.

If I hadn't, I'd be on my sofa, right now with some hot milk and Ian Rankin. But...

Fuck it. It wasn't my fault. She was obviously drunk. She came out of nowhere. She threw herself in front of my car on purpose. She wanted to die. That's suicide....the most selfish thing in the world. To make someone else kill you, just so you don't have to live. You know. None of us like it. But we all have to. What would happen if everyone who wanted to die, just did? Imagine all the bodies...piling up in the streets...if all the desperate...

Shit.

I killed her.

Oh God.

My life will never be the same.

I will never be the same.

I can't move.

I passed my test first time.

Zippy A policewoman arrives in a car. I'll describe everything as accurately as possible. She has brown hair. She has a tired face. She is maybe 30. There's a policeman with her who has a funny shaped nose. He is much taller than her. He has black hair and is younger than she is. George talks to the police woman.

George Yes Marm.
 Sorry.
 Because it was the right thing to do.
 No. No. I didn't know that.
 I ain't done nothing wrong.
 But, it was her. And him.
 I am calm. I was just looking after her soul. She's a human being...she's got a soul.

Never seen anything like it. The way she opened up like that. I'd rather die than let her down. It's more important to look after people you don't know. If you can't look after someone who was nice enough to give you a Double Decker when you were a bit cold...what hope is there?

Hope is everything.

Zippy You'll need to go with them now. You shouldn't have touched.

Jane & Rod Yes, officer. I'll make a full statement. Here is my driving license.

Jane She stepped out in front of me, on purpose. Yes. I'll do a breath test. Yes. A tragedy waiting to happen.

Rod She told me this morning she was suicidal. I work with her father on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Yes. Very ill. I can give you the address. Of course.

Rod's Mum From the cemetery of Iskaheen you could see the Derry boat in Lough Foyle leaving for Glasgow. We watched it the day they buried my da. I squeezed little Roddy's hand and asked him if he wanted to have new shoes for Christmas.

These days I wake up before dawn. I haven't got the strength in my knees. I'd like to prune the bushes. But Roddy's very good. When it's light I take the bus into town. Have a good look around.

Sometimes I get there so early I have to wait for the shops to open. Then I sit on the bench and smoke a cigarette. My last vice. I like the boy who sits in the white suit sometimes. I think sometimes perhaps he is my guardian angel.

If I knew about this what would I say? If I'm honest I'd say what's done is done. Don't want anything to happen to my little Roddy.

Zippy When Google took their picture again there wasn't a white star on Hope Street.

Bungle When the street cleaners came the next day they didn't completely wash off all the blood. There are dark grooves between the tiles where my body lay.

Rod's Mum Have you noticed how many theatres there are on Hope Street? The Arches is at the bottom, then the National Theatre of Scotland, then the RSAMD, and then Theatre Royal right opposite my little Roddy's place. I always like a show. And Rod's going to take me to New York to see Brits off Broadway. Imagine that. From the Derry Ferry to New York, New York in eighty six years.

Zippy What do you hope for at the theatre? Some people come to the theatre because they fancy the actors. I had ...not a stalker exactly, but not a fan either....somewhere in between...Also I had a lover who liked to see me on stage...preferred it to the real thing. S/he said I was better looking under the lights. Sometimes I wonder if I became an actor because I'm such a flirt. My mum says I do it for the attention.

Also Lion Chambers, the derelict white building one block down, the top floor was built to be an artist studio. I do love that building.

I thought I'd try and do a shift on the bench for George while he's with the police. He'll be alright. I've borrowed his suit. It's amazing the things you notice. Man behind me rolling a fag yawns and it sounds like whale song. When he finishes he talks quietly to himself.

A man with super thin legs and really tight jeans walked past carrying two identical shopping bags.

Jane lies down on the floor where Bungle's body was and the other two take it in turns to kiss her. Two seconds per kiss as the lights fade to blackout.

Rod I'm inside Macky D's. It's 2 am.

People look in the windows. Their faces in the space where your own is reflected.

It's dark enough outside so that the fat boy, his father, a blond girl and her boyfriend, who are all sitting at those screwdown, brown cushioned seats, behind me, look like they are out on the pavement. And then a cyclist rides straight through them. Like magic.

I imagine what the accident looked like from here.

The music describes for the last time the accident.

Fat boy sucks at his milkshake, man presses buttons on his mobile phone with his thumb. Home soon. Me too. (*Obviously the answer to 'I love you'.*) Go on. Tell who ever it is that you love them!

I ought to go home. A policeman is looking in the bins with a torch outside the RSAMD.

The fire hydrant is loose outside Vero Moda. It makes a great clunking sound when you walk on it. So quiet now that I can hear the footsteps of pedestrians in trainers, on the other side of Hope. Noise ebbs and flows. A nose blows!

The boogie Bus goes past – 20 people. The passenger side – man calls and waves at girls. Four girls in exactly the same silk scarf dresses floating in the bitter wind and rain. Gorgeous. It's 2 am.

Blood on the floor. Washed away by the rain. By the way.

Then I see a family. At least there's a man, a woman and a young girl, must be about 14. They are selling plastic flowers and pink sparkling cowboy hats. I wonder where they come from?

The End.

Market Place

Performed as part of a Factory Floor showcase at Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff on the 20th March 2010. Also, partially re-written and performed twice on the 10th September 2010 at Chapter Arts Centre. This was part of the TaPRA conference Scenography Working group.

Characters/performers:

Lucy: A satellite

James: A composer and piano player.

Trevor: the light technician and operator.

Lucy is sitting on top of the piano. James is playing syncopated music as the audience come in. Lucy acknowledges the audience in a friendly manner. She is wearing a white top and has diamond-encrusted gold/silver mirror sunglasses.

She indicates to James to either pause or to play more quietly as she is about to speak.

Lucy Hello.

I'm Lucy.

I'm a satellite in asynchronous orbit. At my apogee I'm 999 kilometers above the Earth. At my perigee I'm at 968 kilometers above the Earth, which means I'm pretty stable. I was launched in 2006 Common Era.

I'm Lucy in the sky, this is James on the piano and Trevor is in the box.

Piano might do a little Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds music.

From up here I can see Chapter Arts Centre. Trevor, if you could give me a blackout, I'll show you what you look like from space.

Lights go out and Lucy shines a mag light on the floor.

There...can you see it? There you are in Chapter Arts Centre, in the space between Market Road and Market Place, between Carmarthen Street and LLandaff Road.

Lucy lights own face.

Sometimes I'm called a key hole because even at my apogee, 999 kilometres from the Earth, I can create and transmit an image of something as small as a front door anywhere on Earth, although you will have to wait until I'm, you know, overhead, or use one of the other 26,000 satellites orbiting Earth right now, although not all of them

have cameras, especially not as powerful as mine, but that's still loads though...

...and unless the door was lying flat on the ground you wouldn't be able to actually see the key hole, but look

Light back on the floor.

there you are, down there, in the space between Market Place and Market Place.

You are so beautiful. Just look at the magnificence of the yellow and grey angles across the forecourt of Chapter Arts Centre. Look at the way there are plastic bags wrapped around the seats of the 11 bikes on the left of Chapter Arts Centre as you are facing north and the way the lights on the right are only just proud of the ground. Those lights. They are so beautifully modest. You are a beautiful place; complex and enigmatic. I particularly love the cunning way Library Street and Market Place are both one way, but Market Place is two-way. That's genius!

Right now I'm facing South, like the centre. East is my favourite direction. That's East. (*Demonstrates East.*)

Where the sun rises every morning.

I worship the sun. It's my favourite star in the whole universe!

Trevor could you bring the lights up really really slowly, like it's dawn?

General cover starts to come back up gradually.

Thanks. Isn't that lovely. Trevor, you're *really* good!

When I'm in the dark, on the dark side of the Earth, I love waiting for those first fiery rays to break over the curve of the Earth, all the wings of all the thousands of satellites to the East of me, catch the light before it touches the earth, it dawns on us, before you and oh, how we love it, our solar panels shimmer and sparkle. Like the wings of flies. Those flies on the outside of this building are 200 times bigger than real flies, so I know you know what flies look like up close, but imagine them in colour, 3d, orbiting the earth...amazing, really extraordinary, awesome, in fact.

There is a cloud of giant metallic flies orbiting the Earth and I'm one of them. Isn't that amazing!? I love that.

James imitates a text message alert. Lucy ignores it.

So, there you are Canton. East of you is the River Taff, then London, Amsterdam, Kazakhstan, Vancouver and Eire.

James imitates a text message alert again.

Oh. Alright. Excuse me. I forgot to you know...turn off...

Lucy picks up an object the same shape and size approximately as an iPhone, (maybe a passport?) and reads.

‘Hi Lucy. The disparity between your apogee and perigee is increasing. You’re becoming alarmingly unstable’.

To audience.

I feel fine.

Texting back.

‘Boost my orbit’.

James ‘sends’ the message.

(*To James.*) Thanks.

That’s not happened before.

So. There you are in Chapter Arts Centre. Or CAC. It’s 18.06. The sun set here only eight minutes ago. Or rather the Earth spun out of the light of the sun only eight minutes ago.

I love Market Place. It begins so formally. First the police station, the solicitors and Church. Then it becomes domestic right up until the caution of the 20 miles an hour traffic sign at the end of Camarthan Street. It’s 18.00 hours, which means it’s time to go home. I imagine the solicitor struggling with those difficult cords that work the blinds. They keep twisting the wrong way or pulling back entirely and all she wants to do is to make them lie flat so that people outside know that the office is closed and can’t see inside, can’t see how many computers there are to steal. I wonder if the policemen and women and the Reverend and the solicitors live on Market Road behind those gorgeous domestic doors? Of course from space I can’t see them because they are hidden at the back of porches, but sometimes, when cleaning is being done I see that welcome mats are beaten in the front gardens.

Another text message alert.

Really?!

James nods.

Flipping, fiddlefaddling ek!

(Reads.) We're bringing you back down to Earth. Right now.

Prepare for re-entry.

Some find it quite hard.

Text message sound

(Reads.) Ready?

No!

James takes us on Lucy's epic journey from space to Market Place with music. Lucy mimes this journey with her sunglasses and then arrives on the stage where she shone the torch to demonstrate where Chapter Arts Centre is. She dusts herself off from the enormous journey.

Normally satellites come down in the Pacific Ocean or the Kazakhstani desert. But I'm here. On the corner of Market Road and Market Place.

I don't really blend in.

Don't really know what to do.

It's tomorrow morning. I'm in front of Market House and it's nearly dawn, my favourite. There's not many people about. Not many lights on in the houses on Market Road. But all the lights are on in Chapter Arts Centre. There are people inside. Wow. They are cleaning in there.

Wow. This is truly awesome. It's all so detailed.

Oh it's raining! Amazing. It's actually raining. The rain is making my face actually wet. Total water is running down my cheeks and falling on to the ground. Wow. It's awesome here. Market Road really is amazing, when you're actually in it. Everything looks so different when you're close up...in higher res...also it's a lot warmer than space.

The rain is light and quick. It bounces off the tiles in the pavement on the corner of Market Road and Market Place in white flashes.

The sun comes up, but the rain keeps on coming down.

Suddenly, there is a man in an army coat walking past, he wears an orange shirt, a hat and backpack. He looks in the bin by the no entry sign on the corner of Market Road and Market Place, where the shop is.

What an amazing and strange bin. From above it's just a green square, but now I can see that it's cuboid. AND it has got glorious red detailing around its neck, where you put the rubbish in and then at its foot as well. That red is fabulous the way it contrasts with the deep aqua marine of the over all design. That's talent.

Oh. And there is something sticking out of it. It's an umbrella. Wow. I don't want to get too wet and I can see from here that there is an umbrella, sticking out of that gorgeous bin. But I suppose that umbrella must be broken so I'm going to leave it there.

Look. There's a gold star on the ground. Someone got a gold star for good work at school and then lost it. That's a bit sad. That's maybe even tragic. There are two dark metal telecom covers by the no entry sign to Market Place. The no entry sign is old and weather worn. The iron is very corroded at its base. I know how that can feel. Rust is bad for metal. But it is so beautiful when you look at it closely. Look at that dark brown rust, underneath the peeled-back pale metal alloy. Oh and that vivid orange rust, it is the same colour as lichen on a sea wall. The metal at the base of the no entry sign is growing towards an organic old age...

At the base of the no entry sign there are tiny bits of broken glass, like a constellation of stars. If I relax my eyes and lean back a bit they look like Virgo, the woman in the sky.

There are also double yellow lines, cigarettes and chewing gum on the floor. There's just so much to take in. So much to understand. It's already 9.00 hours on the corner of Market Road and Market Place on the 21st March 2010.

A man in a black jacket walks past with a limp. Oh. Wait. Something is happening. Directly in front of me there are two cars going in opposite directions and they have stopped and are now facing each other. Ah, see, I understand what is happening here. They have to decide now who is going to go first and...and... look, now while they are looking into each other's eyes across their dashboards a van comes wizzing down Library Street and stops *as well* at the junction of Market Road and Market Place. What's going to happen?! This is what they call drama!

They all three of them look at each other over their dashboards. One of the cars says Picasso on the side and there is a woman driving that one with curly blond hair. She is listening to music. She isn't doing anything. She is waiting to see what the others are going to do. She doesn't really seem to be there. She is with the music. There is a man in the grey car. He has glasses and wild hair. There is a man in the van as well. But I can't see him very well from here. There is too much light reflecting on his windshield.

They are all looking at each other in front of the shop on the corner with lots of words in its name. It's called EASY SHOP, Lifestyle Express. The door to EASYSHOP goes *burbub*.

And then they all move. I didn't see what happened. They just all three of them moved. First the grey car, then the Picasso and then the van. The van turns left and parks outside Lifestyle express. It takes its place outside the window printed Easy shop, Easy shop, Newspapers, Wine, Confectionary, Frozen Dairy. Sim cards £4.99 with free credit. How brilliant it that? But also, 'Attention all property security marked and traceable'. *Burbub*. The driver of the van comes back out and drives away. Wow.

In the two windows above the shop one window has a stereo, the other a computer monitor, the curtains are closed. Someone lives there.

I wonder what it is like to be inside?

A woman wearing a blue rain mac with the hood up uses her shopping trolley as a walking support. She pushes it in front of her. My nose is a bit sore, from re-entry. I rub it hard and she notices me, standing by the doorway to Market House. Next to the sign for BAFTA and the black skull. I'm getting cold but it's definitely not as cold as space. She's still looking at me. I'd quite like it if she would come and talk to me.

She's coming towards me. It's proper morning now. The sun is much higher in the sky. It's quite busy now.

A young girl, in a scarlet mac and a white woolly hat goes past. She walks down Market Place and turns on to Library Street. There's a Tesco bag flying in the bare branches of the tree, just as you turn right from Market Road towards Chapter. It's wonderful how that white plastic with the blue stripes bounces about up there, above a girl, about 17, who lights a cigarette and moves on, down Market Road towards Cowbridge East.

The woman with the trolley is only a little bit closer now. She is as slow as Venus.

Jackdoors rattle. It's busier than at dawn, but it's still calm.

A woman with two enormous blue bags of washing is coming down Market Place. I look at her and she looks at me.

Another old woman in a marine but not waterproof coat, is also pushing a trolley in front of her as a walking aid, but her trolley is red. She passes another young woman pushing a toddler in a waterproof pushchair. Then suddenly a silver Vauxhall: two men in the front, with two pink furry pigs hanging from the mirror. A Sikh man with a folded

up black umbrella walks past me with so much purpose. Just as he passes he looks straight at me. His eyes go all round and his eyebrows go right up really quick. He is really surprised to see me there. Also, I forgot to tell you that I'm wearing two hats because although it's not *as* cold as space, it's still really quite cold. Off he goes. Gosh. I love the way he walks. He really falls from one foot to the next.

Are you mad to wear two hats in the cold or not to? There's a good question.

There is a pile of old leaves gathered where the noses of the parked cars on Market Place point. These leaves must have mulched here since autumn last year. From here I can see a green thing flapping in the decomposing leaves. The first old woman, who is about 80, is just going past the mulch now. The other one has overtaken her and oh, she's stopped her and they start talking. They are so pleased to see each other. A woman in heels comes down fast from Lifestyle Express, opens her car, by the mulched leaves and puts two small bags of groceries in the boot. A French stick. She has brown hair, grey at the sides in a pony tail. She might be in her 40s. She looks tired. But it also looks like she's going to have a lovely dinner when she gets home.

My back hurts a bit from standing up all this time. It has stopped raining. So I go and sit on the wall on the corner of Market Place and Market Road.

An empty minibus turns right out of Market Place. On its side is printed VEST. Voluntary Emergency Service Transport. There is a woman with two dogs, one black and one golden. Are they spaniels? So cute! The first of the three bollards on Market Place leans to the right. It's beyond 90 degrees for sure. I think maybe one day someone didn't notice that there were two NO ENTRY signs at the end of Market Place and crashed into that bollard to avoid crashing into a car whizzing down Library Road.

A text message sound that is completely ignored.

Look at Market House. Isn't it brilliant! There is a white P inside a circle with an arrow pointing to the right as you face it – I think it means there is parking to the right. On the other side, the left of the building there is a P with a circle around it with an arrow that bends at a right angle indicating I think that there is parking at the first right turn. I love cars. I think now that I'm back here on Earth, I should get a car and my own parking space.

The girl with the big bags of laundry is back, walking in the other direction. What does it feel like to carry big bags back and forth all day?

There are lots of signs everywhere about parking. Some are printed, official, absolutist: No Parking, others are more relative, Permit Holders Only 8.00 am to 10 pm and others are hand-made, weather worn, explanatory, Garage, No Parking.

My back hurts. My head hurts. I'm a bit travel sick I think. I've come a very long way since yesterday.

The Echo is on sale in Lifestyle Express. There's a white metal sign rusting on the corners, a red dragon, upright, on the right hand side as you look at it. ON SALE HERE. Then there's a grey dragon above the red one: Is it supposed to be like a shadow? GEM security light flicks back and forth. Look closely on the metal sign and you'll see stickers, which say I AM FAMOUS and FREE LOVE.

Nearby another sign. Keep Driveway Clear, Residents Parking. The high call of seagulls and suddenly, on the easterly wind, the smell of the sea. From the Channel. There are no smells in space either. It's a vacuum.

James makes car horn noise.

A woman about to pull out left into Market Road sounds her horn, it makes me jump. Then I wave at her. But she ignores me. Oh. I get it. She did it to warn any on coming traffic. To avoid the kind of *drama* I witnessed a few hours ago.

There are lovely looking houses on Market Road. The houses on Market Road seem to be made of stone. The corners and around the windows have bricks painted white. I love that.

What it would be like to be inside?

Nobody seems to mind me being here. I don't feel like I'm bothering anyone.

Now that the rain has stopped I decide that I'm going to look up.

I've never looked up before.

Will it hurt?

Lucy looks up very slowly.

Oh. Wow. It's amazing! A pigeon flaps down from the spire at the end of Market Road. Thick grey clouds pass by quick.

I lean back against the rails on the wall on the corner of Market Road and Market Place. I look up. This is much better. I'm going to stay like this forever I think. When I was in Space I had an inclination of 120

degrees. Perhaps I'm just better at obtuse angles? Looking up helps me hear things better. I hear

A woman's voice say, 'It's not good for you' and a young voice says, 'But I like it mum'.

I can hear water falling underneath the AIR TIGHT INSPECTION COVER behind me.

I can hear the wail of a police siren, an ambulance. A van with splashy tires goes past. And then the sound of four small hard wheels and then

'I can talk to you now'.

Someone is talking to me. Someone is actually talking to me. In my ear. I move slowly so that I'm back at 90 degrees to the earth.

It's the old woman with the red shopping trolley.

She has an Irish voice.

Where did you get your trolley? I ask.

James plays the old woman's answer, Lucy translates.

Argos.

When did you get it?

James plays the answer.

She bought it when she retired. She's 80 now and retired when she was 69. She used to work in the kitchens with the nuns but it's all gone to wrack and ruin.

A man on a bike, with his phone to his ear says, 'But what about the goat cheese though'.

James talks as old lady again, Lucy listens and then translates for audience.

The woman with the red square trolley has never gone into Chapter Arts Centre. 'I was going to once, but it just didn't happen. I knew it when it was a school. Canton is a very happy place. People come and go. The cars go round and round'.

James continues to talk as old lady with the piano.

The old lady is taking out her phone. It's an iPhone she explains. It's the latest thing. She loves her iPhone she says. She presses her finger on the screen a few times and suddenly there's a picture of the Earth,

just how I used to see it from space. Then she types in Chapter Arts Centre and we zoom back down to Earth just like I did yesterday, until you can almost make out the green bin outside Lifestyle Express.

‘Do you want to have a go on street view?’ she asks.

Well. I guess I do.

And then suddenly I can’t believe it...we’re looking at the very corner of Market Road and Market Place. But I can’t see us.

Where are we? I ask.

We’re not in the picture, because the picture was taken last year. Look, see and she moves along to Chapter Arts Centre and it looks completely different. It’s got an orange sign and the flies aren’t there.

Where are the flies? I ask. I’m getting a bit upset.

‘It’s ok’, says the old woman. They’re coming. This is the past. It’s not now. Look, see that big man in blue crossing the road. He’s not here now either. And it’s summer, look the trees are green. Not like now.

This is really weird. I mean. Bloody hell. It’s amazing too though. Right!

I really like this woman. What’s your name?

James answers.

That’s a gorgeous name. I’m Lucy. Lucy in the sky.

Although I’m not in the sky anymore.

James responds

No. But I know *you* now.

James responds

An outsider, I suppose.

A pretty girl laughs as she comes out of Lifestyle Express. She is with a boy. She tells him ‘Oh fuck off’. He wants one of her sweets that she must have bought from Lifestyle express.

Their mate is a gangle of a 15 year old white boy, cheeks as red as strawberry jelly. He crosses the road towards them.

Look. Here. I show Phyllis the brick at the top of the column, next to the black railings on the corner of Market Road and Market Place.

James 'says' 'Isn't that beautiful' as Phyllis.

Oh yes. It really is. You could never see *that* from space.

TARRIQ has written his name in capital letters on the first brick pillar on the corner of Market Road and Market place. **Julia** has written the first letter of her name with a capital letter, but the rest in lower case. They wrote their names in tippex pen on the orange brick.

Are they in love?

James answers 'Yes, they are like Romeo and Juliet'.

Will you come inside Chapter Arts Centre with me? I've never been inside before either.

James answers: 'No. But why don't you come and have a cup of tea at my place?'

I've never been inside at all.

James: 'Why not?'

I don't know.

James: 'Why are you scared of Market Place?'

I'm not scared of Market Place I love it here. I don't ever want to leave.

James responds.

It's very good for the shops. The girls on the check out in Tesco's are lovely. Phyllis talks to everyone she can, everyday and there are lots of people about. A young man goes past and says; 'How are you Phyllis?' As if to prove it.

But something really wonderful.

It's all pretty good. I've been here since 1948 and I've always liked it.

James: Princess Margaret came here in 1975. She was really beautiful.

Oh. I know. Princess Margaret came here in the seventies. She was really beautiful.

Yes. She was.

James says goodbye.

Goodbye.

Previously on Market Place there was Tarriq and Julia, there was the visit from Princess Margaret, there was a Market once, a real market on Market Place. For over almost a thousand years people came here to buy and sell and talk and find things out. First it was mead and berries and geese, then it was cows and now there are cars.

Just look at it. Who couldn't love Market Place?

It's nearly dusk, tomorrow evening now. I don't want to spend another night outside but I'm still so scared of going in.

I spent a long time walking up and down outside those eight houses this afternoon. If a curtain moved or a light went on, it made me jump. Here in the safety of outside, I watch those chimneys. I was watching the doorways of the homes on Market Road. Beautiful doorways. I can see that now. They are every bit as beautiful as I thought they would be, with mats with the word 'welcome' printed on them. I wanted to take a photograph but I couldn't. I must have lost my camera on re-entry... And even if I could I would have felt bad about it. I thought about the Street View van taking photographs of fuzzy faced people. *It* didn't feel bad. It just went ahead and took its photographs, but I felt bad and when I saw the shadow of someone behind one of those frosted glass doors and I ran away. I wanted to go inside Lifestyle Express. I stood by the door for a bit. There's a Sikh guy in there listening to brilliant bouncy music, syncopated like my orbit... that made me feel good and I went for a long syncopation round the city.

Night. Cardiff... so full of such vivid images. The stone animals outside the Castle, with their amber eyes and their malevolent shapes hunched over the wall in the beating light of the passing cars. As I walked across the bridge and looked to the North, the stadium was behind me in all its phosphorescent glory, but I looked in the other direction across the water that runs through Bute Park, no lights line the river... it was totally dark and I really liked that. Then I made my way back up Cowbridge Road.

I watched a programme called Gavin and Stacy in the window of Richer Sounds and wished that I had the guts to go into The Cod Father, because I'm starving.

And now I'm back here at the front of Chapter Arts Centre. From here I can see the backs of the houses that run from the police station to Lifestyle Express easy shop. There are four chimney stacks, 32 chimney pots, red-orange, clay ceramics.

My brother lives in one of those houses. I'm standing outside Chapter Arts Centre facing south. It's raining again, but if you squash yourself into the corner you can stand there for about two hours before the rain reaches you. My brother is a 'normal' person. Well. He's not a satellite. He doesn't much like going outside at all. He goes out in his car on Sundays and looks at views from across his dashboard. Monday to Friday he gets up in the morning and goes to work and comes home in the evening and goes to sleep before midnight and does it all again the next day. Him and his wife have been looking after my little boy since I went into orbit in 2008. That was the last time I was inside. We grew up in that house with Nan, for the first five years anyway. Ten for my brother. Inside it is dark and warm. The front door is the best part of the house. There are ceramic tiles on each side of the doorways, they shine. I used to polish them with my breath when I was little. Perhaps that's when I started to like being an outsider. It's not the Great Outdoors that I love, it's outside. It is Market Place that I love.

I've been thinking that if I can go inside Chapter Arts Centre then I might be able to go inside my old home.

Inside Chapter Arts Centre it's a bit like a market, all those people, I push my nose up against the glass front. Everyone looks so beautiful inside, all talking and drinking and eating and talking.

There is a group of mostly younger men standing at the end of the bar, there is one woman with them with glasses put back on her head, she is nodding as the man talks. He is wearing a soft hooded jacket. The hood of the jacket is white and furry. There is a lovely young man with a serious haircut and serious glasses talking to another man who has a haircut that is so bad that I think it might be ironic...he is drinking a bottle of beer. The serious man has a ticket in his hand that flaps when he gesticulates.

He looks a bit like...

The automatic doors open and the noise roars into the quiet Sunday evening. Wow.

The End

How does queer theory about time and place guide the dramaturgical principles of the LRE process?

The first part of the LRE playwriting process is to repeat the ‘civic couch’ exercise in a place less than five minutes walk from the theatre where the play will be performed. This process discovers and creates a range of different kinds of queerness in a specific time and place. The knowledge that emerges from the ‘civic couch’ process in turn shapes how I re-write those texts into plays, in dialogue with the dramaturgical principles of playwriting. As I outlined in the introduction I use two key dramaturgical principles: One, that to create a scene a playwright needs to represent a character/actor, a time and a place and second, that action makes those elements dramatic. The difficult question of what ‘representation’ is and how it works means that I understand the practice of playwriting to continuously negotiate with these principles. The material experience of each place is integral to the process of structuring the texts produced through it. This helps me understand more clearly that the content of each play is inseparable from its formal structuring, which leads me to reflect that the way a writer physically writes can meaningfully affect the outcome of a playwriting process: the play in performance.

The three elements of a scene (character, time and place) in the LRE plays are dramaturgically organized around and by the ‘civic couch’ process in a number of integrated ways. First, I use the ‘civic couch’ texts as if they were a collection of strange-queer raw materials gathered in that local place which can be re-shaped or sculpted through a key action into a drama. That action is chosen through my knowledge of a place gained by writing in it for a long period of time. I identify key channels of power that flow through that place and then imagine how they could

collide materially. I then construct a dramatic event from this collision, as the key action of the drama. The plays constellate thematically through similar central dramatic actions. This partly reflects the similarities between the different urban environments in the UK.

This process is guided by Foucault's proposition that each human subject is constructed in relation to the most tenuous connections to power.¹ In Home Street and Hope Street I used pedestrians and cars, feet verses wheels or bodies verses machines, as channels of power in conflict. I was able then to construct a fatal car accident as a dramatic (tragic) event that dislodged that corner of the world in performance from its usually invisible 'everyday' status.²

In Market Place I wanted to dramatize the even more tenuous modes of behaviour that are formed in relation to discourses of being inside and outside. The collision is again between a machine (a Google Earth satellite) and a very ordinary corner of the world. This machine is also a character, "Lucy", 'an outsider' who needs to find out about what being inside means.

Character is constructed in relation to the central action, which emerges out of a specific place. Character as an effect of action in time and place is part of the dramaturgical principles in western playwriting. Queer theory particularly guides this principle by dramatizing that character in a strange-queer relation to that place. This is time and place that is *queered*, because it is *used* queerly.³ At least one character in each LRE play represents someone who occupies that local place for a period of time that is 'too long' for (hetero) normativity. In this way a queer use of time and place is

embedded in each play via the unusual amount of time I have spent writing in each place and which has produced the raw material of the plays.

In Hope Street “George” is the character who is most clearly created out of a strange-queer relationship to that place. He is there for a long period of time because he is waiting for Google Earth to photograph him. He sees and experiences that place strangely and directs his wonder to that place because of his unusual relation to it. “George” is I think less strange than “Lucy”. “George’s” reason for being in that place is ridiculous but possible. His wonder, which leads him to see both beauty and uniqueness in seemingly ordinary and generic things, is also comic because it is strange, ridiculous, but still plausible.

For “Lucy” in Market Place, her reason for being there is more than strange because it is impossible. Her way of seeing that place is, like “George’s”, at times comic because it looks at that everyday place from a different angle, both literally and metaphorically. Her ‘slant’ on the world, is also represented as a more intense physical experience because she is in the process of (re)discovering embodiment and orientation. But she cannot represent someone who is actually a satellite and a human being.

The audience can interpret the connection between these two identities in different metaphorical ways. I tried to keep those possibilities open and I aimed to construct in “Lucy” a character who related to the world in a stranger way than “George”. I hoped that “Lucy” would present a ‘queerly alien(ated)’ slant in and on a corner of the world. In this way I tried to guide the writing of character in relation to queer place as

somewhere beyond the abject horizon and its definition of what is possible and ‘real’.⁴

“Lucy” as a ‘human-satellite’ is imagined in a place beyond the edge of physical possibility. This image aims to express the queerness I began to sense at the horizon of my experience writing outside, when my identity felt less centrally organized around ‘me’ as an individual human being and more around my body’s relationship to where it was. So character in the LRE playwriting process is constructed in relation to action (in a specific local place), and in the way a character uses that place, which fuses their identity to it.

Each of the final three LREs revolve around the internal drama of a character conflicted by the pull and push of the domestic inside and the public outside. But this still leads them *to do* something materially in the world, which changes their life and dramaturgically ends the action of the play. “Lucy” in Market Place is deciding if she can go inside. “Small” in queer street is deciding if she will live outside. Finally “The Stranger” in Hope Street at Homotopia⁵ makes the outside a better place to live when she allows herself to fall in love both with it and a girl singing there.

Each LRE play aims to destabilize a part of the material world: to dislodge or, to use Ahmed’s word, ‘estrangle’ the unconscious and unthinking happiness of the familiar from its place in the background in a (hetero) normatively unified world. But each LRE play also uses unity dramaturgically. The key action, the place and the character/s’ strange-queer use of it are all integrated with each other. This reflects my aim to *guide* the dramaturgical principles of playwriting with queer theory rather than

aiming to radically change or attack them. I negotiate with dramaturgical principles as a queer tactic to prise open cracks in an apparently seamless and neutral ‘reality’ of (hetero) normativity.

Time is structured in the plays as a more or less sequential line. It is represented by the rising and setting of the sun, particularly in relation to the central characters. They also reflect how time is organized socially according to the logics of heteronormative family life and work. But the plays are also playful with time. For example in Home Street the accident is repeated from different points of view in different speeds and with different ways of representing the young girl’s body. In Market Place the old woman “Phyllis” and “Lucy” confront the potential to be disconcerted by Google Earth’s Street View images as they appear in your present ‘from’ the past.

My embodied experience of the ‘civic couch’ exercise can also be understood to construct subterranean unity between each play in the series. This might be seen as a kind of unity through authorial voice. I made a clear authorial decision to use the ‘optimistic voice’ in each LRE play, which I discovered through the writing of ‘Jake’ in Fling. However, there are other similarities and connections that I did not decide to create. For example, I represent an elderly Irish women interacting with the ‘optimistic’ character in both Hope Street and Market Place. This reflects the kind of person I spoke to during each ‘civic couch’ process. However, this might be because they are the most likely people to approach someone *like me* on a bench. It might also be that I am drawn to this kind of character because of my own cultural heritage. There are possibly many other similarities or connections that I am not aware of, which may be perceived by different readers, which create the impression of unity

across the series of plays. While I cannot account for all the ways that unity may be perceived in the series, I think it is useful to acknowledge that a single writer can be understood to unify a series of plays.

The repetition of a model of playwriting can also create the impression of unity across the series of plays produced through it. As I repeated the LRE process I found that different elements of it began to happen more or less simultaneously. This ‘fusing’ together of different elements of the process could be understood to reflect how repetition establishes easier and more homogenized ways of doing things. It could be that any single writer repeating this model too many times and/or within too short a time might risk losing their sense of strange-queerness in relation to that practice. I became more efficient at writing the LRE plays, but perhaps I was also less full-of-wonder on the ‘civic couch’ as I completed the fifth LRE play, as it was also the third in twelve months. However, my approach to each process always changed in a way that also refreshed that process because each new LRE addressed a different research question.

The LRE model also counter-balances the unity that ‘I’ as a single writer, with one body and subjectivity bring to the process because it facilitates a co-writing process with each place. As the ‘first’ person in the ‘civic couch’ exercise ‘I’ am a unified body, but re-orientated away from a unified sense of self through the prolonged engagement with a specific place. I sense through that part of the process that the writing is responsive to those places, in ways that I am not entirely conscious of. In this way I understand each place to be a ‘co-writer’ of the texts. I can see that, particularly in this engagement with place, the structuring of the LRE plays

collaborates with each actual time and place. In this way, the ‘queer-place dramaturgy’ applies queer theory to playwriting. Queer theory proposes that humans do not have essential and individual identities. By bringing that proposition into contact with the playwriting process and dramaturgy the relationship between place, author (playwright) and audience is re-aligned or re-authored.

How does the LRE process re-frame the local?

I try to make it clear in each LRE play that the theatre building where the play is performed is very near to the place represented on stage. The object and representation can be said to be in the same ‘corner of the world’. Through this I aim to construct a place on stage where the audience’s own memories and knowledge of a specific place can overlap with the way they are asked to imagine it (or ‘see’ it) through the performance of the play.

The LRE plays are written to be performed on bare stages. The detailed description of each place aims to provoke the audience into visualizing very material things onto that stage without any other visual distraction. I aim for that description, and the proximity of the dramatized place to the actual place, to construct a ‘double vision’ of that place. This can sometimes overlap with an awareness that the images other members of the audience see are also invisibly ‘on’ the stage. The unseen images that other members of the audience see become apparent in performance as different reactions of the audience are heard as different responses to and recognitions of different details.

During performance and through discussion with audiences afterwards, it is clear that the audience's memories and knowledge of that place can create a pleasurable 'double vision' of the place being represented. It is pleasurable because it offers a small affirmation that the audience members are part of the world outside and that they appear to share a kind of insider knowledge. This is often comic because the status and scale of that insider knowledge is tiny. This re-deploys the strategy of mainstream ('realist') dramaturgy, which represents something that we all know or share, and aims to construct 'us' as all the same and part of a universal whole through that shared knowledge. The sphere of what is offered 'as known' in these plays is so minutely local it is, in fact, often not known, or not yet seen/noticed by most members of the audience. They might smile, or laugh, because they are being tested to believe it is there. The plays encourage audiences to go and look at local and often familiar places again: to go and see some of the details they had not noticed before. Audience members have told me that they are going to go and look at those places again. One audience member at the TaPRA Conference said that he found it a shame that he did not have time to do this. I have (I believe) seen some people looking at the place a LRE play is set in strangely. I propose this affect on the behaviour of some of the audience as one quite simple, but practical, way in which this playwriting process produces performances that potentially dislodge local 'everyday' place from the invisible background of the passer-by.

I can reflect a little more concretely on the reaction of the audience to Hope Street and Market Place through two printed reviews, one of each show. I first want to acknowledge I am reading very partially from the perspective of my research as

practice and also that I am not suggesting that these reviews represent what all, or even most of, the audience saw, understood or felt in response to the plays.⁶

I see in both articles key words that I am using to describe the different kinds of queerness queer theory of time and place proposes. Joyce McMillan describes the world of Hope Street as ‘eccentric’ and ‘strange’. Dr. Steven Blandford also notes in Market Place the performance of ‘wonder’. The two different readings of two different plays produced through the same process partly reflects how Hope Street was a more external drama than Market Place. Hope Street appeared to be *about* globalization and the strangeness of that as a local experience, whereas Market Place represented an internal drama, and perhaps therefore seemed to be more about the relationship between art and (inner) life.

Both reviewers seek to explain the wider, more universal value in the plays. McMillan points to the representations of globalization and its ‘universal problems’. Blandford argues that ‘one of the most important functions of all art (is) making the familiar strange’. As engaged and generous audience members, they offer their reading of what these plays are about, which reminds me of Phelan’s argument that representation ‘always conveys more than it intends’.⁷ Researching playwriting and dramaturgy through performance practice produces many unexpected and interesting outcomes. But, the key word that is obviously missing from these readings of the plays in the context of this research is ‘queer’.

Is each LRE play unrepeatable?

As I reflected on the first LRE performance⁸ I began to think that the queerest thing about it as a play text, was how difficult it would be to perform again. The performance of Home Street on the 24th November 2007 was arguably unrepeatable simply because it was a live performance. But Home Street is also a written play, which I can reproduce as in this thesis, with accompanying DVDs. But when I began to think about recreating the effects and affects of the Home Street performance, particularly as it re-framed the local, I realized that I would have to write another play. This practice as research therefore developed a new playwriting practice that had to produce a series of plays in order to continue to repeat the effects and affects in performance of reframing the local and familiar as strange-queer.

Phelan writes, ‘Performance’s only life is in the present. [...] To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology’.⁹ I initially created Home Street in order to see how close I could bring the theatrical representation of a strange-queer place to an actual place in the public domain. In this way I aimed to engage as fully as possible with performance as an art form that exists in the present. To tour the concept of Home Street, would require a repeatable process, rather than production.

It would be possible to perform any of the LRE plays again. It might be an interesting ‘next step’ in the research to present them in different places, or perhaps as a complete series, to see what difference that makes to the plays in performance. I imagine that re-presenting the texts would make them appear more characterological because the structural relationship of the audience with the outside would be lost.

I did in fact re-present Market Place in the same building, but on a different stage, approximately six months after it was made, for the TaPRA conference in Cardiff September 2010. As I wanted to re-create as much as possible the experience of the original performance, this required a quite difficult re-writing process. Many physical details had changed in that locality. The connection of those, sometimes tiny, physical details to deeper structural elements of action and character were much more far-reaching than I had anticipated. For example, the magnified photographs of flies on the outside of Chapter Arts Centre had been changed, so that the connection of “Lucy”, as a satellite, to that building, through that image of flight and scale was erased. This had ripple effects throughout the text in relation to how she understood where she was and what it meant to her.

It is quite difficult to imagine how other changes in the times and places around which the other LRE plays are constructed would effect the plays, if they were to be re-staged. I think this is difficult because those times and places are so closely imbricated in the plays’ dramaturgy. I can imagine if I were to re-stage Hope Street I would need to rewrite it because ‘Google’ has since developed ‘Street View’ which actually photographed someone being sick on that corner of Sauchiehall and Hope Street.¹⁰ The development of ‘Street View’ and this event in particular, means that “George’s” character would not appear as imaginative, eccentric or strange as it was in 2008. This character would not have the same effect in performance now. It would also require an extensive re-write to re-stage the queer street script because so much of the way “Clare/Small” defines her relationship with where she is, is articulated in relation to the outcome of the general election in 2010. In contrast, the homophobic

graffiti, which is referenced in Hope Street at Homotopia, was partially rubbed out before the performance but, after some deliberation, I decided not to change the script. I felt that this small detail was really important to the way the play represented how “The Stranger” did not understand and therefore did not take part in homophobic discourse. I also felt that if an audience member went to look for that graffiti they would find the remains of it (a large smudge of black ink on the wall) and that would, in itself, be interesting. I thought it might potentially provoke questions and possible stories about who had tried (and not entirely succeeded) in removing it: This in itself might connect with the question of seeing homophobia and (hetero) normativity in that place.

Each place changes over time in less tangible ways. This is because the ‘temperature’ or ‘texture’ of society shifts. This is often the effect of political local and global events, but is also because of apolitical effects, such as the weather or the time of year. The length of time it takes to complete a ‘civic couch’ exercise creates space in my experience of that place for the truly, barely perceivable, channels of power in public place to influence my knowledge of it. I have noted how it is impossible to be fully conscious of how the ‘civic couch’ process records how a place is constructed and how I am constructed within it. These unconscious effects must, I propose, still influence the structures of the plays: be part of the way the plays have currency in performance through their ability to represent and value the present moment as part of the ontology of performance itself.

I want to conclude this chapter by reflecting on the economics of these ‘queer-place plays’. There are some ways in which the financial cost of production had a

significant effect on the dramaturgy of the plays. I wrote Home Street for five characters and Hope Street for six characters (performed by three actors) partly because there was funding to pay those actors. I could afford to pay one actor and a musician for Market Place and Hope Street at Homotopia and only one actor for queer street. I also developed the writing process for these plays into a three-week process so it was more economically viable.¹¹

A consequence of applying queer theory of time and place to playwriting is to also dislodge the economic value of the text as a stable, repeatable ‘blueprint’ for performance. I cannot, for example, get royalties from future performances of these plays if they are unrepeatable. On the other hand, I propose these performances mined the value of live performance through the framework of playwriting and began to help me to ask more nuanced questions in the next two plays about the relationship between money and value and how that relates to sexuality and gender.

LRE 4: Queer Street

Performed on the 4th and 5th June 2010. G12 Studio Theatre. Glasgow University Department of Theatre, Film and Television.

There are 12 seats for the audience. The audience is contacted via email before the show and tempted to go and look for treasure: 'At the first public bench behind the war memorial in Kelvingrove Park, on the left, if you are facing it with the bridge over the Kelvin behind you'. Pennies are hidden around the bench and at the tree behind the bench. This tree has a sign at its base, which reads, 'In Memory of Claire'.

Characters/Roles

Clare/Small	Actor
Claire/Tall	Pre-recorded
Clare	Technician/writer/director

The audience enter the space, a dim spot light on a long table. Small is sitting on the table with her legs around £500 pounds in one pound coins.

Small indicates that the audience should sit.

Small We put a pound in the pot for every day we lived together.

 A tender tender.

 Did you ever go to a fair and guess how many sweets were in the jar?

 How many coins do you think?

 The first one to guess right gets a pound.

She waits for some answers.

Small There's £500 pounds here. So you (*the person who guessed right/nearest*) get a pound. Congratulations! Two years, eight months fourteen days...more-or-less. The other £500 is still at the flat. One little golden coin for each day.

 Have you ever looked at one? Pick one up. Look at it closely. Go on. Really look at it.

 This one was made in 1983. An original. 1983 was the year of the pound coin. There are a hundred beads around the edge of the coin for the hundred pence that it represents. There's a portrait of the Queen in profile. She's looking very pretty. Isn't she? Strange that she is attractive. Don't you think? I find it hard to believe that she's real, sometimes, like a *breathing* human being, with...skin. It's always a bit of a shock if she ever looks or does something *human*. In my mind, my

imagination, she's more alloy than flesh. And I ought to let you know that more-or-less that is where we are...*in my mind*.

There have been 24 different types of pound coin in the past 27 years that it has been issued. I was ten, when the first one came out, which was also the first time I stayed out all night.

On my coin it says DECUS ET TUTAMEN. It means 'An Ornament and a Safeguard'. On a 1984 it says NEMO ME IMPUNE LACESSIT, meaning 'No-one provokes me with impunity', which is the Latin Motto of the Order of the Thistle. Scottish. Love that. No one provokes me with impunity either. It was her idea to start the pound a day thing. It's all her fault. She's probably in the flat right now. Looking at her half of the money.

Let me show you. We live over there. (*Get audience up and go to window.*) Top floor of Westbank Quadrant. Over looking the Kelvin River, overlooking Kelvingrove Park. From that window I can see those red towers above the trees. Majestic, aren't they? What I love most about Kelvingrove Museum is that it's facing in the wrong direction. It's built for the park, not the road, see, so you go in at the back, but it looks best from this direction.

Our first kiss was on the bench behind the statue for the South African War. She put her cold hands under my jumper to warm them up. It was autumn, the day got dark dead early, there was a quiet moment, between the workers going home and the dancers going out. For a moment there wasn't anyone there and she kissed me. Just before dark on November 11th 2005.

Our happy bench, by the African War Memorial, Kelvingrove. Glasgow. (*She shows the audience the spot on her iPhone with google earth*) Here it is last year. See that truck? That's the vehicle that the man in green with white gloves puts the bin bags in. He likes talking to folk in the park.

I used to be East End then I was West...for years. But now what? Glasgow. Doesn't it break your heart?

I slammed the door. After 1,600 days more-or-less since we first kissed, all that time, became suddenly just one single thing, a unit begun and finished. It's a shock

A door bangs.

suddenly out in the cold, homeless, alone. It's nearly dusk. I'm on that bridge down there. Above the river. Don't worry I'm not going to kill myself. I'm just watching the torrents of the Kelvin *surge* towards the Clyde and the Irish Sea.

She says I'm prone to exaggeration. Excess.

But she counts love by the day.

Small redirects the audience's gaze from the window back to the money.

Do you want to touch it? Someone told me once that there's nothing funny about money. But there is something quite exciting about it isn't there? Shall we listen to it?

Small speaks into the microphone. Small leads the audience over to the table and gets the audience to put their hands in the money and make it make noise.

After three let's chuck it on the floor!

They tip up the table together, Small asks how it feels, how they feel, do they want a drink? There's some champagne. Glasses and two bottles of champagne. Small gives the audience the bottles and encourages them to help yourselves. There is sparkling water as well. As they settle back into their seats, Small takes the 'stage'.

Small I blame David Cameron and Nick Clegg. It started going wrong the day Cameron 'kissed the queen's hand'. I wonder was it cold? Her hand I mean. Was it like alloy, d'yer think? 11th May 2010. I had a drink to numb the pain.

From the 11th May I sat all day on the chair by the window, wrapped in a blanket, listening to the beeping of the workmen at Hillhead Primary School. Bastards.

David McEwan is the Construction Manager: 0131 287 2200. I called him about the noise. (*Beat.*) You shouldn't put your number up in public if you don't want people to call you...should you?!

According to her, *her* name is Claire, with an 'I'. I'm Clare with out an 'I'. I really hate having the same name, so embarrassing. But most people call me 'Small': most people don't know what name my mum gave me.

According to Claire, 'humanity only exists when people are with each other' ... Second date, met on the bench, she said 'The smallest unit of human is two, all else is fiction' She didn't make it up. She read it somewhere. She's not that clever. I'm cleverer than she is. She meant it romantically, but she's probably already on the phone to all her friends and family and probably even *my* mum and dad. Because they just love *her*. Shoring up her humanity. While I'm...out in the cold.

I'm on the bench now, not even the comfort of a hangover any more; just the awful-awful knowledge that David Cameron is the Prime Minister and I'm finally where I always knew I'd end up...on queer street.

Blackout. Voice over for Tall and Small conversation.

Tall Darling. I'm home. Are you there? What you doing sitting in the dark?
What on earth are you doing?

Small Nothing.

Tall How long have you been doing that?

Small Since you left.

Tall Oh God.

Have you eaten?

Small Bits and pieces.

Tall Why is all the money on the floor?

Small I was expressing myself.

Tall Susan says you didn't call her about the job.

Small I don't want her fucking job.

Tall Really. Don't you think that's a bit...

Small What?

Tall Childish?

Small You don't understand.

Tall I've been thinking. Why don't you have a baby?

Small You gonna get me pregnant?

Tall Would give you something to do. Something really worthwhile.

Small Can't afford it

Tall I can.

Small How can you think about bringing a child into a world where Cameron
fucking David fucking Cameron is ...

Tall Jesus. It's just politics. He'll be gone soon.

Small Five years, for fucks sake!

Tall 18 months. At most.

Small Don't touch me.

Stop it.

That's not fair

you

...

you always get what you want don't you.

Tall Make you feel better.

Small Won't.

Wait a long time in darkness.

Small (*Speaking close to mic.*) You haven't forgotten about the money, have you?

Did you think about taking some of it? All of it? Do you think anyone else did? Do you think anyone has actually done it? Some people don't think. Do they? They just do.

Some people do like doing things.

Lights come back up.

David and Nick got married didn't they? Smug bastards. I don't believe in civil partnerships. She is always on about getting married. 'More to protect you than me,' she says. But I know that's not the reason. She wants a certificate. She's got GCSEs and A levels and a degree and accountancy certificates and tax returns and mortgage receipts and so much.

She doesn't believe anything is real unless she's got an icon of it.

Kicks money. The sound of the money falling from the table.

Even love.

David stood on the doorstep of his new home waiting for his betrothed to arrive, photographers snapping every moment. They looked so clean in their suits and ties, yellow and blue. David patted Nick on the back, as they shook hands and turned to smile at the cameras. That arm on

the back says, 'You're ma bitch, Nick'. Because David is a patriarch. He sees the smaller party as female, which doesn't mean that he necessary feels stronger than the women in his life.

In fact I'd guess the opposite. But it's just a guess.

Clegg knew this and patted David on the back as he turned and crossed the threshold.

Tall (Voiceover.) The thrill of opening your own door for the first time. Remember when we moved into this flat?

There's a lot to learn when you step into your first home. Curtains, sofas, tv, internet, the plumbing, the roof, everything, I love it. I love every thing in our flat.

I do the housework. Small is...was...always so busy. Work of course, but in the evenings, weekends, meetings, talks, demonstrations. Saving the world. I was so proud of her. I thought she was happy.

I do the housework. I dust the photographs of our grandmothers on the mantle piece, I polish the what-not in the corner...dusting, polishing, cleaning, hoovering, I get into a real sweat, 'a right lather' as Small's mum would say.

I love my...our home. Look...if she's not working...it's not fair. She does nothing but make mess all day. It's taking the fucking piss. That's what it is.

Small David and Nick opened the shiny black door to their new home. They sniffed. A new smell. Not the smell they had been expecting. There were flowers, neither of them knew the name of them. But there was the sweetness of fresh petals. There was the rich, waxy smell of polish, and a high note of Brasso...there was a smokeless fire in one of the reception rooms, practically odourless, but just seeing a fire makes you remember the exotic, spicy green of burning wood...and below all this something else entered this young couple through the nose, penetrating their inner most chambers, it was heavy, pungent and full of longing... the dark smell of Brown.

Sound of door slamming and money rolling on the floor. Small goes and sits.

I'm out in the cold. It's nearly dark. I'm sitting on our bench.

Blond woman in her late fifties bright green jacket. Umbrella. Slip-on faun tan shoes like moccasins. She's skinny. Not much taller than me. Looks at me for a moment in a hurry. Lots of make up, then a cyclist with a woolly hat on. We've probably had the best of the weather for this year now. A young mum, with beautiful silver-grey greyhounds I can't help thinking she's a nanny because that dog is so beautiful, very

expensive and she's only 20. She talks to the dog. 'No. No'. as it disappears towards the river. Imagine that grey silver coat covered in the river's edge. Have you seen the edge of the river? Strange gods are worshipped there. It was raining when I slammed the door. Damp now, as the light fades and the smell of fresh garlic hangs at the side of the Kelvin, just by the bridge near to my bench. There is a long branch that over hangs the river. It is strewn with rags. It looks like the shrine to a Celtic god that I visited in Ireland last year with my Nan. She believes in fairies. Isn't that insane! A woman who learnt how to shoot down German airplanes and still has more secrets than the IRA, believes in the little people.

My iPhone says it is 20.04. I'm tempted to listen to a song. I don't have any earphones so I would have to go somewhere no one will be bothered by me. Also, it's a real luxury. The battery is not going to last all night. So, I'd be a fool to use up so much energy on a song now. I already know which one I want to listen to.

A woman with a purple bag crosses the bridge, phone to ear. A girl, four or five years old, she's on a scooter, followed by older kids with ...with...things, wooden, flat, wheels,skateboards. God. I'm losing my words. I'm tired. So tired. When did I last sleep?

Birds, wood pigeons, starlings, thrush, blackbirds...my favourite. The noise from the building site has stopped. My bench is sad and green. It's on the left as you enter the park over the bridge. I'm sitting on the far right hand end of the melancholy green bench, the War memorial to Soldiers in the South African War 1899-1900 is on my left, far left. On my near left is a green bin. With the word Litter cut out of it.

The woman in the bright green coat is there again! Going across the bridge now. Maybe she does a circuit of the park for exercise?

A Japanese girl has just walked past, her coat is on back to front and half falling off. A bag on her back. She shrugs to hook the coat more firmly onto her arms, across her chest. She looks depressed, defeated, this thin Japanese girl with the eccentric approach to coat wearing.

It takes about 20 minutes for my body temperature to go down. I'm sitting on my hat because of the rain globules still paused on the slats of the bench.

Two boys, about ten, on bikes with helmets, riding up the hill by the river. One pushes his, lazy bastard.

A man, in his forties, catches my eye. He is putting his earphones in. Lucky bastard. I don't dare. Not yet. Not until I really need it. Our bench. Our happy bench. Now a tragic-tragic bench. I'm glad I can still laugh. That's a good sign. Right? I mean it's not just hysteria is it?

18 sad green slats about 1 inch thick. 24 on the bin. To my left I can see two more benches and one more bin. On my right three more benches and four more bins. It looks like one bin has lost its bench. That's really...No one sits on them apart from me.

I don't know what to do next. If I knew. Then I would do it. But I'm stuck here. And the more I stick, the more I'm stuck...and the more I see...I'm not waiting for her to call. I don't want you to think that. Because I'm not. I just don't know what to do. I'm in shock. I need to think. But the world keeps tugging at me. It's all so interesting when you really look at it. That woman again! The woman in the bright green coat just walked past. But this time she really looked at me, a look of recognition. What is her story? I wonder if she can tell mine, by just looking at me? I feel like maybe she can.

A white man in his early 20s, walks with his hands in his pockets, deep in pockets (to stop himself punching someone, I suddenly think). But he's probably just got cold fingers.

He looks at me out of the corner of his eye. It's fine though. I don't mind. It's still daylight. Just. I'm in a public park. But I'm not scared. I'm not scared of anything.

A park vehicle arrives. A little girl with plaits drops her ball, it rolls near me. She looks at me...as she picks it up...curious. I smile. Then look away. Don't want to scare anyone. It's already weird enough that I'm sitting on a bench staring out at the world. Three Muslim women go past. Two wear black headscarves, the other younger woman who walks in front of them, is in a cerise one. Perhaps they don't know each other, but from here it looks like the one in pink is having a strop with her mum and auntie.

Two beagles go towards the bridge, and stop for a chat with a nice looking black dog. Very shiny coat. The woman with the black dog chats to the man with the beagles and the man who was in the park vehicle goes over to join them. He is wearing green, with white gloves. Green, because he works with nature? Is it camouflage? Is it reassuring? Is it political? I don't know anything anymore.

Police [www.strathclyde police.com](http://www.strathclyde.police.com) drive past. Two guys. They look calm and peaceful. Nearest me in the passenger seat sits a young guy. He's good looking. He looks at the top of the trees. You can see he's not worried about anything right now. He doesn't look at me. So I can't be doing anything wrong sitting on my bench, my bench of doom.

A black guy goes past in flip flops. I looked up as he goes past. He catches my eye and looks surprised. He is listening to music too. I'm so jealous.

Two old grey men go past just behind him, whispering to each other. The one on the left in black trousers has had a hip operation. You can tell he is fed up with the other one. I think they were lovers many years ago.

Park guy in green is back in his vehicle. The engine is turning over. I'm getting colder and colder sitting still. And it is surely twilight now.

The colours mute as the light fades. There's less depth. The bin is harder to separate from the path behind it. Everything gets flatter and then when it is dark everything will get closer and the world will get bigger and bigger, or I will get smaller and smaller.

But right now the sunset makes the pale stone of the bridge pink. Lovely.

The wind changes direction. It comes southwesterly, the chestnut tree leaves on my right, by the path leading up the hill, ripple like hundreds of hands stretching before sleep, so calm. I could be happy as a tree. Why can't I be a tree or, or become this bench? If I was a bench I could stay here all night and all I would need to worry about would be someone scratching the paint off me. Maybe that's all that will happen anyway. Darker darker gets the night. A bell somewhere up at the university. My phone says 9 pm.

How long can I sit here before I lose my nerve? Until it's actually night, there aren't any street lamps here, it will be really dark here soon. In half an hour I suppose.

Birds are still singing.

I've stayed out all night before. It's hard. Mustn't fall asleep.

The sound of the leaves, the chestnut leaves whispering it's alright, stay here with us.

I'm not going to spend any money on a bottle. If I got drunk here I'd be really fucked. I've got £500 pound coins in my bag. I've got options. I just need to remember what they are.

Two men and two women chat and walk together holding hands through the park. Perhaps they're going out for dinner? Double dating. They all know each other so well. They've been friends for years.

Then four young men in sports wear go past. Don't know what language they're speaking. They are all laughing. They are having such a great time. Is it Hindi? I've no idea. One of them throws a can in the bin by my bench and the sound echoes. There is a strange, self consciousness as they go past. I'm sure they don't think I understand

them...but perhaps they still feel a bit shy for a moment, talking so loudly when there is someone else there.

Night now. Two police on bikes: florescent jackets, safety helmets.

My stomach is starting to cramp. Shit. I reckon I've got about 6 hours before my period starts. What will I do?

I can't go back East.

I come from Denniston. Good big tenements, quite rough. I say that now. But I didn't think so at the time. The streets are all called 'Drives'. The walls of the back greens were called dykes. I loved to climb along the dykes. You could walk all along them and the women would try and knock you off with their washing poles.

There were wash houses on each green, some were more dangerous than others. I had 'pupils' that I took on climbing expeditions. You *could* pull yourself along the sausages (the round, tiled tops of the dykes), but you didn't do that. Because that would be crap, weak. I ran along the sausages. Climbing was a big thing when I was ten, in Denniston. We used to climb onto the old white hill school roof. If people saw you they'd call the police who'd take you home. All the streets were home. I'd always leave a stash of sweets or money in places outside.

At the old White Hill school the old building was derelict, there was a pole there, where you could unscrew the top and hide sweets or coins.

And in the old church grounds, the derelict belfry was all boarded up, no floor, but you could get right up to the very top. There were loads of derelict buildings-oh and a haunted house on Onslow Drive. You could go in and play there if you were brave enough. Play with the old photographs and the things people had left behind.

Ambient music.

One option is to spend a pound or two. I go to Off Shore. Best café in the world.

I buy a cup of coffee, £1.90!!! But it's worth it for the warmth, the music and the loo.

Everything is dark dark blue. Beautiful blues and greens and then the sharp reflection of the yellow lights in the windows of Off Shore, like a series of moons hanging above the flats on the other side of the road, on the other side of the river. Is that the shore, where the rocks and lost traffic cones rest? Where 'the little people' weave their strange and dark ideas, just below the place that was my home, Westbank Quadrent.

The best part of being in Off Shore is the music. The guy who is serving checked with me if it wasn't too loud. He recognizes me. He doesn't know I'm not local anymore. He shares my taste for ice cubes in black coffee.

'It's so great, the hot and cold at the same time, suck it in together,' he says, 'it's great'.

I drain my coffee, at the perfect temperature, I don't even think about it just drink it all down. Shit. Too quick. Now I have to pretend that I'm happy without anything else. Happy to just sit here on my own.

Coffee does its job though... warm and bitter. From Africa? South America? How long would it take me to go there? I imagine stowing away on a boat, a slow boat South, listening to the eerie sounds of cargo creaking in the hull of a tanker, in the cathedral high container ship and I, like a rat, hidden.

Dark now outside. Really really night now.

How long will the battery on my phone last? How long before they cut me off? It's the beginning of the month. Do they just cut you off if the direct debit doesn't go through? I haven't thought about any of this. How will I survive? In the dark.

There are flowers in the ceiling of Off Shore, patterns in the corner. She would offer the word 'cornice,' I think if she were here. Why doesn't she phone? You'd think she'd text. You'd think she'd want to know where I am.

Maybe I took her for granted? She's paid for everything since I lost my job.

Two minutes to go before I get kicked out. But the other three customers aren't going either. Eeking out the seconds. Hoping the sweet hopeful guy sweeping up won't chuck them out. I've got more pride than that.

I'm off.

I head South.

Where the M8 crosses Sauchiehall Street I pause for a moment and watch the amazing, the glorious and weird night creatures of Sauchiehall Street. There are millions of girls and boys dressed up to the nines, all pure short shirts and high heels. They are so beautiful in all their finery. I used to be one of them.

Glasgow. Doesn't it break your heart?

I think about mum. 'You should count yerself lucky you've not been brought up on queer street like I was,' she'd say, when I wanted new things. Like a puff ball skirt! The great puff ball fight of 1983...I think that was the reason I stayed out all night the first time. Hidden in the girls' den on Finlay Drive.

She's lived in the East End of Glasgow for 50 years. But she comes from the East End of London and her mum, my Gran, came from county Clare, without an 'I'. After that our roots go quiet and dark. Could be from anywhere. Gran tried to do a family tree. But if you're piss poor then there's not many bits of paper to suggest that you were anywhere really. Lots of records were lost because of the famine. I am fabulously wealthy. I have my iPhone. I've got £500. How far will it stretch? I wonder. And as it stretches how tender will I become?

As I walk from one part of the city to the next I feel the change on my skin. As I cross over the M8 on Sauchiehall Street for example I move from birdsong and the still green smells of wet parks to all the smoke of all the folk who are out for the night.

Further down the M8. I'm heading for the Clyde. Under the flyover where Andersen tube station is...I feel like I'm entering hell. The sound gets muffled. The air is weirdly still. It is cold. The grey concrete so huge, so brutal I'm like a penny rolling around in a slot machine. The cars are not driven by people but demons. And then I have to laugh. I have to be relieved when a man in a van gets me to look at him, he rolls down his window as he goes past, as I'm stood at the crossing, not knowing what to do, I look up and and he shouts at me 'Fuck you' and sticks his fingers up at me. He's definitely human...and it makes me feel so much better. 'Yeah...Fuck you too'.

Are you a curly queer or a kicking queer?

I was thinking about how my dad calls me curly. Don't know why. My hair's not curly. Mum's hair is very curly. She doesn't like how curly her hair is. When I'm upset about something and she goes to comfort me, put a hand on my shoulder, she says 'At least you've got nice hair. I can never do nothing with mine'.

I'm a kicking queer.

Those girls wore heels that were so high, four inches at least, lots of strappy roman sandal heels, dresses made with stretch cotton that really don't cover their pants and the boys in jeans, trainers and t-shirts. Not a coat amongst them. I am so middle aged. It's amazing. 37. How did that happen? I used to be one of them.

I cross over the footbridge to the southside. It shakes even with my tiny weight. I pause for a moment and look over the water. I look down stream. Imagine flying with the gulls along with a boat out to sea.

I hold my mobile over the edge. I let go.

During the following paragraph 'Small' shapes an image of herself out of bluetack and puts it on the bench.

I sit down on a bench on the other side. It's stone. Grey. Cold. I'm dead tired. I shut my eyes just for a moment. I'm not lying down. I'm just sitting with my eyes shut for a moment.

Small is now wearing high heels that are spotlighted on the table.

When I shut my eyes I see that trail of perfectly circular dents in the soft wood of the floor boards that I found this morning. Two next to each other by the door. She had the floors stripped and polished last year. They are so soft and beautiful. I love looking at the grain running through them, since I lost my job I haven't been able to stop looking...I've been looking very closely at everything.

I noticed these two holes, this morning, almost perfectly circular, pressed into the wood next to each other. Then there was another one, slightly to the left, on its own, almost two steps away. Then another on the right, another two steps away. Then by the door of our bedroom the holes joined up again, but this time one, the one on the right is deeper and it runs deeper and slopes deeper still towards the bedroom door than away from it. As if...as if...

These are the impressions left by a pair of stiletto heels, worn by someone who has legs much-much longer than mine.

Fuck.

I can't help imagining that they are red patent, the image just comes into my mind and then, I see her come in, standing by the door, taking off her coat, scarf, gloves, hat, walking forward and then turning, putting more weight on the right foot and then fuck-fuck being kissed and leaning back digging the heel in deeper nearer the door to the bedroom.

Claire never wears heels and I always take mine off by the door, because of her. Because she did our floorboards last summer. The dust was terrible and it cost a lot of...

I stared at that dent in the floor, the slope backwards, for hours. Seeing is not believing.

I wish I was small enough to hide in that hole. I wish I wasn't just small. I wish I was miniscule.

When I open my eyes again it's ten past two. Where did I go? I stare at the derelict buildings opposite. They are fearsome in the quiet night. I must be mad to sit here for any length of time. I go to pick up my bag.

Fuck. Fucking shit. Shit.

She kicks the wall...really angry.

It's fucking gone.

Someone has stolen it.

Someone has...shit. Where was I? I wasn't asleep. I was just. Shit.

Blackout. Pause. Lights back up.

I start to walk again. Because I have to now. I walk all night. I walk down Cook Street. Past the little shop that sells metal under the flyover, right onto Eglinton Street, where the Graffiti says, 'Free Palestine'. I walk all the way to Victoria Park. Then I turn East. I'm walking towards the dawn. I'm walking to my mum's.

I need to pee at one point down an alley. It reminds me of playing out when I was wee.

Two hours later. Dawn. I'm sitting outside my mum's. It's got posher in recent years. It's well tended.

The lights go on in my parent's room. The curtains open. I see my mum look at the sky. She points at something and Dad comes and looks too. They don't look down.

I could go in for a cup of tea. At least. But I'm so angry. I don't think it's a good idea. I'll only shout. I'll only start kicking. I don't want them to see me cry.

I head back West.

I start to feel amazing. I haven't eaten. It's a new day.

I probably should eat something.

By the time I get back to the bridge by Off Shore the builders are at it again. Beep Beep. Fantastic. Beep di di beep beep! A big yellow truck, called SELWOOD rumbles past with the most amazing most enormous tyres. The man driving wears a white hard hat. The sun is out and

bright bright. Must be lovely driving a big yellow truck around in the morning sun. Must make you feel like a god.

Walk into the park. Take the long way back to the flat. A dog goes into the water. Goes crazy. Loves it. The wrought iron plumes on the bridge are like a flowery face.

My bench looks glorious this sunny morning. EMP in the concrete by its feet. 'Khia is to'. What does it mean? RHIA Erick ALASI written in the concrete on the other side. The tree behind the bench has a little square notice: 'In memory of Claire' spelt with an 'I'. We found that on the second date. I thought it was an omen. But I didn't say anything.

I turn my back to the east wind. Turn right, up the hill, around the Department of Theatre, Film and TV, right again and take the right after the building site. Go to the end and open the door to the close. Up the stairs, into the flat: 'Claire. Are you there?'

Silence. Small looks at the money. Claire's half of the money on the floor.

Her half of the relationship still lying on the floor.

Small tries to quickly put the money on the floor into her pockets during the final speech.

(Voiceover of Small's voice.) It smells of home. She's had the heating on. She's been ironing. I can smell her clean shirts hanging in the kitchen. I remember this place and our times. The long, hot days of needing, endlessly unraveling each other. She's gorgeous. I love her. I'm not sure what those holes mean. I could stay.

Small stops and throws the money back on the floor.

Small But fuck that.

The End.

Hope Street at Homotopia

Hope Street at Homotopia was performed at the Unity Theatre, Liverpool, on the 12th November 2010.

Characters

Lucy/The Stranger

Lou/The Busker/

Also played by Lou: God/Students/Parent and little girl/A Famous Man

Lou sings 'The Power of Love' by Frankie Goes to Hollywood.

Lucy I am a stranger. I don't know this place. It doesn't know me. But I can tell already that it's got personality.

I'm at the North end of Hope Street. 56 steps up. The steps are pale, dirty white. Every eighth step is different, darker grey than the others. It's like a rosary. Perhaps this a catholic place?

A girl walks past in flowery tights. I can tell she's a student. She's got a bag. She's got a look. She knows where she is going. Her lips are pursed. She's walking to a lecture. Not late yet, but no time to wander or wonder.

Radio City tower is to my west. I'm at eye level with the fourth black dot up the white concrete column...reminds me of Berlin. The early sun catches the glass. It shines. If it were a silver globe, the sun would shine in the shape of a cross. That's what I've seen, in Berlin.

Suddenly flowery tights girl looks back. I follow the direction of her look and see her...staaanding there. Slender. Beautiful. Impassive. It's an act of love to watch someone leave. It shows you believe that person is still somewhere, when you're not with them.

This is the best place I've ever been in the whole world.

I'm going inside now. The sound is amplified. As I sit, a button on my coat strikes the wooden backrest of the pew in front, like a tuning fork. The sound reverberates through the blue, conical space.

When I stepped inside I put my middle finger in the holy water. I made the sign of the cross. Touched my forehead, then my chest, near my heart, then my left shoulder and then my right. It's not automatic. I have to remember. But I do. The ritual puts me in my place. I stood feeling my feet on the floor, my place suddenly calm and quiet. The outside light sharp at my back, before me the quiet, blue stained light, below a crown-of-thorns chandelier. What does it mean? Not in a Dan Brown way. But in a, 'I've got to get out of here' way.

I am...where I am. I don't think...if I can help it. But I can't help it. So it's *really* important, to me, where I am. Here...I'm a beetle pinned to a mount. Here even the soul of my button sings out to God. Here the scuff of my shoes, the taste of breakfast in my mouth, all part of God. God is love, but a jealous, jealous love. A sulky love.

God I did all this for you, you know.

Lucy But I didn't ask you to.

God But I did it to save you.

Lucy I didn't want to be saved. I was fine.

God You were drunk, naked and singing rude songs in the grass.

Lucy I was happy.

God Disgusting rhymes, puns and ... frankly wild associations.

Lucy I didn't know any better. I was innocent.

God (*Sulky.*) But I love you.

Lucy I was a hermit...defined by my cave and its view from the mountain. I thought it would be pure – far from the other...human beings - but it was still very human. So I thought why not embrace it? Get out of the clouds and into the fleshy hope of streets, shops, cars, pubs, theatres and tour buses.

I leave God's skirt and...

walk down Hope.

A tour bus goes past.

Why are people on tour busses funny? See their faces staring out at us? A crocodile of kids at the bottom of Hope look up at the faces of the people on the tour bus. A very rude boy shouts 'Ding Ding' – and does this! (*Rude gestures.*) And this! (*More rude gestures.*) At the people on the tour bus. Most of them don't notice because they're looking at God's concrete dress. One girl in a woolly hat, on the open deck looks down and is shocked. Her mouth goes round. The boy is now doing this! (*Rude gesture.*) She is mortified. Because she is on the bus...she is being sexually mocked by a little shit, who shouldn't even know about such things. If she were somewhere else, she would not be mocked in this way. She *is* where she is...and on a tour bus she is a fool.

Tour bus 'Half of England's Catholics live here. More coloured glass than any other building in Europe'.

Lucy If you're on a tour *boat* or on the ferry even, people wave...dead friendly.

Tour bus 'Bell tower, Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John, or George, John, Paul and Ringo'. 'John Lennon said that the price of fame was a pint in the Phil'.

Lou starts to sing 'Something' by The Beatles.

Lucy But they laugh in your face if you're on a tour bus. I'm at the place where Hardman crosses Hope. There's a girl. Singing.

I try not to stare.

I try not to faint.

I *do* stop breathing.

So I run.

As I get to the other Cathedral my face is wet. I'm sweating under my arms and between my legs. There is a cold breeze that chills the sweat, on the steps, up to the door, on the side. It's nearly winter.

In the toilets of Liverpool Cathedral I breathe. Above the door in the great space of the Cathedral it is written, in electricity, 'I felt you and knew you loved me' over the doors, the big doors. Imagine those doors opening. What love that would be.

I pee. Then...

I go up the bell tower. Scared legs. If you can't walk up the tower you can still see the view. You can zoom as far as the Blackpool tower... on CCTV camera at the bottom of the tower lift. There's a dead fly on the lens. That gives you a bit of perspective.

I'm at the very very highest top of Hope. I imagine I can still hear her voice, down there. Wowser! I have to go back to her, where Hardman meets Hope. But first I pause at the chapel in the Cathedral grounds. There's a statue of a woman where it is written, 'She hath done all she can'. I haven't. Not by a long shot.

North Hope, I pause again at the petrified luggage. Bags in stone left behind by the famous sons and daughters of Liverpool.

What if you didn't know who the Beatles were?

I'm glad I'm not famous. I'm glad I'm not John Lennon...

The white paint on the 'Hope Street' sign on my left is crumbling away. But the black letters are perfect. On the other side of the corner there is a

sign for Mount Street. From this angle I can see that the letters are indented.

A Swedish man explains the lost luggage to his daughter:
'lkdsjflkdsfksdflksjf Paul McCartney ckjlkjdaksdfdkjf'

'Paul McCartney?' she repeats. She's only four.

'Ya'.

'Dak'.

On the bins it is written 'Liverpool' and 'Hope Street'. The bins on Hope Street are proud of where they are, they know they *are*...where they are.

Paul said he used to strut around Liverpool with John when he was younger, 'Being dead hard'. I love this insight into the youthful psyche of a Liverpool god. Three men in their late 60s, early 70s, arrange themselves for a fourth one to take a picture on top of the bags. They look dead hard.

'I swear its getting cold' says a young guy walking by. He's wearing a woolly zip-up cardigan, with his hands pushed into the pockets and a braced smile on this face. As if the cold wind he's walking into were a kind of joke at his expense.

There's Rice Street in metal. Modern. Then Hope Place, where the Old Jewish school is and the synagogue, now a theatre. Unity. Must be the best theatre in the world.

I rub my cold nose. I check my body. In my abdomen the last ache of my period. In my ear the faint ache of the ear infection I had two weeks ago. In my calves the ache of climbing the bell tower. In my mouth the metal of my last cigarette. In the tips of my fingers...coldness. The wind catches minisucle hairs disarranged by the Vaseline on my lips.

I might fancy a glass of wine. Calm my nerves. I half hope she isn't there.

But she is.

Lou sings 'Something' by The Beatles.

It's 11.59. Nearly noon. Autumn mist still lingers at the tender place where Hardman meets Hope. It hangs in the tender space between the road, pavement, trees, Philamonic Dining Rooms and Phil Hall. I'm sweating again. Just listen to her. I'm so hot for Hope. I'm sitting on a beautiful bench outside the Phil Hall. Best bench in the world. It's metal. Four metal seats, like the vertebrae of a giant spine. I listen. Drink a bottle of red. Look south. But not at her. The 699 turns left. The 74 goes west. I'm being taken away with the music of Hope. Biting the nail on the

middle finger of my right hand. Footsteps go past. I'm looking down now. I see the bottom of a green skirt, black tights and a pair of DMs laces undone. I don't dare look up.

To my left, two men with silly grins walk into the Phil. They are over 60 and funny looking. One gestures a jelly wobble hand to the doorway and they go in, like they're making their way through custard. That is to say, something in the way they move is not quite straight.

Student 'London, London. You can't scratch your arse without it costing 80 quid'.

Lucy Cold students in cardigans...stop behind me.

Student 'If you go out and buy a tonne of fertilizer and you're not a farmer, then that will flag up, flash, that will flag up about...50 MI5...signals.

Lucy Some red flowers on the floor from the baskets above the door of the Philharmonic dining rooms. The red looks good on the stone pavement. On the sandstone wall of the Philharmonic Dining Rooms it is written, in black felt tip pen: 'The 'Philhar 'gay' ic' and there's a strange picture of a large tower between two hills with a stick on the top, maybe a lightening conductor? Or a CCTV camera for the disabled?

The sun is lower now. It will be dark by four and all the spots of chewing gum shine in this new moment of the day.

Lou sings, 'Yes'. By McAlmont & Butler

You can see so much about people as they walk across the place where Hope meets Hardman. Does that mean that we're all different even in the same place? But even if we're really close we're never in exactly the same place. You can't be in my body. Can you? I am always in a different place to you.

She sounds warm. Doesn't she?

I'm holding a mouthful of wine in my mouth. Warming it up before swallowing. My skin notices the cold and my heels feel strange.

...

What the John Lennon is that! It's bright yellow. It's a tour boat *and* a tour bus. It's a Wacker Quacker: RSY 883 going south down Hope!

Those passengers are no fools. Their guide is making them laugh. See that's what you have to do...if you are already laughing on your tour bus/boat little boys won't be rude to you.

Hope...from God's skirt to Hard Man, past Unity and on to God's bell tower view of 360 degrees of Liverpool, as far as the Blackpool Tower.

The North Welsh hills and...just across the water, Dublin. Then the Labrador Sea, James Bay, Queen Charlotte Sound, the Bering Sea, Islands of four mountains in the Aleutian Islands and Burjatija.

A woman coming out of the pub says: 'My identity has gone. They took my purse with my phone, my card. My life. They dumped my bag. I got that back. So I got a bit of my identity back. But I wasn't very nice when I cancelled my cards. I just wasn't myself'.

I look up for a moment and see a sign. ALCOHOL FREE ZONE an old fashioned beer glass in a circle with a line through it on the diagonal. If you drink alcohol in a public space in this area you could be fined up to 5000! There's a sticker over the £ sign. UK SKATE.COM. I put the bottle in the bin. I'm nothing if not a good citizen.

Birds. Everywhere. Their shadows criss-cross over me. One gull walks across Hope, holds its head so proud, as it trots across. There's something stupid about its expression. It reminds me of someone I went to school with. See that mutant pigeon with its legs covered in feathers? So covered in feathers that you can hardly see its feet...

I think I am falling in love with the tenderness of the place where Hardman meets Hope. Maybe everyone falls in love with Hope.

Lou leaves.

I follow. I have to.

She walks down the jetty to wait for the ferry. But I'm stopped by the ticket inspector. Suddenly there's a strong smell in my nose and a voice, in my ear. 'Take me photo'. He says. 'I'm a famous man'. I take his picture. The Liver Building behind him. 'Lovely' I say. '*You* are lovely'. He says. 'I saw you on Hope Street. That's *my* bench. But I don't mind *you* having a loan of it'. He follows me into the ticket office. 'I've been out on the town a few nights,' he says.

How can I describe the smell? Cough medicine. Cherry cough drops. Sweet, rotting fruit. Arseholed. Utterly. We get on the ferry, the three of us. But I'm the only one that knows we're all together. He falls asleep suddenly on the blue cushioned life rafts.

Facts. Great facts to be proud of...800 years of ferry. Seven miles of docks. First commercial wet dock. Industrial revolution. Americas. Race. Slavery. Wales. Africa. Biggest Chinese population outside...9 million people left Liverpool in search of a better life.

The BeatlesTheBeatlesTheBeatlesThe Beatles.

It starts to rain on my face. I can see the skirt still shining in the grey dusk. I imagine a silver line through the sky from the skirt to the tower...shimmering all the way above Hope.

The world's greatest facts: Mersey is the tenth most important site for ducks and wader birds in the UK. It can rise and fall as much as nine metres. It's the deepest river in the North West. This is the first ferry in the world to be guided by radar. Hamilton Square has got the most Grade I listed buildings in the UK, apart from Trafalgar Square. Albert Dock is the greatest docks in the world. Doesn't it take your breath away? It's in the same league as the Taj Mahal and the Great Wall Of China. There's the Wallace and Gromit exhibition. Three graces. 1830 – 1890 nine million emigrants left. The clock faces of the Liver building are bigger than Big Ben. And the best in the world. She takes your breath. Something in the way she moooves me.

She had a ticket to ride. And we got back off where we got on and walked back to the corner of Hardman and Hope. I saw a street, Stanley Street I think, on the way with rainbow flags. Is it the most colourful street in the world? Wasn't mentioned by the guides.

Lou sings 'I Want To Hold Your Hand'. By The Beatles.

When you sing about love there is this strange but wonderful feeling. Heat in my mouth, a blankness in my brain, a cold fire across the hairs of each pore, like a runner who stops suddenly at the top of a mountain, or the tower and the cold wind suddenly catches the moisture filming your skin. I throb. Need it to stop. It makes me want to *do* something, run at something, smack my body against something, oh, oh I know...against you. That would be great...a great idea...it would be great ...run against your amazing voice that spears my skin, like the cry of a gull makes me look up. I think I know what this means.

I think this means that I want to kiss you.

It's evening now. God's skirt is lit for the night like a woman waiting for a dance in 1957. She has lights on the bones of her corset. She's got no head, shoulders or arms. But what a figure. My bench now has four blue lights under it. I love the hue of that blue. Ooooh! It's my bench. I won't let that famous, drunk man ever have it back.

My hat is crocheted, which means its holey, which means I can pull my unbelievably long ear lobes through the holes. Is this me? No. I have to be better than this if I want her to kiss me.

A very tall woman in a leopard skin print jacket stands still for a very long time outside the hall, with her very long fingers over her lips. When she was born they might have said: 'It's a boy!' Why does she hold her mouth like that? Is she thinking? Or is it to stop herself shouting at someone?

There's a piece of chewing gum in the crack between the traffic lights and the pavement tiles in front of me. It's in a thin strip. Last bite down squashed it over three back teeth. Did my love drop it there? I'm looking at her now. Like a fool on a bus staring at Liverpool, because she is beautiful. Takes your breath away.

So many different lights shining in different directions. Shadows go in all the ways. Pink granite bollards. Nine. The tops polished so shiny, but the natural miniscule shifts of the material mean that as I gently rock my head from side to side the reflected lights from the Philharmonic Hall roll and bend around in its perfect 360 degree surface. Joy. Joy in the unexpected ripple of things that grew organically but are now still. Joy just to see her standing there.

It's night now.

Philharmonic Hall all shut up. I didn't notice the doors being shut. There's a large sycamore leaf, brown and dry at her feet. I know if she stood on it, it would shatter into a hundred pieces and leave the skeleton, like the bones of a three fingered hand. My fingers are blue from the under bench lighting.

23.08. The CCTV camera looks down Hardman Street from the corner of Hope. Is anybody watching?

There was a gang of students going down Hardman. A boy in a red dress on his hands and knees on the ground as another boy pushed his pelvis back and forward above him. I am a stranger. I see strange things.

Suddenly lots of skin goes past.

A guy walking behind me says, 'Sorry I was looking at that girl's arse and got completely distracted'. A window has been broken on the corner of the building behind me. Amongst the crisp packets and dropped napkins the glass shines in 1,000 pieces. The most broken piece of glass in the world.

There must be a club down Hardman Street where all these nearly naked people are going. Three people walk past and I felt like one of them wanted to push me-grab me, like people do sometimes when you're standing on the edge of a pool or a cliff, and they say something like 'saved your life'.

There was a man who really looked at me then. I'm more and more visible at night. She sits down on the other bench.

11.58. You can tell if someone is walking home from the way they go. A guy wanders past. What is he doing? Not drunk. Not going home. Hands in pockets. Walking towards town. It's dark down by George Square.

Silhouettes of still, metal men against the town hall lights. I bet those gardens are busy at night.

Hope Street is so grown up. Hardman is young.

Lou sings '11.59' by Blondie, quietly to herself.

I remember the hubbub as the Hall emptied. What did they listen to? They are all in the same mood because of it. They're not the same, but they had shared something and it showed. I felt it. Tasted it.

Beyond day, long before dawn. When the cars stop you can hear the dry leaves tapping along the street, a thousand long nails tapping on the pavement like scratching your head when it's quiet. Oh...joy to sit on my bench and be in the world, and not just anywhere in the world, but here on Hope Street. With her.

CCTV still in the same position. No one gives a fuck.

Why don't we do it in road?

Lou Excuse me?

Lucy Did I say that outloud?

Lou Who are you?

Lucy I am...where I am.

Lou Nice.

Lucy *(To audience.)* Isn't she amazing?!

Lou comes to sit with Lucy.

Lucy Where else would I be?

The End.

Chapter 4.2: Reattaching queer sexual identity to a ‘queer-place dramaturgy’

The outcomes of the first three attempts at LRE did not appear to be very queer: they did not present a recognisable resistance to the political and social effects of the construction of heterosexuality as the naturalized, and therefore, invisible norm. The research question that drove the next two plays in the LRE series was: What is the effect of re-attaching a sexual ‘lesbian-queer’ identity to strange-queerness in this playwriting process? I will discuss how both queer street and Hope Street at Homotopia can be understood to represent an engagement with identity beyond the identity politics that has produced terms such as ‘queer’. I read the last two LRE plays through José Esteban Muñoz’s provisional notion of ‘disidentity’ as a heuristic rejection of ‘any route understanding of ‘identity’¹ because I aimed in queer street and Hope Street at Homotopia to dramatize some moments where ‘identity’ might be left behind from a place that was marked ‘lesbian-queer’.

I ‘re-attached’ lesbian-queer identity to my ‘queer-place’ playwriting process firstly and simply by calling LRE 4 queer street and secondly by representing a woman who is in the process of leaving her long-term female partner. However, I resisted the central character “Clare/Small” using the word ‘lesbian’ to describe herself and she only used the word ‘queer’ as part of a question about what kind of ‘queer’ someone might be: the alternatives she offers are ‘curly’ or ‘kicking’. It appeared to me that the play was most clearly queer for the audience because of the name. I discussed the play with members of the audience immediately after the performance and via email. The key question that arose through these discussions was: ‘Why is queer street queer?’

My initial answer is that the play dramatizes “Clare/Small’s” reassessment of what she values, this changes her relationship with her apparently ‘money-orientated’ partner and with her environment. At the end of the play she chooses to live outdoors, which is a strange-queer choice in relation to normative economic practice. I conceived of this as a way of dramatizing a connection between a queer identified character choosing to live in the economically-‘queer street’.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘queer street’ as ‘an imaginary street where people in difficulties (especially financial ones) are supposed to reside; (hence) the fact of being in a difficult position, in trouble, etc’.² This term is not now in common usage and may be more common in Irish English language use, where the idea of being a ‘queer fellow’ for example is not necessarily attached to sexuality.³ The concept of ‘queer street’ emphasizes the spatial meaning of the term ‘queer’ as being on a slant or twisted, so that someone can be ‘a queer’ in relation to both heterosexuality and capitalist economics.

Cheryl Martin, an invited audience member to both performances, interestingly asked via email correspondence, if queer street would be different if “Clare/Small” were straight:

So a woman runs off into the dark, loses one identity, and is forced to create another. Love all that. Just don’t see how it would be different if she were straight.

You could argue that a lot of film noir tropes are actually standing in for homosexual content – probably true. Then. Not sure if it’s still true now.⁴

I aimed in queer street to dramatize the time “Clare/Small” hesitates at the edge of a new identity. This new identity would emerge if she did not own anything and would therefore be queer in relation to economics. However, “Clare/Small” arrives at this

moment because she believes that her partner is having an affair with another woman and because she feels overwhelmed by questions of work, children and civil partnership. Lesbian sexual identity is an integral part of her route to this edge but it is also what she must let go of if she is going to create a new identity. I aimed to construct a character who chooses to leave the normative world behind, including its definitions of sexual identity. She does this by choosing to live outside, without any possessions, and thereby forging a new identity that is also radically beyond the normative use of inside/outside and public/private separations that are attached to both normative sexuality and economics. However, I think that the process of creating a character with sexual identity meant that this LRE became more characterological. In order to present “Clare/Small” as lesbian I chose to represent her relationship with her partner and to make that relationship the cause of the drama. Arguably, this then focused the dramatic question on whether or not “Clare/Small” would leave her long-term partner rather than on the question of leaving a (homo and hetero) normative world behind.

If queerness is beyond the abject horizon then it is necessarily unknown. I find it impossible to fully imagine what a ‘new identity’ might be or how it might be lived. Cheryl Martin wondered if nighttime is used in queer street in a similar way to how film noir sublimates homosexuality in its shadowy aesthetic. The approach of “Clare/Small” to an, as yet, unknowable way of being is perhaps dark because it symbolizes the unknown-ness and fear of the unknown in this journey. It could also be a material condition of a queerness that rejects normative economics and the separating of inside-private (property-space) from outside-public (unpriced) space. I aimed to construct “Clare/Small” approaching a ‘new identity’ in the darkness of

nighttime outside, both metaphorically and materially. She finally makes the decision to step into the unknown at the start of a new day. I aimed to frame this moment as bright and therefore hopeful, but could not represent the unknowable world beyond that horizon.

Muñoz compares two Cuban-American cultural workers at two very different ends of the economic spectrum, who both worked on and at the abject horizon of identity politics. Felix Gonzalez-Torres was an internationally celebrated visual artist who aimed to reject playing an assigned ‘role’ as a ‘Latin’ or ‘queer’ artist for a ‘multicultural’ hetero/homo-normative audience. Muñoz quotes Gonzalez-Torres discussing the identity politics of his work:

As in a glass vitrine ‘we’—the ‘other’—have to accomplish ritual, exotic performances to satisfy the needs of the majority. [...] Who is going to define my culture? It’s not just Borges and García Marquez, but also Gertrude Stein and Freud and Guy Debord—they are all part of my formation.⁵

“Sara/Ricardo” was a homeless transwoman who was one subject in the documentary The Salt Mines (1990) by Susana Aiken and Carlos Aparicio. “Sara/Ricardo” later married a Christian woman and took up a life within an Evangelical Christian community. “Sara/Ricardo’s” life after identifying as trans was the subject of The Transformation (1996) also by Aiken and Aparicio. Muñoz provisionally proposes the term ‘disidentity’ to describe the position Gonzalez-Torres and “Sara/Ricardo” took in relation to identity. Muñoz argues that ‘disidentity’ is not ‘anti-identity’, but an attempt to *reconstruct* identity politics itself. The notion of ‘disidentity’ represents a ‘tactical misrecognition’ of dominant identity politics and in the case of Gonzalez-Torres this particularly involves ‘a tactical misrecognition of dominant publicity’s private/public binary’.⁶

Muñoz proposes that Gonzalez-Torres ‘disidentifies’ with identity as a racial and sexual construct through putting images of vacancy and invisibility found in everyday normatively private spaces into public space. Untitled (1991) by Gonzalez-Torres was made in relation to the AIDS crisis and the death of Gonzalez-Torres’ partner; it is a series of photographs of an unmade bed, depicting two pillows still indented by absent heads. These images were enlarged to the size of billboards and mounted in billboard spaces across New York. Muñoz argues that the queerness of this work was only recognised by those ‘in the know’:

[H]is work functioned as a formidable obstacle to facile conceptions of identity. He elaborated forms of representation premised on *invisibility*. Gonzalez-Torres invokes a disidentity that is predicated on transparency and the everyday instead of the more familiar models of minority identity that invoke exotic colors and rituals.⁷

Muñoz argues that it was only the ‘cognoscenti’ who recognised the queer voice speaking in these works.⁸ These images of absence or invisibility were made in the context of AIDS as a ‘gay epidemic’, an epidemic which in fact also affected the lives of many other communities. Untitled presents vast images of the private experience of a bed. These posters make no direct allusion to AIDS, but I would also argue that the ‘gay epidemic’ was so present and ‘loud’ in the consciousness of the general public at this time that it provided a likely backdrop against which to interpret these images. A vast empty bed, I think, can quite easily be interpreted as an image of loss and even mourning. Muñoz certainly needs that background to make his interpretation of a queer ‘disidentity’ in these images of invisibility.

The examples of Gonzalez-Torres work could also be understood as successful in the common social public sphere because they utilize the strategy of representing a

‘disidentity’ that does not disturb its norms. The representations of ‘disidentity’ in Gonzalez-Torres’s work could also be read as a return to a ‘film noir’ sublimation of sexual identity in codes, for those ‘in the know’ and therefore even a retreat ‘into the closet’.

Muñoz argues “Sara/Ricardo” disidentified with a queer-trans self in order to survive poverty and illness. This did not involve a denial of his past experiences, but rather a prioritizing of survival over the politics of sex-gender identity. This survival strategy might also be understood as a tactical retreat into a kind of ‘closet’ that offers the protection of heteronormativity. Muñoz writes that The Transformation shows “Sara/Ricardo” still missed the touch of other men and that, her/his attempt at disidentification (with a trans-queer identity) ‘failed’.⁹

Muñoz writes in Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity that queerness is untouchable, a futurity, only a ‘warm illumination of a horizon’.¹⁰ For me Gonzalez-Torres and Sara/Richardo are both approaching ‘disidentity’ from a clearly gendered, racial and sexual identity. The aim may be for ‘disidentity’ but they take a route that is marked as queer within normative identity politics. The challenge of ‘disidentity’ is to begin to prise open the perception that another politics of being, perhaps a less ‘self’-centred one, could come into being. There is a utopianism in the proposition of ‘disidentity’ that I find exciting. However, the material practice of making queer street and Hope Street at Homotopia keeps me focused on the way that Muñoz proposes ‘disidentity’ as a *heuristic* process. That is, the definitions of what it is continue to develop as each cycle of discovery feeds into the whole.

I can read the LRE plays through the notion of ‘disidentity’ as they are an attempt to resist (hetero) normative formulations of identity without engaging in a symmetrical ‘reverse discourse’ with homophobia or heterosexism. I found in the first three LRE plays that this strategy left almost no recognizable queerness in the work. My aim in queer street and Hope Street at Homotopia was to make a more visible connection between strange-queerness and the sexual-gender identity that is *more commonly* understood *as* queer.

The naming of queer street and trying to re-attach lesbian-queer sexual identity to the LRE process was an experiment in making a ‘queer-place’ playwriting practice recognizably queer. I found that this experiment identified a gap between what is commonly perceived to be or look ‘queer’ and how queer theory defines queerness, particularly in relation to time and place. An audience member speaking with me after the performance said: ‘I’m a white, middle-class man and I usually feel alienated by queer work. Why was this queer?’¹¹ This question seems to propose that the mark of queerness is primarily the threat it poses (hetero) normativity.

I tried not to use visual stereotypes of queer identity in queer street. The actor Pauline Lockheart is white, petite and ‘feminine’, which means that she can ‘disappear’ into the ‘majoritarian’ crowd. It could be that her physical appearance makes her seem less threatening to a heterosexist framework or mindset. This for me reflects how lesbian-queer identity is still so unseen and unseeable in mainstream society unless coded with gender stereotypes. I wonder if one of the few, well-known, lesbian identified performers/actors in Britain were to play this part the character would have had a more obviously queer presence in performance. This might have made it clearer

that “Clare/Small” was approaching a ‘disidentity’ in the future, from a queer identified place in the present.

Sue-Ellen Case writes in Feminist Futures about lesbian artist Reno, whose lesbian agency is not located in the art she makes, but in her position as a lesbian artist in relation to the world.¹² This redistributes the place of queer identity from the interior meaning of the art to the known embodied position of artist ‘outside’ in society. When the writer and director is also the performer, her social identity is also part of the interior space of the performance. It generates the performance and can still be, indirectly, what it is about.

I was, in fact, a performer in queer street. I operated the lights and sound. I also invited each audience member to the performance individually and gave them instructions prior to the performance to ‘look for treasure’ at the actual bench outside, which would then feature in the play: I collected the ‘treasure’¹³ as payment for the performance; and, of course, I share a name with the protagonist. I also asked Pauline Lockheart to refer to me by name during the performance. In contrast, I stayed at the back of the audience for each of the other LRE plays and this created a more intimate, interactive and perhaps less defined relationship between me, as the author, the actor and the audience.

My performance as the author in the play would have meant different things to different audience members depending on their relationship with me and/or their knowledge and understanding of ‘who I am’. I also told the audience before going inside the theatre building that this performance was research as practice about queer

theory of time and place. So, in this way at least, my performance as author framed the performance as research of queer theory and helped to open the question of the difference between what is commonly meant as 'queer' and what 'queer theory' defines as 'queer'.

I also wrote and directed queer street in response, not only to the place outside, but also to a different kind of performance space. The small studio space in the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies at Glasgow University does not have raked seating, so I chose to invite a small audience, initially for the practical reason of simply wanting to make sure they would be able to see the performance. This practical choice led to a performance that engaged the audience directly with their senses more than an audience would in a conventional use of 'end on' studio theatre. The audience in queer street touched the pile of pound coins, drank champagne, moved through the performance to look out of the window towards the bench and interacted with each other. The sensuous and interactive elements of the performance worked with my role in the performance mainly in the first half to create moments of intimacy that culminated in something akin to a private party. This then shifted into the separate audience/performer relationship for the second half of the performance.

I can see that it could be a successful tactic to keep the sexual-queerness of queer politics alive and visible in the embodied identity of the performing author. But this still displaces the 'problem' of a queer disidentification with identity itself. If the author is to embody queerness for a 'disidentity' to appear as queer in performance, then they are not making what Peggy Phelan describes as 'a deliberate and conscious

refusal to take the payoff of visibility'.¹⁴ Phelan notes that the idea of '*active vanishing*'¹⁵ is only really a possibility for white middle- and upper-class women. I can see that, as with AIDS, there needs to be a visible or commonly 'known' situation if invisibility is to be used as an effective tactic of resistance. The LGBT/queer arts festival 'Homotopia' provided a visible political framework for the last LRE. I relied on the festival's context to provide the queer visibility against which another attempt of lesbian-queer 'disidentity' could be performed.

In queer street I aimed to represent the imagining of the possibility of living beyond 'identity'. That possible future was imagined as free but also isolated, vulnerable and much closer to death or madness. I aimed in Hope Street at Homotopia, by contrast, to represent a more hopeful vision of life lived strangely-queerly outside in public, which also re-attached a recognizable lesbian-queerness to the 'queer-place dramaturgy'. Hope Street at Homotopia portrayed the 'coming out' of isolation of "The Stranger" from her 'hermit's cave' and becoming again part of social life. It dramatized that specific place on Hope Street through the action of "The Stranger" falling in love with a busker.

This fifth LRE play represented lesbian sexuality partly because the two performers were both women and they were able to perform an embodied relationship between two women. In queer street this had been pre-recorded and was played in the dark, as a memory. The action of arriving in society and falling in love/desire/lust for another woman repeats the two things that are known to define 'lesbian' identity, which is 'coming out' and having sex with women. However, there was a personal satisfaction that I could add this more joyful representation of lesbian-queerness to this 'queer-

place' playwriting model. I also saw 'glimmers' of a lesbian-queerness that is constructed out of a sensuous relationship with environment. But I am also acutely aware that this queer construction of identity as relationship with place still relied on a version of the 'coming out' narrative.

Hope Street at Homotopia also returned the LRE process to a 'black box' studio theatre configured as a separate stage and audience. After the focus in performance of queer street on all the audience's senses I particularly noticed how the other LRE plays invite the audience to be more queerly curious about their fully sensuous relationship with the local place outside. The plays not only ask the audience to imagine *seeing* local detail on stage but also to imagine *feeling* other details through their other senses. In this way I felt that, for example, when, "The Stranger" asked the audience to feel the tenderness of spots of chewing gum on the pavement, at dusk, in the autumn mist, amongst the sound of footsteps and cars wheels, with the taste of wine in her mouth, the context of her position as 'a-woman-in-love-with-a-woman' was one part of her strange-queer way of being in the everyday public world.

"The Stranger" also makes more obvious reference to the concrete evidence of heteronormativity in public space than in any of the other LREs: at one point she notes how the 'gay village' part of town is not referenced in the tourist maps. She also refers to a piece of homophobic graffiti that was inscribed on the side of the Philharmonic Public House and shows the audience the phallic drawing that accompanies it as if she does not understand what it means. In this way I aimed for "The Stranger" to make a tactical misrecognition of normative identity politics and signs.

The process of writing Hope Street at Homotopia was achieved, more than the other plays, through the ‘civic couch’ exercise. I re-wrote much less of that text and found that I primarily wanted to edit what I had written in situ. I believe I felt brave enough to do this partly because I knew that the play would be performed as part of a queer arts festival and partly because I knew that this would be the last one in the series before I exited this research process. However, this shift in the final LRE process could also partly be because this was the third time I had repeated the practice within 12 months. One interpretation of the effect of repetition is that I became better, or perhaps simply quicker, at the process. Another interpretation could be that I began to lose my keenness of engagement with a practice by repeating it too often. I feel that I have left this model at the right moment and that further development of the LRE model will reshape it into something significantly different.

This reflection about the effects of repeating the same writing process brings the location of this research squarely back to me, as the researcher. It contributes to the questions this research raises about how applying queer theory to playwriting re-authors the ‘self’ and my role as a writer both of the LRE series and other plays for the conventional or mainstream sector of Theatre. It is my interpretation of these plays, and the places that they were written in and for, seen through the framework of my knowledge of queer theory about time and place and after reflection on the responses of audiences to the performance of the plays, that produces my contribution to queer dramaturgical practice. I do not propose the outcomes of this ‘queer-place dramaturgy’, or my reflection on them, as self-evident but as part of a hermeneutic-

interpretive spiral model of practice as research. I will expand on these questions in the conclusion.

Chapter 5: Practice context: Queer Sited performance and Other Benches

In this fifth chapter I will contextualize the LRE model of playwriting in relation to definitions of British site-specific and site-responsive performance. I will propose that applying queer theory to playwriting as a conventional theatre practice has created an intersection with queer site-specific performance. I will also note that there is very little queer site-specific or site-responsive performance in public outdoor space and propose that this is, at least partly, because of the power of heteronormativity in such spaces. In the second section of this chapter I will contextualize LRE and in particular the ‘civic couch’ exercise in relation to how four contemporary artists make interventions into the (hetero) normativity of public outside space through public benches.

The terms used to describe how performance can be sited-in and related-to place continue to change as artists continue to create new kinds of engagements with place. Fiona Wilkie’s survey of site-specific performance in Britain (2002) presents definitions of ‘site-specific’ as a map whose lines are constantly being redrawn. She also asks if the notion of ‘purity’ is useful for making distinctions between the growing range of different related practices of ‘performance of/in place’.¹ Wilkie quotes performance collective Wrights and Sites’ definition of site-specificity as a continuum. Wrights and Sites propose that the relationship of performance with place moves from performances ‘In Theatre building’, through ‘Outside theatre’, such as Shakespeare in the Park, to ‘Site-sympathetic’ performance, where an existing text is performed in a particular site, to ‘Site generic’ performance (made for a series of kinds of places, such as beaches or parks), to ‘Site-specific’, which is ‘performance specifically generated from/for one selected site’.² The dedication of a performance to

one selected site is therefore proposed as a ‘pure model’. As Helen Goldwater puts it: ‘To make a truly site-specific piece means it sits wholly in that site in both its content and form’.³ Also, Nick Kaye locates the mark of a truly site-specific work in the impossibility of moving it from the place it was made in: ‘To move the site-specific work is to *re-place* it, to make it *something else*’.⁴ For this reason it is arguably not possible to tour ‘pure’ site-specific work.

I also find the term ‘site-responsive’ useful to indicate that a performance may contain different elements of Wrights and Sites’ definitions of ‘site-sympathetic’ and ‘site-generic’. I understand a site-responsive performance to create a close, but not necessarily totally dependant, relationship with the place it is performed in. Such ‘responsive’ performance might use pre-existing text and might (or might not) be for a ‘generic’ site, such as a beach or car park.

Wilkie’s survey also suggests that site-specific theatre is two times more likely to be performed outside, although ‘inside/outside’ are not necessarily discrete and companies and performances often use both. Sophia Lycouris’ (Kunstwerk-Blend) contribution to the survey shows she considers her work *inside* theatre buildings to be site-specific. However, Lycouris also recognises that she would not use this definition ‘without clarifying the character of (her) site-specificity’.⁵

I write the LRE plays ‘purely’ to be performed *in relation* to a local specific public place outside, but they are not actually performed outside *in* that place. They *can* be performed in other places and times, but that creates significantly different effects in performance, which makes them mean something else as plays. So, I propose the LRE

model could be located somewhere between the two ends of the Wrights and Sites' continuum, as they are performed on a stage, inside a theatre building and are also 'purely' responsive to a particular place.

Arguably site-specific and site-responsive work has become even more mainstream since Wilkie's survey. The new national theatre companies of Scotland and Wales both used site-specific and site-responsive productions to introduce themselves to their communities in 2006 and 2010, respectively. Wilkie reports how some companies make site-specific work outside because they want to create more public access to performance than theatre buildings can offer: 'The park, along with the beach and, indeed, the shopping centre, is suggestive of 'public inhabitability' (Bloomer and Moore, 1977, p. 84) and therefore is a factor in enabling artists 'to make the work accessible' (London Bubble)'.⁶

Queer site-specific and site-responsive performance is predominantly made for *inside* places, often with ticketed access. The queer or, as they describe it, 'post-gay' work of the Duckie collective is very concerned with making its work accessible. Members describe themselves as 'purveyors of progressive working class entertainment'.⁷ Duckie made site-specific walking tours for the public outside spaces of Soho, Spitalfields and Vauxhall in the 1990s.⁸ However, they predominantly now invite their audiences inside to take part in their site-responsive and often interactive performances.

Brian Lobel is a queer artist who makes site-responsive work. Cape Minuta Prima (2011) is, I think, a quite rare example of a queer intervention into public outside

space. It is brief, lasting a few minutes and I read it as strange-queer rather than sexually-queer. Lobel invites members of the public to sign a contract that gives him one minute of their lives and this minute is recorded onto a DVD disk and kept by Lobal. He frames this piece in relation to economics, value and health, which is partly located in relation to his own experience of cancer.⁹ This public intervention into the value of time dislodges normative use of time from the invisible background and therefore can be understood to queer it. Other recent work by Lobels, such as Cruising for Art (2010), is more obviously about a sexual-queer use of place as it is about cottaging. It was initially created to be performed in the Victoria and Albert Museum and was later performed at Forest Fringe in Edinburgh.

Curious's On the Scent (2003), which I saw in Cambridge in 2009 brings lesbian-queer sensibility to the range of indoor queer-site-responsive performance. Curious adapt their text based performance to different houses/homes. Lois Weaver performs lesbian desire through her memory of the Avon lady and flirts with the small audience through the scent of perfume. Leslie Hill and Helen Paris perform the following two monologues. Framed by Weaver's named 'lesbian' performance, Hill and Paris can be read as queer-lesbian and even butch/femme. These performances can also be read as relating queerly to that place because of the strange intensity with which smell is used as a primary way of perceiving the world. David Leddy, Quarantine Theatre and Adrian Howells also make influential site-responsive performances that express, to varying degrees, a queer sensibility. These artists' works are predominantly constructed as indoor performances. Even Leddy's public, outdoor, site-responsive (and site-generic) piece Susurrus (2006), which dramatizes queer sexual identity, is

still a private experience because it is an audio tour on individual headphones for a Botanical Garden.

There are a number of artists who bring a queer sensibility and politics to indoor 'pure' site-specific performance. Neil Bartlett has created indoor site-specific performances since the 1980s and most recently for the 2007 Manchester International Festival.¹⁰ The queer arts festival Queer Up North (QUN) commissioned the site-specific performance You Who Will Emerge from the Flood (2009) by Julianna Snapper, an underwater opera for the Victoria Baths in Manchester in. Chris Goode made a one off, site-specific performance, Who You Are? (15th March 2010) in response to Miroslaw Balka's How It Is in the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern.

I saw in Who You Are? an application of queer theory to performance and dramatic writing that spoke to my own practice as research questions. Balka's installation is a huge box-structure, which is black inside and has one of its six sides open, through which to enter. It is big enough to allow for complete darkness to be experienced inside at the space furthest from the open end. The queerness of Goode's performance was in part constructed by applying Sara Ahmed's theorizing in Queer Phenomenology about what the orientation in 'sexual orientation' means to performance in this specific place.¹¹

Goode began the performance with a list of some of the things he 'is'. This included many different things including his sexual orientation, how much money he has saved and his favourite television programme. He used the complete darkness near the beginning of the performance to focus the audience's attention on where they were

and their orientation in the dark to other people and that place. A key moment in the performance that connected with my research questions was a dramatization of a meeting between Goode and a female official for the Tate Modern. They were trying to agree how to make the performance safe for the public. This encounter was an audio recording played in the dark and comically dramatized the official, played by Lucy Ellinson, and Goode having a queerly-opposite sex sexual encounter. In this moment I felt that Goode had combined the queerness of sharing a completely dark environment with strangers through performance with a dramaturgy of active characters.

The structure of Who You Are? was a constellation of moments about the phenomenology of being in the dark, which was unified through the presence of Goode as author and performer. The audience looked out from the darkness at the enormous square of light through which we had entered as the performance made the proposal that ‘who we are’ is produced from our relationship with the material and psychic qualities of how we arrive where we are.

I find it significant that so few queer artists who engage in site-specific and/or site-responsive performance make their work in public, outdoor spaces. I think this partly reflects the actual physical and psychic risk in making queer site-specific/responsive performance in public. It also may reflect the *perception* of danger in these spaces for queer artists. My experience of writing in public for prolonged periods of time suggests that being strange-queer in public produces a range of difficulties (both for passers-by and the artist) and leads me to believe that being visibly sex-gender-queer in public presents enough of a risk to discourage queer site-specific performance

outside in public. This demonstrates the continuing political value of public lgbt/queer community and political performative actions such as Pride marches.

Other Benches

To conclude this contextualization of my practice as research I want to turn towards the public bench, or ‘civic couch’ as the central object of my investigation of queer place. The most significant benches in playwriting are arguably the two in Edward Albee’s The Zoo Story (1959). They are also quite clearly contextualized by queer sexual identity, as they are the public place where two men challenge each other about who they are, particularly in relation to the normativity of heterosexual marriage and homosexual identity. The location of these benches is very specifically placed in New York. The first exchanges of dialogue locate these benches somewhere between Fifth Avenue and Seventy-fourth Street. This suggests that there is something about the public bench that is about being very specific about where you are and even how that creates *who* you are.

Outside of the context of playwriting Alexander Kelly (and Third Angel), Paul Harfleet, Lena Simic and Jenna Watt are four artists who in different ways have used the public bench as a means to comment critically about the performativity of normative uses of time and place. Watt’s Bench (2007) was originally located outside in public and was subsequently shown inside, at the National Review of Live Art (NRLA) in February 2008. It involves Watt occupying a bench for four hours, taking photographs of where she is and writing comments about those images on the photographs. She then displays the photographs on lines of string.

The first performance could be described as ‘purely’ site-specific because it was created in relation to a specific public bench in Stockbridge, Edinburgh. The bench intrigued Watt because it seemed to be in a ‘non-place’.¹² For Watt, the bench was a ‘non-place’ because it did not seem to have a reason for being there. It was on its own, had no view and was surrounded by homes. This also meant, she told me, that it ‘already felt like a stage’.¹³

Watt reflected that she preferred making the piece in public; the weather was sunny and lots of people came and enjoyed watching her perform which contrasted sharply to the way that she felt trapped inside the performance at the NRLA. In Stockbridge she connected the lines of string and photographs from the bench to a bollard. At the NRLA Watt instead created a barrier between her audience and her bench. Her feeling of being trapped might have been because of the different configuration of the string and photographs. But I think this relates more profoundly to the kind of space that she was in and how she related to it through performance.

Watt’s performance outside was clearly framed *as* performance and was an open invitation to passers-by to become an audience; it was clearly framed within the public norm. It seems that when Watt’s performance was framed by the discourse of contemporary Live Art her performance was radically changed because in this space ‘passers-by’ were already an audience. Watt’s Bench helps me to remember that the context for my becoming strange-queer in relation to public-norms was that I was not framed as a performer on each ‘civic couch’.

Paul Harfleet is a visual artist who makes queer interventions into public outside places and has also used public benches to do this. His most well-known work is the 'Pansy Project' (2006) where he plants pansies at public sites where homophobic abuse has happened. I saw this work as part of the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival in 2007.¹⁴ I came across a flowering pansy plant before I knew it was artwork. I think I noticed it because the small flower was out of place, in the square of earth around a tree in the concrete environment of the South Bank. It made me pay attention to it and think about this otherwise invisible place much more acutely. I then connected the name of the flower I was looking at with the Lesbian and Gay Film Festival I was going to, and began to wonder if there was a queer sensibility at work in this apparently lost/lonely pansy. It implied a queer presence was there, using invisibility in a similar way as Muñoz describes in Felix Gonzalez-Torres's work. It is like a queer clue, which says, 'Some queerness grows here'.

In the same year Harfleet was also working on a bench project, part of which took place in Edinburgh. He reflects on his website about his memories of sitting drawing on a bench in Princes Street Gardens and being in the same place 20 years later. Harfleet hopes to create some public art with benches by dedicating them to queer experience. He writes, 'In discussing parks, fountains and benches I ask the audience to re-contextualise these democratic spaces from a 'queer' perspective'.¹⁵

Lena Simic has written about how writing, thinking, taking photographs and being on a public bench was the creative process through which she 'creatively refigured motherhood through an arts practice'.¹⁶ In Contemplation Time (2008) Simic with her baby Sid, records her perception of the conventional normative parent as (self) righteously invested in biological essentialism. I find this both funny and moving as it

expresses, with such vigor, the challenge of resisting the normative constructions of motherhood.

I also read Simic's Contemplation Time in relation to Halberstam's discussion of reproduction time, which is governed by the 'biological clock for women and [...] strict bourgeois rules of respectability and scheduling for married couples'.¹⁷

Halberstam acknowledges that not all parents are able or willing to follow the (hetero) normative rules. But Simic's work, particularly as a member of The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home¹⁸ is an important example of how, through arts practice, family practice can and does sometimes rigorously resist normative, straightening bourgeois rules particularly through the feminist framework of discourse.

Simic is part of Factory Floor. I am, like her, a founding member of this network and two of the five LRE plays were performed as part of Factory Floor showcases. We formed as a direct consequence of the Split Britches workshop, run through the Lancaster AHRC-funded Womens' Writing for Performance project.¹⁹ We share a common understanding of our political and philosophical position as feminist artists. Half of us identify as either lesbian or queer and we all make disidentifications with capitalist (hetero) normativity in our practice. This is focused for some members primarily through a materialist framework and for others through a more psychoanalytical discourse.

I am going to conclude this contextualization of my practice as research with a discussion of Third Angel's bench projects, Off The White (2007) and Words and Pictures (2009). I will read Third Angel's benches and my 'civic couches' in relation to Marc Augé's notion of 'non-place' and Dee Heddon's critical reflection on the co-authorship of place and self.

Third Angel benches are primarily framed in relation to national identity. Kelly and Rachel Walton (co-Artistic Directors of Third Angel) began to think about benches while researching Englishness for This Pleasant Land (2003), an installation I saw at Leeds Metropolian Gallery. Their interest in benches is still generating work but the most dramaturgical performance they have created is Off The White. This was presented in Portugal as part of Teatro Praga's SHALL WE DANCE IV, CAPA, in Faro, in November 2007 and was performed in both English and Portuguese. Through the research for this performance Third Angel creatively 'identified' a new social group connected through their relationship with public benches: 'benchers'.

Kelly and his collaborator Paula Diogo asked a large number of people from both England and Portugal to contribute to the process with their thoughts about benches. These thoughts were edited and shaped to form the text of this 30-minute performance. Some of these people were thereby imaginatively brought together through the process and performance of Off The White. It is also a dramatization of the use of public benches to telepathically connect individuals across international borders.

Although I did not see the performance, from the script I understand that Off The White shares some themes with the LRE plays such as: How safe or threatening is it to be on a public bench? How can the normative flow of globalised capitalism in public outside times and places in Western Europe be denaturalized through spending a prolonged time on a public bench? How are benches both a place to think and to not think?

Kelly has written about a similar experience of alienation, as I experienced, while researching for this performance.²⁰ This text begins with a description of Kelly taking a picture of a solitary empty bench by the side of a busy road. A member of the public questions him about what he is doing. This moment is particularly familiar to me from my research on the ‘civic couch’ when I discovered that my presence drew an unusual attention both towards me and where I was. This attention was often in the form of odd, sideways looks and almost imperceptible glances. For Kelly, the camera makes it clearer what he is doing. But the extra attention he pays to something that tends to be understood as an unimportant place is still disruptive to the normal flow, in this case of traffic, in that place.

Off The White concludes with a reflection on a bench about a mother who has died and whose daughter uses the bench to *not* think about her. This connects with my reflection that I find through spending long periods of time writing on public benches a less personal, less ‘I’ centred experience of place emerged.

Off The White was presented on a bare stage, with a double video projection of a series of benches and their views. Each time Kelly and Diogo quoted from the ‘benchers’ one would read the text from a book, while the other showed the latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates of that bench. The action of the story they told is located in the emergence of this new group of people in Portugal and England. This structures the performance itself as the result of that group forming, which means that the action of the story is located in the past and leads up to the present moment of the live performance. The audience is then addressed in the style of a lecture: ‘As you

may know we're here to talk to you about benches'.²¹ The different reflections from different benches are given shape and unity in the present moment of the performance through the way the two performers play themselves as the creators of the performance.

Third Angel use benches to make connections between (sometimes alienated) people in different places, whereas the LRE process primarily uses public benches to examine how strange uses of time and place can alienate someone. I find the most interesting difference between Off The White and the LRE series is that Third Angel's process was collaborative, whereas my research as practice has so far been solitary.

My future plan for the LRE process is to explore the effects of developing it as a collaborative process. I am planning to do this through a new project called North. This, I hope, will explore queering national identity through collaborative writing about the effects and affects of extreme light conditions with different communities north of 60 latitudinal degrees. Beyond 60 degrees there is at least one full 24-hour cycle of light in the summer and dark in the winter. Through this I am hoping to examine the idea of a different kind of 'national' identity that is constructed in relation to light, rather than land mass borders or capital cities as seats of political power.

Kelly and I are both drawn to the way that benches facilitate people to create a gap, or lacuna, within the seamlessness of normative uses of space and place in a globalized capitalist environment. We have exchanged ideas about this work since 2006. I

corresponded with him recently about what he thinks is particular to a public bench as a kind of place. He replied that Off The White was particularly inspired by Augé's Non-places, but that for him 'a bench has the possibility to be the opposite of a non-place, as its surroundings are unique'.²²

Augé's use of the term 'non-place' refers to a way of using space that is characteristic of 'supermodernity'.²³ For Augé archetypal 'non-places' are found in trains, cars, motorways, airports and supermarkets. He writes: 'Since non-places are there to be passed through they are measured in units of time'.²⁴ This means that a place can become a non-place and visa-versa through the way it is used and related to. They do not exist as a 'pure form'.²⁵

I could understand the practice of sitting and writing on a public bench as a way of turning a 'non-place' into place. The choice to spend time in a 'non-place' that is usually passed through could make it into 'place'. However, I share with Kelly the idea that our practice on public benches is not quite this. It is not only the unusual amount of time I spend on a public bench that turns it into a 'civic couch'. It is also the *strangeness* of this practice in relation to the public norm. I find Kelly's idea of 'the opposite of non-place' quite queer as it proposes something beyond the place/'non-place' dichotomy: that the opposite of the negative ('non-'), might not necessarily be a positive 'place'.

I want to contextualize the 'queer place' of the 'civic couch', with Dee Heddon's critical reflection on the co-authorship of self and place in relation to her own practice.²⁶ She reflects, 'The One Square Foot project offers one model for making an

autobiographical performance that inevitably goes beyond the self, because the site itself becomes a co-author and co-subject'.²⁷ I wonder if the co-authorship of self with place (and therefore also of place with self) is also part of how the public bench becomes a queer place. Each 'civic couch' creates and discovers queerness through the unique strangeness-queerness that comes into being specifically through the creative engagement between a particular self, or selves, in a particular place, at a particular time. My research as practice shows that at least one way of creating the chance for that engagement is by writing about a place while physically in it for a prolonged period of time. This practice as research inscribes queer theory into any public, everyday, outside place and then uses that to create a series of performances in relation to each specific theatre's queer place.

Conclusion: How queer can you go in the context of a conventional theatre practice?

This practice as research contributes ‘queer-place dramaturgy’ to knowledge about playwriting, creating an intersection of writing queer site-specific performance with conventional theatre practice. As I outlined in Chapter 1, the LRE series of plays work on the relationship between ‘difficult’ form and queer content in relation to how far an audience for any venue can be ‘productively challenged’. I produced the most recognizably queer LRE plays either for a small invited audience or within the framework of a queer arts festival. My overarching conclusion is that as a ‘lesbian-queer writer’ I am most likely to be able to directly represent queerness on mainstream stages in relation to heterosexism and homophobia within a broadly ‘realist’ dramaturgical form. I can also represent queerness with a looser relationship to (hetero) normativity and experiment formally with the representation of ‘reality’ on the ‘fringe’ stages of conventional theatre in the UK. I have not been able to find a ‘lesbian queer’ landmark play such as Angels In America Part 1 and 2 (1990, 1992), Beautiful Thing (1994) or Ravenhill’s Shopping and Fucking (1996) in the lineage of lesbian queer writing for theatre. It seems to me there are not enough diverse representations of lesbian-queer women in public life for a conventional theatre writer to create such a critical and commercially successful ‘lesbian-queer play’.

I think a key reason there are so few ‘lesbian-queer’ women in the public sphere is that (hetero) normativity is a more powerful force in UK society than homophobia or heterosexism. Queer theory argues (hetero) normativity is deeply bound to capitalist structures of time, space, reproduction and progress, which makes it extremely difficult to see. As Michael Foucault argues, it runs through the smallest and almost

imperceptible routes of everyday life. This means 'lesbian-queerness' appears as esoteric in the public sphere: a private matter of no significance beyond the personal and domestic sphere. This practice as research leads me to conclude that the most I can aim to do is crack open the apparently neutral and seamless familiarity of (hetero) normativity in conventional theatre rather than radically break or break-away from it, and that there is still a lot of public space to be claimed by 'lesbian-queer' women if we are to make more diverse images of female sexual and gender queerness familiar or exoteric.

I found in the lineage of lesbian-queer writing for theatre a direct and indirect strategy for negotiating with (hetero) normativity. Lillian Hellman's The Children's Hour (1934) resists homophobia and heterosexism directly by representing women who identify themselves (with horror) as lesbian as they instantaneously realize that they are victims of homophobia. Public lesbian icon Gertrude Stein, in contrast, created an indirect resistance to (hetero) normativity by formally challenging the construction of identity itself and the role of the writer in 'authoring' the play. I propose that Stein and Hellmans' strategies still effectively map the boundaries of how queer a 'lesbian-queer dramaturgy' can go today.

The most well-known contemporary 'lesbian-queer writer' for conventional theatre practice in the UK today is, I think, Bryony Lavery.²⁶⁵ Arguably her most commercially and critically successful play is Frozen (1999), which was nominated for a Tony Award for best play in 2004 after a successful run on Broadway. Frozen is an unusual play for Lavery within her canon of work, in that it does not directly represent any lgbt/queer experience or character, neither does it particularly question

the normative construction of gender or sexuality through its formal structure.²⁶⁶ I could argue that Frozen represents a concern with how human identity is constructed which emerges from Lavery's place in the lineage of lesbian-queer writing for theatre. However, I think this would be an esoterically queer reading of the play based on my specialist knowledge of Lavery's playwriting career and of lgbt/queer history and theory. *Exoterically* Frozen presents as a beautifully realized psychological thriller far removed from any question of 'queerness'.

Frozen is formally elegant, moving primarily from one character to the next in the cycle of connection and consequence before and after the abduction and murder of a child. It primarily uses monologues, which may be directed as direct address and/or as internal soliloquy. Re-reading Frozen recently I was particularly struck by the value of writing within and also against the familiar form of 'the thriller'. As each phase of the drama of Frozen unfolds I hear the echoes of the numerous other thrillers I have watched either on television, film or on stage or read as short stories, novels as well as poems. Lavery picks a new route through the very familiar landscape of both the form and content of the psychological thriller. Thereby this play also demonstrates for me that a 'lesbian-queer writer' will have the most success if she can find a way to represent queer concerns esoterically while delivering a fresh take on familiar form and content.

In some ways it can be argued the same challenge faces any individual artist. Every artist has their own personal, private and esoteric reasons for wanting to communicate with 'the world' beyond their own friends and family, which they also may not be entirely conscious of. However, I propose that the 'lesbian-queer writer' is put under

pressure to decide whether to represent lgbt/queer content explicitly and therefore be 'out' as a 'queer-lesbian writer' or to indirectly queer 'reality' through form. Lavery's career maps many creative negotiations of the relationship between queer content and challenging normative form in relation to particular venues and audiences from the 1970s to the present day.

Sarah Kane's playwriting is among the most formally radical, or 'difficult', to achieve international critical and commercial success in the past 20 years. Her writing can be read as 'queer' because it explicitly represents male-queer sexuality and the fluidity of gender-queer identity, as I discussed in Chapter 1. In plays such as Crave (1998) and 4.48 Psychosis (2000) I also read a concern to (re) write human identity as 'a landscape' that is remarkably formally close Stein's playwriting.

4.48 Psychosis in particular does not give stage directions or any indication of who is speaking, to whom, or even how many people might be speaking. 4.48 Psychosis even uses a pattern of numbers on the page,²⁶⁷ which particularly reminds me of Stein's first play A Curtain Raiser (1913).²⁶⁸ Stein's deliberately obscure use of numbers is a recurring trope throughout her work, perhaps most famously in Four Saints in Three Acts where there may be any number of saints and at least *four* acts.

Kane's work can be argued to directly and indirectly represent queerness in both form and content, but it does not directly represent sexual love or desire between women. This leads me to ask: if Kane had been identified as a 'lesbian-queer writer' would she have been able to write as she did? Is the fact that she was a woman writing queerly for mainstream theatre already a significant factor in the initial negative

critical reaction to her work? Finally I wonder if I (as someone who began this practice as research because my personal and professional practice led me to identify myself as a ‘lesbian-queer writer’) must dis-identify with the concept of identity itself, even if diverse representations of lesbian-queer women remain profoundly unfamiliar in the public sphere?

Through each cycle of writing, directing and producing a LRE play I became much more aware that the human figure on stage is read as heterosexual unless marked otherwise in UK theatres. Drama series such as The L Word and Lip Service are very useful for ‘lesbian-queer writers’ because they have begun to make a greater diversity of ‘lesbians’ familiar to the general public. But, I propose that until there are more ‘lesbians’ visibly part of public life, there will not be many critically and commercially successful plays that represent contemporary lesbian-queerness.

Enormous steps have been made towards lgbt/queer civic rights. The repeal of ‘Section 28’ in 2000 felt like a particularly important change.²⁶⁹ Part of my work as a lgbt/queer youth group facilitator in the late 1990s was to train professionals who worked with children about the clause. I found that ‘Section 28’ instilled and/or reinforced a deep, but also vague, sense of fear in many adults working with children and young people around any questions about sexuality beyond the most normative.

However, as civil rights for lgbt/queer people improve it also becomes more difficult to see the need for lgbt/queer representation as ‘we’ are (re) authored by this legislation as more alike than different to the ‘heterosexual norm’. Legal equality can imply equality of civic experience, which is not always born out by the day-to-day

experience of walking in the street, going to the doctor, reporting a crime, buying your own home or chatting to a neighbour. By thinking queer theory and playwriting through each other, this practice as research made clearer what queerness is left after lgbt/queer identity becomes more civically ‘acceptable’ and closely aligned with ‘the norm’. This made it clearer for me that queerness *can* and probably *must* detach from sexual identity if it is to take part in resistance to the logics of capitalist and (hetero) normative time and place.

The ‘queer place dramaturgy’ evolved as a way to create, experience and think about queerness as a range of scales from the odd to the strange to the abject. It aimed to activate strangeness in the familiar and in this way can be understood as a queer reverse-discourse with (hetero) normativity at the ‘ground level’ of materiality. The dramaturgical process of the ‘civic couch’ shows that exceeding the normative use of time and place can queer both a place and the writer.

As I discuss in Chapter 3, I became a ‘queer writer’ on the civic couch beyond my own sexual identity ‘as a lesbian’. As sexual identity is detached from queerness I also found that identity itself opened to place: That my identity as a ‘human being’ became more obviously co-authored by that place. As I described myself in a particular place for a prolonged period of time (to the edges of what I felt I could physically and safely manage) I became more conscious that ‘I’ was not the sole authority over what I wrote. Therefore place and writer entered a practice of co-authorship.

There are two outcomes from this. Firstly, the practice as research has dislodged ‘me’ productively from normative discourses of identity. Personally and professionally I do not feel as obligated by my ‘identity’ to directly represent queerness on stage as I did when I first began to write plays on my own. This means that I can be more clear about when and how much I want to directly challenge (hetero) normativity. I also know if I choose to challenge normative constructions of reality, that I approach it from a queer place, even if there is no exoteric connection to queerness.²⁷⁰ Secondly, this practice of co-authorship with place dislodges ‘the writer’ from normative discourses of authorship.

I found the ‘queer-place dramaturgy’ shifted the typical relationships between place, writer and audience, particularly in relation to who is authoring at any moment. I see my ‘queer-place plays’ as a less radical and more accessible way of exploring the same formal strategies that Stein experimented with in her ‘landscape plays’ and the aesthetic of the ‘continuous present’.

Stein’s plays, on the page, are radically unexplained. They challenge the reader, director and actor to co-author them into production. In this way any reading of a Stein play is also a self-portrait of the reader and therefore her plays are co-authors of the reader’s identity, at least for the time they are being read. I hope to direct a series of Stein’s plays in order to research this process more fully.

It can be argued that this is true of any artwork and is simply a description of the processes of mimesis: of the relationships between a way of making and an economy of affects. But Stein is radical in her insistence on making those mimetic processes the

object of her mimesis. In doing this she radically displaces the centrality (or authority) of her own authorship. The plays for me remain ‘dramatic’ because the action shifts from between actor, time and place, to between play and audience in the present time and place. The ‘dramatic action’ is therefore in the present of the play *as a play*. I find this is as formally radically as, for example, contemporary postmodern writing for performance by Tim Etchells for Forced Entertainment as I discussed in Chapter 1.

The ‘queer-place plays’ in performance ask audiences to co-author the place of the plays. This produces, as I discussed in Chapter 4.1, a ‘doubling vision’ of the audience’s different authorships on stage at the same time. The plays also invite the audience to re-write the familiar in the theatre’s locality after the performance. This form of co-authorship is much more accessible than Stein’s, firstly because in a LRE the landscape is literally accessible because it is just outside. Also, Stein’s plays evoke many different kinds of landscape simultaneously. Bonne Annee (1916) for example jumps from a market place, to a hairdresser, to the concept of ‘a nation’, to two people talking (saying ‘happy new year’), to a ‘sir’ who might not be a man and Sevres, in the suburbs of Paris.²⁷¹ The LRE plays show different characters experiencing different places and worlds, but the unity of the presentness of place, I think, makes this much less ‘difficult’ than Stein.

I also give the LRE audience a great deal more information than Stein does. The LRE plays fulfill the dramaturgical principles of representing action between at least one person, a time and a place. These principles are organised around a local place rather than (as Stein does) the presence of the play as a play. Formally this focuses the audience more on their authorship of place in the play, whereas readers of Stein’s

plays have much more to co-author in the action, character, time and place. The ‘queer-place plays’ guide the audience to co-author place in the plays and outside after the performances with the aim of dislodging the familiar from its frame of politically neutrality. From Stein’s lecture Plays it seems that Stein’s aim is primarily aesthetic. She does not relate her formal experiment to a particular politics, but rather to the discomfort of the conventions of conventional theatre, particularly where the emotion of the audience is not in the same ‘tempo’ as the performance.²⁷²

I first created the ‘civic couch’ exercise as a way of researching queerness. As I continued with the series I wrote more and more of the plays in situ. As a result, the editing and dramatizing process, which I continued to do inside at a desk, became shorter and shorter. This led me to ask if the emplacement of the writing process makes a ‘queer-place dramaturgy’ more than the way it structures action, actor, time and place around a specific place. I find that the more ‘I’ am co-authored and (re) written by each place I write about, the more of the actual play I write in situ and the more that place therefore co-authors the plays themselves. As I argue in Chapter 4, this can be recognised in the difficulty of re-mounting the plays in different times and places. In this way I discovered as I continued with the series that I was queering the role of the writer in a playwriting process.

The more I wrote the LRE plays in situ, the less I edited and dramatized them. If I follow this shift in the role of the writer as co-author I can also propose that *anyone* can write a LRE play. I find that I have authored the ‘queer place plays’ as a process, rather than a series of texts and performances. I also wonder if a ‘queer place play’ would be queerer if it did not negotiate with dramaturgical principles at all and

everything that was written over 24 hours on a public bench was performed. I can imagine that the production of this text would be as ‘difficult’ as a Stein play for the actors and director and perhaps also for an audience. If it were performed in full it would also be a very long performance.

I did consider the possibilities of making a durational work from unedited and undramatised ‘civic couch’ texts. But the question of where they would be performed returned me to the context of this research as conventional theatre practice. A ‘pure’ LRE play, entirely co-authored with place, I believe, would be too long, too messy and too personal to be performed for a conventional theatre audience. However, I could imagine it as a durational piece in a ‘found’ performance space, in a gallery or even in a studio theatre that had been re-structured so that it did not present as a conventional theatre. I also imagine this would effectively shift the authoring process from me as the writer to (perhaps me as) the director and the actor/s.

I read both a utopian wish and death wish in the effects and affects of shifting queer identity from the framework of sexual and gender identity to time and place. I found through this practice as research that it led to a dis-identification with human identity itself. This is both a beautiful glimpse of a ‘post-anthropocentric’ stage, where ‘self’ is co-authored in the continuous present with place and time. It is also primarily found as the body and ‘self’ approach the boundaries of pain, isolation and therefore abjection, which leads ultimately to either madness or death.

The lineage of queer writing for theatre is remarkable for finding comedy in reaction to the abject horizon of what it is to be a queer human being. I have included the

following epilogue because it records a moment when - impossibly and comically -
place seemed to speak to me.

Epilogue

Yield

I was working on Hope Street in Northern Ireland in the spring of 2008. I had decided to go to Donegal, just on the other side of the border one Sunday, partly to research and partly to change my environment and to experience, just for the pleasure of it, some of the beauty of the Irish countryside. However, when I arrived I found a small town of newly-built houses. The few people there regarded me with suspicion, as I tried to 'go for a country walk' in the new-build, suburban environment. 'Stranger danger' alarm bells were ringing. I eventually found a proper country road and walked it for about an hour. I realized that I would only get lost if I continued so I retraced my steps. All the time I was worrying about the play, the performance, if the text for the flyer was right. I was hot, bothered and exhausted. I came to the turning where I could find the road home and looked up to see the red triangle of a road warning sign. Inside the warning sign was the word 'Yield'.

Introduction

¹ Judith Halberstam, In a Queer Time and Place (New York and London: New York University Press, 2005), p. 1.

² Halberstam, In a Queer Time and Place, p. 10. 'Perhaps such people could productively be called 'queer subjects' in terms of the ways they live (deliberately, accidentally, or of necessity) during the hours when others sleep and in the spaces (physical, metaphysical, and economic) that others have abandoned, and in terms of the ways they might work in the domains that other people assign to privacy and family'.

³ Lara Shalson, "On the Endurance of Theatre in Live Art", Contemporary Theatre Review, p. 106-119.

⁴ Hans-Thies Lehmann (trans. Karen Jürs-Munby), Postdramatic Theatre, (Oxon: Routledge, 2006).

⁵ Alan Sinfield, Out on Stage: lesbian and gay theatre in the twentieth century, (London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 337-8.

⁶ Kate Davy, "Richard Foreman's Ontological-Hysteric Theatre: The Influence of Gertrude Stein", Twentieth Century Literature, Vol. 24, No. 1, Gertrude Stein Issue (Spring, 1978), p. 112.

⁷ The Children's Hour was produced in 2011 at The Comedy Theatre and The Killing of Sister George was produced in 2010 at The Arts Theatre.

⁸ Although I had been writing and devising with Unlimited Theatre, the company I co-founded in 1997. I continue to write with Jon Spooner and Chris Thorpe of Unlimited Theatre as co-director of the company, which is based at the West Yorkshire Playhouse.

⁹ I find this is the common practice for playwrights working in the UK, which I partly base on my experience as a member of the board of the Scottish Society of Playwrights for four years during this research project.

¹⁰ Melissa Trimingham, "A Methodology for Practice as Research", p. 55. Studies in Theatre and Performance, Vol. 22, No. 1, (2002). 'The 'disorderliness' of the creative process must be incorporated into the methodology. The paradigm model of progress that allows for this is the 'hermeneutic-interpretative' spiral model where progress is not linear but circular; a spiral which constantly returns us to our original point of entry but with renewed understanding'.

¹¹ Trimingham, "A Methodology for Practice as Research", Studies in Theatre and Performance, Vol. 22, No. 1, (2002), p. 56.

¹² I will outline in Chapter 1 how the terms 'realism' and 'naturalism' have been used both interchangeably and to differentiate between the philosophical aims of 'realist' dramaturgy and stage craft.

¹³ Judith Butler, Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex' (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), p. 3. '(T)he heterosexual imperative enables certain sexed identifications and forecloses and/or disavows other identifications. This exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed thus requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, those 'unlivable' and 'uninhabitable' zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the 'unlivable' is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject'.

¹⁴ José Esteban Muñoz, Disidentifications. Queer of Color and the Performance of Politics (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, 1999), p. 5. 'It is also important to note at the beginning of this book that disidentification is *not always* an adequate strategy of resistance or survival for all minority subjects. At times, resistance needs to be pronounced and direct (...) But for some, disidentification is a survival strategy that works within and outside the dominant public sphere simultaneously'.

¹⁵ Sara Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others (London: Duke University Press, 2006) p. 163–164. Ahmed argues that a table can dance, or come to life, through the way we arrive at it and how it impresses on us. 'Such wonder directed at the objects that we face, as well as those that are behind us, does not involve bracketing out the familiar but rather allows the familiar to dance again with life'.

¹⁶ This, I reflected, echoed early 'realist' theorist and practitioner Emile Zola's proposal that 'realism' is the mode through which poetry is found everywhere. Claude Schumacher (ed.), Naturalism and Symbolism in European Theatre 1850-1918 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 153. Zola writes: 'L'œuvre d'art est un coin de la nature, vu à travers un tempérament'. I will return to this phrase in Chapter 1.

¹⁷ I could argue that some scenographic, installations or 'immersive' work by artists such as Janet Cardiff creates dramas for no actors. This work usually constructs a role for the audience member as either author or actor. This form of 'performance' is at the edge of what I would define as dramatic and I do not think could be understood as 'playwriting'.

¹⁸ Aristotle (trans. intro. Malcolm Heath), Poetics (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 11. 'So tragedy as a whole necessarily has six component parts, which determine the tragedy's quality: i.e. plot, character, diction, reasoning, spectacle and lyric poetry. The medium of imitation comprises two parts, the mode one, and the object three; and there is nothing apart from these'.

¹⁹ Martin Banham, The Cambridge Guide to Theatre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 176. Lodovico Castelvetro (1505–71) initiated debate about the dramaturgical principles of the 'three unities', with his 'liberal understanding' of Aristotle's Poetics. The Cambridge Guide to Theatre also states that the three unities of time, place, and action 'were considered canonical by, in particular, the seventeenth century dramatists of France and England', p. 37.

²⁰ Aristotle, Poetics, p. xiii (intro.). Heath argues that Aristotle's argument is 'that poetry is an expression of a human instinct of *mimesis* that is also displayed in more elementary forms of behaviour'. The 'elementary forms of behaviour' Heath is referring to are children's play and the mimicry of animal noises.

²¹ Stephen Halliwell, The Aesthetics of Mimesis. Ancient Texts and Modern Problems (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 14.

²² Jacques Rancière (trans. Gregory Elliott), The Future of the Image (London: Verso, 2007), p. 112.

²³ Elinor Fuchs and Una Chaudhuri (eds.), Land/Scape/Theater (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), p. 3. Landscape 'is *inside* space, (...) but *contains* place'. I discuss Stein's 'difficult' dramaturgy in more detail in Chapter 1.

²⁴ Elinor Fuchs, The Death of Character (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 107.

²⁵ Walter Benjamin (trans. Edmund Jephcott and others. eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings), Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, 1938-1940 vol. 4

(London: The Belnap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 25. Benjamin critiques Charles Baudelaire's images of women as reflections of (heterosexual) male desires and fears. Benjamin quotes the poem "A Une Passante", from Baudelaire's Les Fleur du Mal (1857), in the second chapter of The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire, entitled, "The Flaneur" (1938). For Benjamin this poem presents the love and eroticism that emerges, briefly, from a modern crowd and which 'suddenly overcomes a lonely man.' Les Fleur du Mal were originally to be called Les Lesbians.

²⁶ David Wiles, A Short History of Western Performance Space (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 254.

²⁷ Peter Brook, The Empty Space (London: Macgibbon and Kee Ltd, 1968), p. 9.

Chapter 1: 'Realism' is a queer problem

- ¹ Lacey, British Realist Theatre. The New Wave in its Context 1956-1965, p. 103
- ² Lacey, British Realist Theatre. The New Wave in its Context 1956-1965, p. 6 Lacey cites the term 'new wave' as coined by John Russell Taylor in 1962.
- ³ Dan Rebellato, 1956 And All That: The Making of Modern British Drama (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 213-4
- ⁴ Lara Shalson, 'On the Endurance of Theatre in Live Art', Contemporary Theatre Review 22:1 (2012), p. 106-119 "Insofar as dramatic theatre continues to be dominated by realism (and a rejection of melodrama), one could say that theatre itself is antitheatrical". p. 117.
- ⁵ Mark Ravenhill (intro. Dan Rebellato), Plays: 1 (London: Methuen Drama, 2001), p. ix (intro.)
- ⁶ Aleks Sierz, In-Yer-Face. British Theatre Today (London: Faber and Faber, 2001), p. 4
- ⁷ Innes, Modern British Drama 1890-1990, p. 16
- ⁸ Ibsen's 'realist' plays, A Doll's House, (1879), Ghosts (1881) and Hedda Gabler (1889) were described by contemporary critics in terms of 'disgust' and 'sewage'. Christopher Innes (ed. intro.), A Sourcebook on Naturalist Theatre (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 115. Jack Tinker headlined his review of Blasted, 'This Disgusting Feast of Filth'. Daily Mail. 19 January 1995.
- ⁹ Elin Diamond, Unmaking Memesis. Essays on Feminism and Theatre (London: Routledge, 1997), p. v (intro.)
- ¹⁰ Judith Butler, Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex' (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), p. 226
- ¹¹ Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (edit. and intro.), Performativity and Performance (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), p. 5
- ¹² Parker and Sedgwick (edit. and intro.), Performativity and Performance, p. 4. 'Where Austin, then, seemed intent on separating the actor's citational practices from ordinary speech-act performances, Derrida regarded both as structured by a generalized iterability, a pervasive theatricality common to stage and world alike'.
- ¹³ Judith Butler, Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), p. 175
- ¹⁴ Susan Styker and Stephen Whittle (eds.), The Transgender Studies Reader (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 183. 'Butler's insistence that gender is always ultimately about something else devalues their (transgender readers) experiences of gender identity's profound ontological claim – that is precisely about the realness and

inalienability of that identity (...) [I]f gender is not real, how real can its oppression be?’

¹⁵ Butler, Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’, p. 49

¹⁶ Butler, Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’, p. 34

¹⁷ Butler, Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’, p. 35

¹⁸ Butler, Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’, p. 54

¹⁹ Luce Irigaray (trans. Gillian C. Gill), Speculum of the Other Woman (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 27

²⁰ Diamond, Unmaking Memesis. Essays on Feminism and Theatre, p. xv

²¹ Diamond, Unmaking Memesis. Essays on Feminism and Theatre, p. xv

²² Diamond, Unmaking Memesis. Essays on Feminism and Theatre, p. 149

²³ Martin Banham, The Cambridge Guide To Theatre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 907

²⁴ Toby Cole (ed.), Playwrights on Playwriting (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), p. 17

²⁵ Cole (ed.), Playwrights on Playwriting, p. 17

²⁶ Stephen Lacey, British Realist Theatre. The New Wave in its Context 1956-1965 (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 8

²⁷ Bert O. States, Great Reckonings in Little Rooms. On the Phenomenology of Theater (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), p. 90. ‘Brecht realized what I have here tried to describe from a neutral viewpoint, that too much furniture, or walls that were too tight, created the effect of an unchangeable world, a ‘fated’ world, much as the principle of the tragic hero led to too much ‘soul-probing’. Naturalism, he said promoted an atmosphere of *‘tout comprendre c’est tout pardonner’*’.

²⁸ Brecht, Bertolt (ed. and trans. John Willett), Brecht on Theatre. The Development of an Aesthetic (London: Eyre Methuen, 1973), p. 219

²⁹ Claude Schumacher (ed.), Naturalism and Symbolism in European Theatre 1850-1918 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 5

³⁰ Schumacher (ed.), Naturalism and Symbolism in European Theatre 1850-1918, p. 5

³¹ August Strindberg (trans. intro. Michael Meyer), Plays: One (London: Methuen, 1976), p. 102. The first production of A Doll’s House, which is often cited as the first major ‘realist’ play was two years before the first full theatre electric lighting. Strindberg complained about the use of the ‘unnaturalness’ of limelight and footlights in 1888, because it produced contortions to the actors’ faces, which would distract and audience from the ‘realism’ of the drama.

³² Very few canonical, early-naturalist plays use public *mise-en-scène*. Chekhov sets the first scene of A Seagull in the grounds of the house and in Act Two of A Cherry Orchard by the side of a road, which leads to the main house where the rest of the play is set. Shaw follows Chekhov’s example using the exterior *mise-en-scène* of Captain Shotover’s garden in Act Three of Heartbreak House but, apart from the roadside, these are still private and domestic spaces

³³ Cole, Playwrights on Playwriting, p. 16

³⁴ Cole, Playwrights on Playwriting, p. 12

³⁵ Schumacher, Naturalism and symbolism in European theatre 1850-1918, p. 153
There are a number of ways to translate this phrase. The broad translation would be: ‘A work of art is a corner of nature, seen through a temperament’. A ‘corner of nature’ suggests *any* corner of the world, or reality, but might also be interpreted to be more specifically any small part of the natural, or biological world. The word, ‘*tempérament*’, is often translated as ‘personality’ or ‘character’. It is also associated

with sexual identity. This phrase could be understood to mean that the process of the artist's sensuality, if not sexuality, transforming a 'corner of nature' *is* the work of art.

³⁶ Elaine Aston and Geraldine Harris (eds.), Feminist Futures? Theatre, performance, theory (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, 2006), p.110 Case describes 4.48 Psychosis as a scripting of 'the mad roles that the 'I' as subject and object may play – particularly through the process of shaming'.

³⁷ Dimple Godiwala (ed), Alternatives within the Mainstream II. Queer Theatres in post-war Britain (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007) p. 142. Selina Busby and Stephen Farrier read Kane's characters and staged bodies, 'as queer visions of gender as it is expressed in fluid identities'.

³⁸ Sarah Kane, (intro. David Greig) Complete Plays (London: Methuen, 2001), p. 3

³⁹ States, Great Reckonings in Little Rooms. On the Phenomenology of Theater, p. 62-63

⁴⁰ Mark Ravenhill (intro. Dan Rebellato), Plays: 1 (London: Methuen Drama, 2001), p. 3

⁴¹ David Edgar (ed.), State of Play. Issue 1: Playwrights on Playwriting (London: Faber and Faber, 1999), p. 28-9. 'Both Dead Funny and My Night With Reg positively flaunt their drawing-room-comedy credentials, stage-centre sofa and all; Mark Ravenhill's Shopping and Fucking takes place on that very piece of furniture'. (...) 'The kitchen-sink drama was so called not just because that's where some of the plays were set, but because they *weren't* set in drawing rooms and country houses, because they *weren't* light social comedies or whodunnits or indeed musical comedies. Superficially, forty years after drama was dragged kicking and screaming from the drawing room into the kitchen, the new generation appears to be dragging it right on back again'.

⁴² States, Great Reckonings in Little Rooms. On the Phenomenology of Theater, p. 43

⁴³ Case (ed. and intro.), Split Britches. Lesbian practice/feminist performance, p. 1. Case writes in her introduction about how Split Britches have also engaged with queer theory and activism.

⁴⁴ Case (ed. and intro.), Split Britches. Lesbian Practice/Feminist Performance, p. 29

⁴⁵ Holly Hughes, Lois Weaver, Peggy Shaw 'Dress Suits to Hire: A Collaboration between Holly Hughes, Peggy Shaw, and Lois Weaver', TDR Vol. 33, No. 1 (1988-), (Spring, 1989), p. 132-152

⁴⁶ Geraldine Harris, 'Double Acts, Theatrical Couples, and Split Britches' 'Double Agency'. New Theatre Quarterly, Vol. 18 (2002), p. 211-221.

⁴⁷ Case, Split Britches. Lesbian Practice/Feminist Performance, p. 2

⁴⁸ Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling Devising Performance. A critical History (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) p. 221. Heddon and Milling argue that collaborative performance-making processes have the potential to produce, 'a different kind of performance structure that in some senses reflects its collaborative creative process – typically compartmented or fragmented, with multiple layers and narratives'.

⁴⁹ Following Alan Sinfield I take the Stonewall riots in New York (1968) as the key event beginning the gay liberation movement. Although The Sexual Offences Act (1967) in the UK, which amended the law relating to homosexual acts in private, is at least as significant. Each of these events provide the historical context for the creation of Gay Sweatshop theatre company.

⁵⁰ Dominic Johnson (ed.), "Introduction: The What, When and Where of Live Art" Special Issue: Live Art in the UK Contemporary Theatre Review, Vol. 22:1 (2012), p. 4–16.

⁵¹ Stein published 77 plays from 1922 to 1946. Her early plays (1913–22) were published in 1922. Although none of these plays were performed, Cyrena N. Pondrom writes, 'Though the book was not a commercial success, it helped to reinforce her existing reputation as a monumental figure among a literary avant-garde in France, England, and America.' p. ix. Gertrude Stein (intro. Cyrena N. Pondrom), Geography and Plays (The University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin; 1993).

⁵² Gertrude Stein and Virgil Thomson (eds. Wiley H. Hitchcock & Charles Fussell), Four Saints in Three Acts (A-R Editions Inc: Wisconsin, 2008), p. l-li.

⁵³ Hans-Thies Lehmann (trans. Karen Jürs-Munby), Postdramatic Theatre (Routledge: Oxon, 2006), p. 49.

⁵⁴ Kate Davy, "Richard Foreman's Ontological-Hysteric Theatre: The Influence of Gertrude Stein", Twentieth Century Literature, Vol. 24, No. 1, Gertrude Stein Issue (Spring, 1978), p. 108–126.

⁵⁵ Alan Sinfield's extensive history of LGBT/queer theatre only mentions Stein once and in relation to her connection with Radclyffe Hall rather than her playwriting. Alan Sinfield, Out on Stage: lesbian and gay theatre in the twentieth century (London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 77.

⁵⁶ Alan Sinfield, Out on Stage: lesbian and gay theatre in the twentieth century (London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 271.

⁵⁷ The Killing of Sister George (1965) by Frank Marcus is a significant commercially successful pre-Stonewall lesbian-queer play. It was produced in the West End and transferred to Broadway in 1966. It was also revived in 2011 in the West End. It represents the lesbian-queer 'problem' through conventional dramaturgy. The central characters are also not named as lesbian but "June" and "Alice" can be easily read as (heterosexist) representations of 'butch' and 'femme' lesbians.

⁵⁸ Catharine R. Stimpson, "The Somagrams of Gertrude Stein", Poetics Today, Vol. 6, No. 1/2, The Female Body in Western Culture: Semiotic Perspectives (1985), p. 68.

⁵⁹ Sinfield, Out on Stage: lesbian and gay theatre in the twentieth century, p. 72.

⁶⁰ Stein's arguably most iconic phrase comes from her poem Sacred Emily: 'Rose is a rose is a rose'. Cyrena N. Pondrom writes that Stein encoded lesbian eroticism in her playing with meaning and language through formal experimentation so for example: 'a rapid reading of the signature line: [produces] Rose = eros = eros = eros'. The line can also be read as a tautological play on what metaphor is. So a woman called "Rose" is metaphorically (like) a rose. But a rose can also only be a rose and therefore not like anything else. Gertrude Stein (intro. Cyrena N. Pondrom) Geography and Plays (University of Wisconsin Press: Wisconsin, 1993), p. xlv.

⁶¹ Gertrude Stein, Gertrude Stein. Writings 1932 – 1946 (Library of America: New York, 1998), p. 261.

⁶² Davy, "Richard Foreman's Ontological-Hysteric Theatre: The Influence of Gertrude Stein", p. 112.

⁶³ Davy, "Richard Foreman's Ontological-Hysteric Theatre: The Influence of Gertrude Stein", p. 112.

⁶⁴ Sinfield, Out on Stage: lesbian and gay theatre in the twentieth century, p. 337–8.

⁶⁵ Gay Sweatshop Archive. 6th February 1996. Royal Holloway University GS/1/2/6/1.

⁶⁶ Valerie Mason-Brown's first performance was staged in 1999 after Gay Sweatshop closed in 1997.

⁶⁷ Gay Sweatshop Archive. Royal Holloway University. June 15th 1975. GS/1/2/1/17.

⁶⁸ Jill Davis (ed.), Lesbian Plays (Methuen: London, 1987), p. 24-25.

⁶⁹ Nicholas de Jongh, Not In Front of the Audience. Homosexuality on Stage, (London: Routledge, 1992), p.143.

⁷⁰ Davis, Lesbian Plays, p. 82.

⁷¹ Davis, Lesbian Plays, p. 82.

⁷² Davis, Lesbian Plays, p. 82.

⁷³ Stein, Gertrude Stein. Writings 1932 – 1946, p. 245. Stein writes that the difference in tempo between the stage and audience 'does make anybody nervous'.

⁷⁴ Davis, Lesbian Plays, p.83.

⁷⁵ Ntozake Shange, for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf (London: Methuen, 1978), p. xiii.

⁷⁶ Shange, for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf, p. xv. Shange writes: 'for colored girls ... is either too big for my off-off Broadway taste, or too little for my exaggerated sense of freedom'.

⁷⁷ Lynette Goddard, The Methuen Drama Book of Plays by Black British Writers (London: Methuen Drama, 2011)

⁷⁸ Gay Sweatshop Archive. Royal Holloway University. 2nd April 1996.

⁷⁹ Section 28 repealed in 2003. Gender Recognition Act (2004). Civil Partnership Act (2005).

⁸⁰ Sinfield, Out on Stage, p. 1.

⁸¹ Sinfield, Out on Stage, p. 1.

⁸² Michael Wilcox, Gay Plays: Five (London: Methuen Drama, 1994), p. vii.

⁸³ Astonishingly the first female playwright to have an original play produced on the Royal National Theatre's main stage was Rebecca Lenkiewicz in 2004 with Her Naked Skin. This play represents the 'problem' of being a woman, as it is about suffragettes in the early 20th century and includes a lesbian 'coming out' drama that ultimately ends because of the power of heterosexism as "Eve" leaves "Celia" for the security of heteronormativity and marriage.

⁸⁴ Dominic Johnson (ed.), "Introduction: The What, When and Where of Live Art" Special Issue: Live Art in the UK Contemporary Theatre Review, Vol. 22:1 (2012), p. 4–16.

⁸⁵ Lara Shalson, "On the Endurance of Theatre in Live Art" Contemporary Theatre Review, p. 106.

⁸⁶ Beth Hoffmann, "Radicalism and the Theatre in Genealogies of Live Art" Performance Research, Vol. 14:1 (2009), p. 95-105.

⁸⁷ Tim Etchells, "Step Off the Stage" (ed. Daniel Brine), The Live Art Almanac (London: Live Art Development Agency, 2008), p. 7-15. Etchells is the writer and director for Forced Entertainment, a key and influential formally 'difficult' and experimental theatre and performance company.

⁸⁸ Gay Sweatshop did engage with the Live Art sector. Lois Weaver as member of Split Britches and Joint Artistic Director describes her work in terms of 'performance' and 'live art' in the Gay Sweatshop minutes. Gay Sweatshop also produced 'Queer Bodies' (1993) an International Festival of Lesbian, Gay and Queer Performance his included Tim Millar, Marty Pottenger, Holly Hughes, Kate Bornstein and Michael Kearns.

⁸⁹ Lois Keidan (ed. with intro. Dominic Johnson), "Frightening the Horses: An Interview with Neil Bartlett" Contemporary Theatre Review, p. 158.

⁹⁰ Johnson (ed.), "Introduction: The What, When and Where of Live Art" Contemporary Theatre Review, p. 7.

⁹¹ Keidan (ed. with intro. Dominic Johnson), "Frightening the Horses: An Interview with Neil Bartlett", p.158-159.

⁹² Keidan (ed. with intro. Dominic Johnson), "Frightening the Horses: An Interview with Neil Bartlett", p. 156.

⁹³ Johnson (ed.), "Introduction: The what, When and Where of Live Art" Contemporary Theatre Review, p. 7.

⁹⁴ Holly Hughes and David Román (eds.) O Solo Homo. The new queer performance (New York: Grove Press, 1998), p. 2.

⁹⁵ Forced Entertainment's performances have always been reported as provoking audience members to leave.

⁹⁶ Shalson, "On the Endurance of Theatre in Live Art" Contemporary Theatre Review, p. 111.

Chapter 1.2: Reflection on first phase of research as practice: Fling

⁹⁷ I wrote this play in the context of the Jerwood Arvon Young Playwrights Apprenticeships 2004/5 and a Scottish Arts Council (SAC) writer's bursary in 2006. Extracts from the first draft of Fling were shown at the Soho Theatre, London.

⁹⁸ I grew up in Eltham and I was staying with my parents for two weeks at this point in the research.

⁹⁹ 'Kate' is cutting her hair to celebrate being sober for two years.

¹⁰⁰ Henrik Ibsen (trans. intro. Michael Meyer), Plays: Two (London: Methuen, 1980), p. 334.

¹⁰¹ Graham Saunders, Love Me or Kill Me: Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Extremes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 37 Saunders quotes an interview with Kane where she describes making a connection between a hotel room in Leeds and the war in Bosnia.

¹⁰² Saunders, Love Me or Kill Me: Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Extremes, p. 27

¹⁰³ Phelan, Peggy, Unmarked. The politics of performance (London; Routledge, 1993) p. 96

Chapter 2: When and where is queer?

¹ Judith Halberstam, In a Queer Time and Place (New York and London: New York University Press, 2005), p. 1

² Sara Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others (London: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 164

³ Michel Foucault (trans. Robert Hurley), The History of Sexuality: 1 The Will to Knowledge (London: Penguin Books, 1978), p. 11. The History of Sexuality is a foundational text for queer theory although, as Tamsin Spargo notes, Foucault is not at the origin of queer theory nor is queer theory 'the destination of Foucault's thinking'. Tamsin Spargo, Foucault and Queer Theory (Cambridge: Icon Books Limited, 1999), p. 10. Annamarie Jagose is also careful to note that Foucault is not the only point of origin of queer theory. She points to Mary McIntosh and Jeffery Weeks' destabilizing of an essential or unified homosexual identity in the 1960s and 1970s.

Jagose, Queer Theory. An Introduction p. 10. Jeffrey Weeks, reviewing his 1977 publication Coming Out in 1990, in turn states that McIntosh was 'perhaps the single most important influence on me, as on many others'. He reflects on how isolated he felt developing the work of feminist and socialist scholars to analyze homosexuality as a social and historical construction, little knowing that he was taking part in creating the field of lesbian and gay studies that was simultaneously emerging both in France and North America in the 1970s. However, Weeks also writes that the publication of The History of Sexuality Vol.1 was 'most spectacular in its impact' and that it 'was to transform sexual studies in general'. Jeffrey Weeks, Coming Out. Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present (London and New York: Quartet Books, 1977 (revised 1990)), p. xi (intro.)

⁴ Didier Eribon (trans. Michael Lucey), Insult and the Making of the Gay Self (Durham and London: Duke University Press; 2004), p. 72

⁵ Paul Gilroy, Lawrence Grossberg and Angela McRobbie (eds.), Without Guarantees. In Honour of Stuart Hall (London: Verso; 2000), p. 33

⁶ Foucault (trans. Robert Hurley), The History of Sexuality: 1 The Will to Knowledge, p. 22

⁷ Foucault, History of Sexuality. Vol.1, p. 131. 'The fact that so many things were able to change in the sexual behavior of Western societies (...) is sufficient proof that this whole sexual 'revolution,' this whole 'antirepressive' struggle, represented nothing more, but nothing less- and its importance is undeniable- than a tactical shift and reversal in the great deployment of sexuality. But it is also apparent why one could not expect this critique to be the grid for a history of that very deployment. Nor the basis for a movement to dismantle it'.

⁸ Foucault, The History of Sexuality. Vol.1, p. 8

⁹ Foucault, The History of Sexuality. Vol.1, p. 43

¹⁰ Annamarie Jagose, Queer Theory. An Introduction (New York: New York University Press, 1996), p. 22

¹¹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Touching Feeling: affect pedagogy, performativity (London: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 12

¹² Sedgwick, Touching Feeling: affect pedagogy, performativity, p. 12

¹³ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Epistemology of the Closet (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), p. 85

¹⁴ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Tendencies (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 5

¹⁵ Sedgwick, Tendencies, p. 5

¹⁶ Ahmed also writes about how failure to perform the correct emotion in relation to these alignments produces figures such as the 'feminist killjoy' the 'unhappy queer' and 'Melancholic Migrants'. Sarah Ahmed, The Promise of Happiness (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010)

¹⁷ Sedgwick, Tendencies, p. 9

¹⁸ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Epistemology of the Closet (Los Angeles: University of California Press: 1990, 2008), p. 72

¹⁹ Sedgwick, Tendencies, p. 11

²⁰ Sedgwick, Tendencies, p. 8

²¹ Sedgwick, Epistemology of the Closet, p. xvi (intro.)

²² Alan Sinfield, Cultural Politics-Queer Reading (London: Routledge, 1994 (2005)), p. x (intro.)

²³ Jeffrey Weeks, The World We Have Won: The Remaking Of Erotic And Intimate Life. (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), p. x. (intro.). Weeks wants to look at how 'sexual and

intimate life (...) are transforming everyday life and the rapidly globalizing world we inhabit'. His focus is on the 'grassroots transformation' of the world.

²⁴ Halberstam, In a Queer Time and Place, p. 10

²⁵ Halberstam, In a Queer Time and Place, p. 5. Binnie also remarks on how little notice has been taken of sexuality as a route for power through the capitalist mechanisms of globalization. Sexuality has only become a subject for research into globalization in the past five years he states, pointing to Jameson's and Masao Miyoshi's The Cultures of Globalization as not even mentioning sexuality. Jon Binnie, The Globalization of Sexuality (Sage: London, 2004), p. 33. See also Sue-Ellen Case on the exclusion of sexuality from discourses circulating around globalization. Sue-Ellen Case, Feminist And Queer Performance: Critical Strategies (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) p. 86. 'The concept of globalization is most often understood as a genderless, sexless phenomenon(.)'

²⁶ Siddharth Kara, Sex Trafficking. Inside the Business of Modern Slavery (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). Sidharth Kara has shown how a globalized sex industry has increased the consumer demand for sex as a commodity.

²⁷ Halberstam, In a Queer Time and Place, p. 12 Halberstam is following Doreen Massey's questioning of Harvey's account of capital as the dominant discursive frame of space and place.

²⁸ It was my experience that elderly women were most likely to engage in conversation with me. For this reason the character of an elderly women reappears through the LRE series.

²⁹ Cindy Patton, and Benigno Sánchez-Eppler (eds.), Queer Diasporas (Duke University Press: London, 2000)

³⁰ Binnie, The Globalization of Sexuality, p. 49

³¹ Binnie, The Globalization of Sexuality, p. 49

³² Binnie, The Globalization of Sexuality p. 59

³³ Binnie, The Globalization of Sexuality p. 69

³⁴ Binnie, The Globalization of Sexuality, p. 75

³⁵ Doreen Massey, For Space (London: Sage Publications, 2005), p. 35

³⁶ Massey, For Space, p. 9

³⁷ Ahmed, The Promise of Happiness, p. 96

³⁸ Ahmed, The Promise of Happiness, p. 17

³⁹ Queer literature often claims the night as its proper place David Bell and Gill Valentine (eds.), Mapping Desire. Geographies of sexualities (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 20. Bell and Valentine quote from a pamphlet circulating New York, *circa* 1990 to contextualise their definition of 'queer': 'Being queer means leading a different sort of life. It's not about the mainstream, profit margins, patriotism, patriarchy or being assimilated. It's not about being executive directors, privilege and elitism. It's about being on the margins, defining ourselves; it's about genderfuck and secrets, what's beneath the belt and deep inside the heart; it's about the night'.

⁴⁰ Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others, p. 67

⁴¹ Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others, p. 154

⁴² Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others, p. 161

⁴³ Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others, p. 4

⁴⁴ Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others, p. 5

⁴⁵ Foucault, The History of Sexuality. Vol.1, p. 103

⁴⁶ Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others, p. 6

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- ⁴⁷ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others*, p. 6. Ahmed also explores the cultural and political meanings that accrue to the idea of left and right.
- ⁴⁸ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others*, p. 9
- ⁴⁹ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others*, p. 3
- ⁵⁰ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others*, p. 4
- ⁵¹ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others*, p. 113
- ⁵² Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others*, p. 114
- ⁵³ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others*, p. 121
- ⁵⁴ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others*, p. 4
- ⁵⁵ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others*, p. 82
- ⁵⁶ I used the image of a body at a literal slant in *LRE 3: Market Place* play for comic effect.
- ⁵⁷ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others*, p. 107
- ⁵⁸ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others*, p. 107

Part II. Chapter 3: Queer ‘civic couch’ effects and affects

¹ I applied a small editing process to this text. I transferred handwritten words to a computer and completed unfinished sentences, corrected spelling mistakes and cut sections that I felt were clumsy. I edited the text so that it was reasonably easy to read. I also checked quotations and factual details such as the name of a tree. But otherwise this was what I wrote on the stated dates and times.

² The complete texts to the other four ‘civic couch’ processes can be found in the appendix.

³ Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2005), p. 1. Judith Halberstam begins her book, with the acknowledgement that ‘(t)his book makes the perhaps overly ambitious claim that there is such a thing as ‘queer time’ and ‘queer space’.

⁴ José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), p. 1

⁵ Quoted from the ‘civic couch’ Grassmarket text: *‘A woman flanked by two men was looking at me, just then. Am I less invisible as night approaches? Does my presence as scribbling figure in my red hat and shabby coat make me more suspicious?’*

⁶ Quoted from the ‘civic couch’ Grassmarket text: *‘Is it a miniscule civil disobedience to sit for no reason on a bench at night?’*

⁷ Quoted from the ‘civic couch’ Grassmarket text: *‘Is asking for money from the ground the limit of acceptable civic behaviour? Defines the standing centre? Not for nothing is penury called queer street’.*

⁸ Quoted from the ‘civic couch’ Grassmarket text: *‘I approached my bench with tender feelings. It’s been a while. Disappointed to see the state it’s been left in’.*

⁹ Quoted from the ‘civic couch’ Grassmarket text: *‘(W)hen I concentrate on writing, with creating the representation of this sensation with words, then I don’t feel the cold, because in fact I feel myself to be somewhere else’.*

¹⁰ Elinor Fuchs, *The Death of Character* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 107

¹¹ In Market Place I did not write on a bench but a wall on the corner of Market Place and Market Road.

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- ¹² Walter Benjamin (trans. Edmund Jephcott & others. eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings), Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, 1938-1940 vol. 4 (London: The Belnap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 19
- ¹³ Benjamin, Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings. Volume 4, 1938 – 1940, p. 19
However, Theodor W. Adorno challenged Benjamin about this metaphor because it was not precise enough: '[T]he metaphorical character of going 'botanizing on the asphalt' does not seem to me in complete agreement with the claim to reality which the historical-philosophical categories in your text necessarily assume'. p. 201.
- ¹⁴ Benjamin, Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings. Volume 4, 1938 – 1940, p. 22
- ¹⁵ Janet Wolff, Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture (California: University of California Press, 1990), p. 34. 'the experience of 'the modern' occurred mainly in the public sphere, (and) it was primarily men's experience'.
- ¹⁶ Sally Munt, Heroic Desire: Lesbian Identity and Cultural space (New York: New York University Press, 1998), p. 41 'When Walter Benjamin described *flânerie* as going 'botanizing on the asphalt' his turn of phrase hinted at a gender ambiguity facilitating this poet to be read as less – or more – than male. The lesbain *flâneur* is one step from here'.
- ¹⁷ David Bell and Gill Valentine (eds.), Mapping Desire. Geographies of sexualities (London: Routledge, 1995), p.114
- ¹⁸ I found that women over the age of approximately 75 were most likely to want to talk to me during the day.
- ¹⁹ Munt, Heroic Desire: Lesbian Identity and Cultural space, p. 47
- ²⁰ Wolff, Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture, p. 39. 'For Simmel, the stranger is not a man without attachments and involvements (...). He is characterized by a particular kind of 'inorganic' membership of the group, not having been a member from its beginning, but having settled down in a new place. He is 'the person who comes today and stays tomorrow'; in this he differs from both the *flâneur* and Baudelaire's *étranger*, neither of whom will settle down or even make contact with those around him. But Simmel's stranger is always a 'potential wanderer': 'Although he has not moved on, he has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going'. These heroes of modernity thus share the possibility and the prospect of lone travel, of voluntary uprooting, of anonymous arrival at a new place. They are, of course, all men'.
- ²¹ Georg Simmel (trans. Kurt Wolff), The Sociology of Georg Simmel (New York: Free Press, 1950), p. 402 - 408. 'If wandering is the liberation from every given point in space, and thus the conceptional opposite to fixation at such a point, the sociological form of the "stranger" presents the unity, as it were, of these two characteristics'.

Chapter 4.1: How do the LRE plays reframe local place?

Introduction

²¹⁰ There are five LRE plays. Home Street was the first. It was produced at The Traverse Theatre on the 24th November 2007 as a script-in-hand performance as part of Stellar Quines' annual Rehearsal Room event. It was directed by Paul Warwick and performed by Sarah Belcher, Pauline Lockheart, Alexandra Mathie, Gergo Danka and Eric Barlow. Unfortunately there is no DVD documentation of it, but the play text is located in Appendix B. LRE 2: Hope Street was produced on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd

May 2008 at the Centre of Contemporary Arts (CCA), Glasgow. This was part of the CCA's Creative Lab project. It was written for three actors: David Gallacher, Maryam Hamidi and Linda McLaughlin. It was funded with a New Work grant from the Scottish Arts Council (SAC). Nick Bone directed Hope Street and Robin Mason composed and performed sound and music. The third LRE process was Market Place. It was performed as part of a Factory Floor showcase at Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff on the 20th March 2010. I directed Lucy Ellinson's performance and James Williams as composer/musician. Factory Floor is a creative network of eight women solo artists/writers/performers. Factory Floor was founded in 2006, following a series of workshops and symposia at Lancaster University entitled Women's Writing for Performance. We meet 3-4 times a year, taking it in turns to host and facilitate weekend workshops and showcase new work. Current members are Abi Lake, Caroline Wilson, Clare Duffy, Emily Underwood, Kerstin Bueschges, Lena Simic, Lorena Rivero and Louie Jenkins.

²¹¹ I produced queer street on the 3rd and 4th June 2010 at the G12 Studio at Glasgow University Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies. I also directed queer street and designed and operated the lights and sound. Queer street was performed by Pauline Lockheart. Lesley Hart performed the pre-recorded sections as Claire/Tall. LRE 5 Hope Street at Homotopia was performed by Lucy Ellinson and Louise Platt at Homotopia the queer arts festival in Liverpool as part of a Factory Floor showcase on the 12th November 2010 and was also shown at Midlands Arts Centre in Birmingham on the 10th November 2010 as a work in progress.

Chapter 4.1: How does queer theory about time and place guide the dramaturgical principles of the LRE process?

¹ Foucault, The Will to Knowledge. History of Sexuality. Vol.1, (London: Penguin Books, 1978), p. 11.

² Bertolt Brecht, (ed. and trans. John Willett) Brecht on Theatre. The Development of an Aesthetic (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964). P. 121-129. It was also inspired by Bertolt Brecht's famous, short essay, A Street Scene.

³ Judith Halberstam, In a Queer Time and Place, (New York and London: New York University Press, 2005), p. 1

⁴ Judith Butler, Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex' (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), p.3. I am particularly thinking here of the queerness of those 'abject beings who live beyond the 'norm' and not just opposite to the norm'.

⁵ The character is named 'Lucy' in the text, but her name is not revealed in performance and she refers to herself as 'a stranger'.

⁶ Joyce Mcmillan "Local Reality Expo at the CCA", Glasgow, for The Scotsman 7th May 2008 3 stars ***

When the Scottish Arts Council announced last week that Suspect Culture had lost its funding as one of the nation's top touring companies, it seemed like the end of an era in Scottish theatre; a time of cool, good-looking Scottish-made shows about the universal problems of urban life in an age of emotional isolation and global unease.

Not, though, if Nicholas Bone and the CCA have anything to do with it; for Bone's latest show, a work in progress from the CCA's Creative Lab programme, represents a heartfelt reworking of the same themes and impulses for 2008.

Beautifully written by Clare Duffy, Local Reality Expo takes the form of a 65-minute cantata for three actors, set in the heart of Glasgow, at the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope Streets. In true Wim Wenders style - or like a benign Google Earth satellite - it casts a kindly, angelic eye over all the hope, despair and eccentricity of urban life as revealed on that busy corner; then it homes in on a group of converging characters, and begins to spiral towards a strange moment of tragedy and revelation.

As performed, script in hand, by David Gallacher, Maryam Hamidi and Linda McLaughlin, this is not ground-breaking material; and its occasional little ventures into meta-narrative - actors arguing about who plays whom - are plain irritating. But the script has a powerful, looping structure, and some exquisite moments of insight into the profound loneliness and occasional ecstasy of the human condition; and Nicholas Bone stages this short event with all his trademark sensitivity and grace.

Dr Steven Blandford, "The Ordinary and the Extraordinary" Planet. Edition 200. Autumn 2010

Local Reality Expo 'lavishes attention on the very, very ordinary' according to its own programme notes and this goes straight to the heart of the delightful qualities of the Market Place version at Chapter in Cardiff in early September. To provide just a little background: Local Reality Expo is a framework that uses a writer's detailed observations of a very specific time and place and turns them into a piece of work performed as close as possible to the observed location. As well as Market Place (set in Canton), the writer, Clare Duffy, has written work growing out of Home Street near the Traverse in Edinburgh, Hope Street near the Centre for Contemporary Art in Glasgow and will shortly be at another Hope Street, this time near the Unity Theatre in Liverpool.

The Canton version could not be simpler in terms of presentation – one actor, a pianist and his piano, and a bare rehearsal space tucked away in the recesses of Chapter. The performance takes us on a journey through the tiniest details (recorded by the writer sitting on what she calls her 'civic couch') of the world through which we traveled to get the 'theatre' space. By this she means a bench, a wall or a bus stop from where she records 24 hours of detail edited down to the show's 40 minutes.

The demands on the performers are considerable (the endless cataloguing of the mundane); however, Lucy Ellinson's default position of sheer delight and wonderment at everything she sees and James Williams's witty interplay with her on the piano make the show completely absorbing. At times it is very funny, at others very moving. A lengthy encounter with an elderly woman and her shopping trolley is both of these as we gradually see the sympathetic unfolding of a life shrunk to the bare necessities.

However, this is no social realist treatise on urban deprivation, but much closer to an encouragement to rediscover our sense of wonder and delight in the ordinary. In a world that provides almost limitless possibilities for vicarious experience here is a reminder not to lose touch with our immediate material existence and all that it has to offer us.

Local Reality Expo was also a reminder of the pleasure in 'chamber' theatre – just 40 minutes long and with minimal resources, the piece was a welcome reflective space that also allowed enough breathing space for gentle humour. Someone has already referred to the concept as a kind of theatrical Google Earth. It could be better than that: where Google Earth offers frozen snapshots, an illusion of

engagement with far-off place, Local Reality Expo brings a place alive and in the process engages with one of the most important functions of all art – making the familiar strange.

⁷ Peggy Phelan, Unmarked. The politics of performance (London; Routledge, 1993), p. 2

⁸ This was therefore only called Home Street.

⁹ Phelan, Unmarked. The politics of performance, p. 146

¹⁰ Kirsteen Paterson, “Hey, that’s blurry-eyed me in the city centre...” (Metro, 20th March 2009)

¹¹ I spend one week writing in the public place, one week re-writing that text and one week directing it, for one (or sometimes two) performances.

Chapter 4.2: Re-attaching queer sexual identity to a ‘queer place’ dramaturgy

¹ Muñoz, Disidentifications. Queer of Color and the Performance of Politics, p.164

² ‘queer, adj.1’. OED Online. June 2011. Oxford University Press.

<http://oed.com/view/Entry/156236?rskey=e0P2LX&result=2> (accessed July 19, 2011).

³ ‘queer, adj.1’. OED Online. June 2011. The Irish English use of ‘queer fellow’ does not suggest sexuality at all: queer fellow *n.* (a) chiefly *Irish English* and *Naut.*, an odd or eccentric person, a ‘character’; (b) *slang* (orig. *Mil.*), a person in command or in charge.

⁴ Cheryl Martin is a playwright, poet and theatre director. She is a board member of Arts Council of England North West in Manchester and brings a black female queer perspective to everything she does. I have included the whole letter in the appendix (marked ‘G’).

⁵ Muñoz, Disidentifications. Queer of Color and the Performance of Politics, p.166

⁶ Muñoz, Disidentifications. Queer of Color and the Performance of Politics, p. 169

⁷ Muñoz, Disidentifications. Queer of Color and the Performance of Politics, p. 166

⁸ Muñoz, Disidentifications. Queer of Color and the Performance of Politics, p. 178

⁹ Muñoz, Disidentifications. Queer of Color and the Performance of Politics, p.163

¹⁰ José Esteban Muñoz, Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity (New York: New York University Press, 2009), p. 1

¹¹ This is my memory of his comment and therefore both paraphrased and prejudiced. He is also straight, but I do not recall if he cited this.

¹² Elaine Aston and Geraldine Harris (eds.) Feminist Futures? Theatre, performance, theory (Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, Hampshire, 2006), p. 115. Case writes: ‘(T)he events of 9/11 are not made to reveal the citizen status of the lesbian, but the lesbian performer reveals the militaristic isolationist violence of the state. If, in the past, the practice was to reveal the status of one who identified with a sexual minority within the processes of citizenship and legislation, this performance stages the lesbian performer as one who speaks about the nation as a citizen – looking out from that vantage rather than playing out issues surrounding her unique identity’.

¹³ 100 pennies were hidden around the bench and by the plaque behind it.

¹⁴ Peggy Phelan, Unmarked. The politics of performance (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 19

¹⁵ Phelan, Unmarked. The politics of performance, p. 19

Chapter 5: Practice context: Queer Sited performance and Other Benches

¹ Fiona Wilkie, "Mapping the Terrain: A Survey of Site-Specific Performance in Britain", *New Theatre Quarterly*, Vol 18, No.2 (2002), p. 149 '[C]an we distil a *pure* model of site-specificity, with which other, related, practices might also be illuminated?'

² Wilkie, "Mapping the Terrain: A Survey of Site-Specific Performance in Britain", p. 150

³ Wilkie, "Mapping the Terrain: A Survey of Site-Specific Performance in Britain", p. 149

⁴ Nick Kaye, *Site-Specific Art. Performance, place and documentation* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 2

⁵ Wilkie, "Mapping the Terrain: A Survey of Site-Specific Performance in Britain", p. 149

⁶ Wilkie, "Mapping the Terrain: A Survey of Site-Specific Performance in Britain", p. 144. 'The park, along with the beach and, indeed, the shopping centre, is suggestive of 'public inhabitability' (Bloomer and Moore, 1977, p. 84) and therefore is a factor in enabling artists 'to make the work accessible' (London Bubble).'

⁷ This is the 'tag-line' for the Duckie collective.

<http://www.duckie.co.uk/article.php?id=127> accessed 20th July 2011

⁸ Duckie has been part of my experience as a member of the 'lgbt/queer' community since its inception, although I did not take part in these performances discussed by director Simon Casson, which can be found here:

<http://www.duckie.co.uk/article.php?id=127> accessed 20th July 2011.

⁹ I discovered Brian Lobel's work through his website. 'Carpe Minuta Prima' (meaning 'seize the minute') playfully explores themes of economy, the value of our time and our work, the over-documenting of our lives and what it means to sign away your soul'. Quoted from Lobel's website: <http://www.blobelwarming.com/carpe.html> accessed 7th July 2011.

¹⁰ Neil Bartlett's early work with GLORIA theatre often created site-specific performance inside nightclubs and warehouses. Bartlett also created a site-specific staging of *The Maids*, by Jean Genet, for the Brighton Festival. He also directed *The Pianist*, for the Manchester International Festival with Mikhail Rudy and Peter Guinness in 2007. Information about Neil Bartlett's work accessed most recently at <http://www.neil-bartlett.com/directing-theatre.php> on 20th July 2011.

¹¹ In correspondence with Goode I confirmed with him that Sara Ahmed's book had influenced his text and performance: Email from Chris Goode, 17th March 2010.

¹² Notated conversation with Jenna Watt 24th June 2011. I will address Marc Augé's use of the term 'non-place' in relation to Kelly's work at the end of this chapter.

¹³ Notated conversation with Jenna Watt 24th June 2011.

¹⁴ The pansies on the South Bank were in memoriam of David Morley who was killed on the South Bank in 2004 after surviving the Admiral Duncan bombing. Information found at: http://thepansyproject.blogspot.com/2007_03_01_archive.html accessed 6th July 2011.

¹⁵ http://thepansyproject.blogspot.com/2007_03_01_archive.html accessed 6th July 2011.

¹⁶ Lena Simic "Impossible Expectations and Everyday Interventions A Document of Maternity Leave", *n.paradoxa: international feminist art journal*, Vol. 22 (2008), p. 79. 'I remember seeing a parent pushing a pram and smiling at me. She expected a reaction – a supportive fellow- parent sign. I stayed blank. I wrote about finding other

parents so righteous, so essentialist, so fundamentalist: one of the most despicable groups in society'. Lena created this documentation between the 5th July 2007 until the 27th April 2008.

¹⁷ Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2005), p. 5

¹⁸ This is an art activist initiative run from the spare room of Simic's family's council house, with her family: Gary Anderson, Neal, 10, Gabriel, 8, and Sid, 3.

¹⁹ *Women's Writing for Performance*, AHRC funded research project at Lancaster University led by Professor Elaine Aston and Dr Geraldine Harris.

²⁰ Third Angel published an online version of *Empty Benches*, which is also published in the artists' book *Slow*, edited by Ian Abbott, and is part of *Words & Pictures*. *Words and Pictures* an unpublished book, which I saw Kelly read from in August 2009 at Forest Fringe. *Empty Benches* can be found at:

<http://thirdangeluk.blogspot.com/search/label/emptybenches>

²¹ *Off The White* (unpublished), p. 4. Quotation by permission of Third Angel.

²² Email conversation with Alex Kelly 19th July 2011. Kelly writes he was particularly inspired to write *Off The White* by Marc Augé's *Non-places: introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1995)

²³ Marc Augé (trans. John Howe) *Non-places. Introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*, (London: Verso, 1995) p. 94. The examples of supermodernity Augé gives such as high speed travel and communications are part of what I think of as a 'globalized capitalist environment'. 'Supermodernity' can also be historically located as post-communist as Augé often makes comparisons between the 'non-places' in the supermodernity of France and the West with Eastern European where the generic signs of supermodernity, for example for food or fuel are not everywhere. Augé also proposes that 'supermodernity' is a development of the modernity that Baudelaire and later Benjamin described. He writes: 'We may wonder whether yesterday's representatives of modernity, who found material for reflection in the world's concrete space, might not have illuminated in advance certain aspects of today's supermodernity; not through the accident of a few lucky intuitions, but because they already embodied in an exceptional way (because they were artists) situations (postures, attitudes) which, in more prosaic form, have now become the common lot'.

²⁴ Augé *Non-places. Introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*, p. 104

²⁵ Augé, *Non-places. Introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*, p.78 Non-place 'never exists in pure form; places reconstitute themselves in it; relations are restored and resumed in it'.

²⁶ The destruction of a public bench begins the research process of Heddon's contribution to a collaborative project and series of performances entitled *One Square Foot*.

²⁷ Roberta Mock (ed.), *Walking, Writing and Performance. Autobiographical texts by Deirdre Heddon, Carl Lavery and Phil Smith* (Bristol: Intellect, 2009), p. 173

Conclusion

²⁶⁵ Bryony Lavery was listed as the 71st most powerful and influential lgbt/queer in the UK in a list of 101 in *The Independent* newspaper's 'Pink List'. The author of this article, Philip Hensher, writes that each of the people named on the list approved the appearance of their name and that in 'quite a few cases, permission was withheld'. It is therefore a very partial 'survey'. However, I think it reflects how few lesbian-queer women have power and influence in public and theatre. There are 13 women in the

whole list. Four of them work or have worked in theatre (Miriam Margolyes, Carol Ann Duffy, Maureen Duffy and Bryony Lavery). However, Carol Ann Duffy is primarily known as a poet and Maureen Duffy's most famous play *Rites* was first produced in 1969. There are 15 men listed who working in theatre. The list is also predominantly white. Philip Hensher, *The Independent* 26th June 2005, p. 11 – 31.

²⁶⁶ I read Lavery's play *More Light* (1997) as an example of her indirect resistance to hetero-gender normativity through form. *More Light* was written for a cast of 15 young men in the York Youth Theatre, as part of the National Theatre Connections programme. It is about the wives of a Chinese Emperor who are buried alive in his tomb after his death. It uses the young cast's embodiment of emerging masculinities to open the question of constructing female identity and sexuality in relation to the royal male power of an Emperor.

²⁶⁷ Sarah Kane (intro. David Greig), *Complete Plays* (London: Methuen, 2001), p. 208.

²⁶⁸ Gertrude Stein (intro. Cyrena N. Pondrom), *Geography and Plays* (The University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin; 1993), p. 202. I have reproduced it in full below:
A CURTAIN RAISER

Six.

Twenty.

Outrageous.

Late,

Weak.

Forty

More in any wetness.

Sixty three certainly.

Five.

Sixteen.

Seven.

Three.

More in orderly. Seventy-five.

²⁶⁹ Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 stated that a local authority 'shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality'.

²⁷⁰ I am thinking particularly of *Money...the game show* as a play that emerged from a practice of queer writing for the theatre, but does not particularly aim to be recognised as queer. I wrote and directed this play in 2011 at The Arches and The Traverse theatres. The play deconstructed the value of money by playing a series of games, illustrating the economic crisis of 2008 with 6000 actual pound coins. I could not have made this show if I had not made *queer street* in 2010. It is also important to note that I could not have made a show that so directly questions the structures of capitalism without the exoteric quality of the economic events in 2008 and their subsequent repercussions.

²⁷¹ Stein, *Geography and Plays*, p. 303.

²⁷² Stein, *Gertrude Stein. Writings 1932 – 1946*, p. 245.

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Volume 2: Appendix

Applying queer theory about time and place to playwriting

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Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
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The University of Glasgow

The Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies

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A: Fling Act Two

Callum and Kate are in the flat above the fruit and vegetable shop on Eltham High Street. It has become filthy, All the rubbish has been pushed to the sides, like a chimpanzee nest. The television is off. The curtains are pulled. Kate and Callum are both dressed in sports wear. Kate is breast feeding a baby. Her back is to the audience. She is also masturbating. She moans very quietly. Trying not to be heard.

Callum (Off) Are you doing it again?

Kate No.

She stops and mutters under her breath.

Callum What was that noise then?

Kate What noise? There weren't no noise. There was a bus. P'haps you 'eard a bus.

Callum I know what you sound like. You were doing it again.

Kate You don't know nothing. You don't.

Callum I want you to talk to someone.

Kate I want you to do one.

Callum Not going to happen. 'Love'.

Kate I would love to talk to someone. Someone else. Anyone but you and your watchful ears.

Callum enters.

Kate Do her will you?

Callum starts to change the baby's nappy. He is fatherly and gentle. The baby cries. The baby only stops crying when it is feeding.

Callum You must be tired.

Kate Why don't you leave me?

Callum I'm not leaving her with you on her own. You're not ready.

Kate I am.

I would be if you would just go.

Callum I will.

Kate When?

Callum When you're ready.

It's called Post/natal depression you could talk to someone but obviously that would involve you admitting that you have a problem.

Kate /Friend of mine drowned. When I was 13. It was on the radio in the shop. I was serving a customer and I was just passing the apples, or whatever.

I was serving a mate of mine's mum, we both knew Tracey, the girl what drowned and we both 'eard them say her name and then Eltham High Street and just like that, we both looked into each other's eyes. It might have been the first time someone, an adult I mean, the first time an adult looked at me like I might be able to answer *their* question. Know what I mean?

She looked scared. There was the word drowned and murder. 'Bring back 'anging.' She said.

If I ever killed anyone, I'd want to be 'anged. Wouldn't you?

Callum But I wouldn't.

Kill someone.

Kate I would.

Callum Of course you wouldn't. You've got post/

Kate You don't know. If you were really in the shit. Not just like a little bit 'unappy. But properly in the shit and no way out...cept killing. You'd do it.

You.

You wouldn't even think about it.

I know what you sound like too, boy.

Callum has finished dressing the baby and puts her down in the cot.

Callum ooo. You're sooo tough. She's sooo tough. Isn't she?
...shhhhh...now shhhh...She's a scary monster, isn't she?

Kate punches him in the face.

Kate Don't disrespect me.

Callum What the fuck!

Kate Don't disrespect me.

Callum Fucking Jesus. What the fuck do you think you're doing?

She punches him in the face again.

Kate Respect is important. Alright.

He scrambles up and wipes the blood from his nose.

Kate Yeah. A bitch.

She punches him hard in the face again.

 You want me to stop?

Callum Yes.

Kate Really. *(She continues to punch and kick him.)* Do you really want me to stop?

Callum Yes.

Kate But you like it.

Callum I don't.

Kate Then fight back.

Callum tries to get up from the ground but he's feeling dizzy, he's scared and she goes in even harder punching him in the face.

Kate Fight back.

Callum You're hurting me.

Kate 'you're hurting me'

She pauses and rubs her sore hands.

I used to be violent when I was pissed. But this is much better. I prefer being sober. I'm going to remember this.

Oooo. Are you 'ard?

Callum No.

Kate You are. You've got a 'ard on.

Callum Fuck you.

Kate Fuck me!

Callum This is a totally unprovoked/

Kate You like it!

Callum No.

 You're gonna scare her.

 It's very important she's not going to stop with this in the room.

 Early stages of development are

Kate slaps him.

Kate I've brought up three boys. I know what I'm doing with kids.

 Let 'er cry.

 It's good for their lungs.

Callum And they're such fine examples of manhood.

Kate They wouldn't get turned on by a thump. I'll tell you that for nothing.

Callum I'm not leaving her with you.

Kate Does this remind you of her?

 Was she rough with you?

 Did she hurt you?

 Show me what she did with that.

 Go on. Do it.

She slaps him about the head.

Do. It. Do. It.

Callum cups his genitals in his hands for protection.

 Wank. In front of me.

Callum I'm not leaving her with you. She's my daughter. I've been very reasonable. Understanding. I've been...Jesus

He gets up. Collecting himself.

This is absolutely, fucking outrageous. I. I.

She pushes him back down and ties his hands with some plastic thread from the fruit boxes scattered and piled around the edges of the room.

Kate You. You. You. You. You. You a God? A Sun God p'haps? 'round you all the planets go? You must be feeling a bit surrounded. Bit overwhelmed, monkey face? So much to do.

You're too used to getting your own way. You're spoilt...lawyer boy.

Did you know, that I know, what you're thinking?

You do too. You can tell what I'm thinking. But you pretend you don't. Sometimes you know what I'm thinking and you act accordingly. You've ducked before now. Something inside you has kept you away. So why did you decide then, to suddenly push me?

I wonder?

But most of the time you don't believe what you see. You see me hating you. But you don't believe it, because you don't understand it. So I see I'll 'ave to prove it to you.

I can see it in your walk. I see you thinking, (*Imitation of Callum's voice*) 'Am I being a bit too cocky?' Do I look like I love myself? I need to look cool. But, I can't look like I'm beaten. I need to look like I'm the one in control.

She looks at him for a moment. Gets up but keeps talking as she exits.

I'm not finished with you.

Do you like it yet?

It's for your own good.

She's come back with a dildo and a pair of scissors.

I am such a liar.

I want you to see how strong I can be. I want you to see things from my point of view. Even if I have to beat it into you. Because that's what you do with good-bad boys. You beat them until they see things from another point of view. Right?

I'm going to knock you into next week.

And then you'll know that it is time to leave.

I was finking while I was feeding 'er. I was finking about how much I hate you.

Callum Why?

Kate You're so weak.

She cuts open his trousers.

I seen them do this on Casualty.

She cuts off his Calvin Kleins.

Kate Fancy. You can get five for three pounds in Marks. And they're just as good.

Using some near by baby nappy rash cream she rapes him with the dildo.

And you've got no empathy. You don't know how I feel. You never will. You will never begin to imagine how it feels to be me.

Cos I look at you and all your soft underbelly and brains. It makes me sick. It makes me want to puke.

Cos you've had every fucking advantage haven't you, but you're still 'ere. It's my shit 'ole. Get the fuck out.

She stops.

That was so easy. You are easy.

Callum ...

Kate Do you want to die? *(Pulls back her fist to hit him again.)*

Callum No.

Kate Ok. I'll stop. *(She kisses him on the forehead.)* I really enjoyed that. Say you enjoyed it too.

Callum No.

Kate Was that a joke?

Callum No.

Kate I don't like you being funny.

She takes a banana out of a box and eats it.

Callum Let me go.

Kate Do you promise to stop being funny?

Callum I promise.

She unties him. He sits still.

Kate Do you want a bath? I'll run you a bath if you like. Like on Friends. I could 'draw' you a bath like Monica does for her Chandler and I'll put lavender oil and rose salts in it. Lavender is good for the nerves and rose is good for the heart. Good for love. I did a weekend in aroma therapy once. Load of Bollocks. But it does smell nice.

Would you like a bath?

Callum Yes.

Kate Good. Excellent.

She exits. Sound of running water. Callum moves carefully his hands and arms. He is tramatized, dizzy. He tries to stand. Manages. Then faints. Kate comes back in. She takes his pulse. Very gently cradles his head in her lap. Looks around her. Then picks him up and carries him off to the bath where she washes him gently like a baby. She leaves the doors open behind her. So we can see them in the bathroom through two doorways. All the while she talks to him under her breath. 'There there. I didn't mean it. I don't know what got into me. Won't ever happen again.' She then starts to sing him a lullaby.

Kate I was once a little Alabama coo
And I hadn't been born very long
I remember singing one sweet song.
I remember singing one sweet song.

And they took me down to where the cotton grows.
And I rumbled and I tumbled in the sun.
This was the song that I sung.
This was the song that I sung.

Go to sleep. My little nick a pinny.
Mumma's gonna spank you if you don't.
Hush a bye. Don't you cry. Mumma's little baby.
Mumma's little Alabama coon.

I love that song. I always imagined being in the country. And I'm the nick-a-pinny, which is like a baby, but I fink like a bit of a magic baby, because it can rumble and tumble and I always imagine me as a ikkle baby, but doing roolly pollies in the sun, so its like, I'm the baby and I'm going round and round but also and at the same time, I'm watching me, against this big, low, red sun; it makes me feel really good. It makes me feel really warm and safe and cozy. It's the end of a hot day and I've burnt my skin just a bit and there's that feeling of wanting to go to sleep and not being at all worried about anything that might happen in the night. Cos there's this big, blood sun, soaking into the earth. I imagine sleeping outside on a bed of cotton, what I've picked, next to me mum. Breathing in the open air.

Callum groans.

Kate Yeah.

You bruise easy. Don't ya. I barely touched ya, you know. Soft as a lily, your skin.

You shouldn't push me. I get really grouchy when I'm tired.

Callum Grouchy?

Kate Had no sleep.

Callum You want to kill me.

Kate No.

Why would you think that?

I was only playing.

Rough and a tumble. You like it.

Callum No.

No.

Kate Fine. I won't do it again.

I thought you liked it.

Callum Liar.

Kate No I'm not.

Callum Sorry.

Kate Ok. We won't say any more about it.

She gives him a clip round the ear.

Ok?

Callum I can dry myself.

Please.

Kate I'm doing my best you know. I'm up all night with her. My tits are red raw with her mouth chewing away. Do you know what it's like to have brand new teeth, teeth that 'ave just pushed their way through a baby's fucking gums, bite down, sharp, on the most, nearly the most, sensitive bit of your body. You've no idea what I go through. And she fucking does it on purpose you know.

She only feeds for comfort you know. This time of night. Not cos she's hungry. And she puts my red raw tit between 'er teeth and bites down and she looks at me and she fucking laughs.

Laughs!

You don't know what it's like.

I mean. I do love 'er.

But she bites me and she finds it's funny.

Callum You might need a bit of break don't you think?

Callum gingerly gets out of the bath and wraps himself up in a towel and dressing gown. He sits down in the front room in front of the tv. Turns the sound up.

I'm stronger than you.

Kate and Callum are looking at each other. The telephone outside starts ringing. They wait. They listen. It continues to ring.

Callum Will someone pick up that fucking telephone?

Kate gets up in a sulky way and leaves. We hear the phone stop ringing.

Kate Elham High street 0208 553 2479

Yes.

No. Thank you.

Bab bye.

Then the sound of Kate smashing up the phone box.

Callum during this has picked up the baby and is cradling her in his arms.

Callum No. Don't you worry, my darling. I won't leave my girl. Poor soul. Sweetheart. We'll be alright. I won't leave you.

Kate enters.

Kate She's not hungry again.

Callum How long do you think she'll breast feed?

Kate I don't know. Another year maybe.

Callum Oh.

Kate Why don't you know when you're beaten?

Callum Sleep. I'll be here.

He takes the baby from her. The baby is still crying.

Kate Just for a bit.

She rests and listens to him. Telephone rings and rings.

Callum Annie was my best friend. I only realised that when she died. She was my only home. My fundamentals. I thought when I saw you crying in the church, when I saw your belly, all wrapped up and full, I knew what you'd done.

Annie and I had a friend at school who killed himself. He was the smelly kid. The kid who wets himself, whose parents are weird and don't talk to anyone on parents day. He had something wrong. But we were that kid too, in our own way, so we were alright the three of us together.

Poor Annie.

Why did she do it?

It was your fault. I can see that now.

Kate It's all love.

Callum Why is there so much of it?

Someone answers the telephone.

Voice outside It's me. I know. I know. I know. (*Voice starts to cry.*) I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I know. I know. I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry.

Can I come home?

Callum I should help you.

Kate Don't need no help.

Callum You do.

You just don't know it.

He picks up the muslin and puts it over the baby's face.

Kate No.

Callum It's because I love you.

Act three.

The flat above the shop is empty now. There is a hole in the roof, through which snow is falling. Jake is older, about 30. He wears dark glasses. Kate is cleaning in the kitchen. The door is open and we can see her through it occasionally.

Jake I mean people lie, all the time.

Don't they?

I think so.

I do. I lie all the time. If I can get away with it I tell people I can see. And if they guess or see that I can't. I tell them. 'There is a deeper sight. There is the sight that comes out of the dark. Like a child.' And people are impressed by that and of course people want to know that it's all going to be alright. I can tell them that it will be. At least they won't go blind. It's not very likely anyway.

Insight comes out of the dark. Like a child. I find it comforting. Don't know what it means.

He takes off his glasses. His eyes are smooth patches of skin.

I'm talking to you.

I'm talking to you.

Mum. Kate.

What does the old place look like? What does it feel like to be here?

I can feel a breeze. Did you open a window. *(He stands up)* Oh. It's coming from above. *(He takes off a glove)* Is it snow? How beautiful. I never saw snow. My mum, my old mum, used to give me cards with pictures of snow at Christmas, when there was never any snow at home? That's mad. Isn't it?

You were the one who wanted to come over here. Was there something you wanted? Did you want something? You know what I want. I want to watch television again. Just once more. I want to know what the contestants on big brother look like. Apart from that, I've really accepted it now. We were all happy here. Watching telly together.

Are my worms still here?

Have a look in the toilet. I left them in there I think.

Kate comes in with the glass worm box. She puts it in his lap. He feels around gently and pulls out a long earth worm. She goes out again.

Hallo little fella. Hallo. I shall call you Sid? I can. Can't I? Or perhaps I should call you Julia? You are like me because you can sense light but don't see. You are not like me because I am a man and you are a hermaphrodite. I am like you because I am simple. I am not a worm. You are my friend. If you could understand. Do you think you would find it strange that our word for the first person singular is I. And that it sounds exactly like the word for an eye. Like my dud eyes?

Mum. Come in here. *(Kate comes to the door way. She has been cleaning.)* I forgive you. *(She listens)* Did you hear me? I said I forgive you. *(She tip toes away)* I would feel guilty if it were me.

You see. You see. You see. You see.

Oh God.

Do you have them with you?

Can I have them please?

It's fine. I'm sitting down. I'll be fine.

I can't blind myself twice can I?

Kate comes out holding the scissors from the first act. She gives them to Jake.

Thank you.

I just want to see how long it takes them to reform.

He picks up a worm and cuts it in half. He does this 5 times.

Now we wait.

And feel.

B: Home Street

To only be performed on a stage within walking distance (5-10 minutes) of Home Street, Edinburgh, EH3.

Actors speak directly to audience members, unless indicated. Actions may be demonstrated and repeated if necessary. Actions should be developed as if dance steps. Actors are performing the story of the characters. For example, although Fred's death is shown at the beginning of the play, the actor does not play his ghost from then on. There are no objects used on stage. There is no miming. The aim is that the language will bring the objects 'into view' for the audience.

Bungle and Fred are sitting on the floor.

Bungle She's going into a public telephone box to use her mobile phone.
Sketchy bird. She ought to be careful her camera ain't nicked.

Fred She's here all daylong, day in, day out. Never sits down. Must get
tired.

Jane No.
I'm not coming home.
I've *found* my perspective. This is the *real* story. This *is* the big
picture. This is *real* reality.
It's all here.
...
That's just one way of looking at it. Your *www*... But
I'll show you. It's all here.
I'll show you if it kills me.

Rod I love Home Street. It's the best place in the world. It's gorgeous:
The most gorgeous place in the world.

I love the (Polish) bakery, where the bread is £1.20. Can you see it
next door to the new Kurdish restaurant, Laraz? Which is where Mr
Bonni's used to be. I still miss Mr Bonni's ice cream. Don't you? I
love the supermarket opposite, where you can buy cheap booze and
at night they have to have a bouncer to stop underage drinkers
causing too much trouble when refused. Although, the shop owner
says he's not a bouncer, he's just a very 'big friend'.

I've seen them trying to carry out six packs under their t-shirts. I've
seen them! Those gorgeous, under washed scrotes. I love them too.
I love the Romanian charity shop 'Bagpus', because they make such
an effort with their window display. They always have something I
want to buy in there. A five piece set of place mats, illustrating
small mammals in the British countryside, £3.50, or a picture of
princess Diana. There's the sewing shop. 'Pins and Needles.' Do

you know how many times they've had to replace the glass on that front this year?

There's the off-license. The kids pester them less there. And personally I think that's because it feels a bit more formal. The supermarket is all...twists and turns, isles and stacks of stuff, places to hide behind the beans...it's more 'family' and Haddows is more... You need more bollocks, to knick from Haddows, somehow.

Oooo...ooo and of course, can't forget Concorde. Best Chips In Edinburgh! *Everyone* knows that. Then there's the Cameo. Best cinema in Scotland! *Everyone* knows that too. And the telephone boxes there, outside the cinema. I love those telephone boxes! They are so grey and they have such advertising on them!

Inside it says: 'You can email, surf and text from here. But it's a phone too!' It *does*! Go and look for yourself if you don't believe me. But underneath that message, there's just an ordinary pay phone...the internet phone is in the *other* booth. I reckon that's a bit misleading? But apart from that, everything on Home Street is brilliant-gorgeous-splendid!

Zippy (To Fred) She's come out of the telephone box now, but she's still on her mobile phone.

Jane Home soon. Love you. Bye.

Rod Have you ever noticed that advertising is the best art form in the whole history of the whole world ever?!¹ And right now, telephone adverts are the best adverts in the world. I love mobile phone adverts best. They show us: 'That the Material World is Only an Illusion.'

Do you remember this one? Remember:

The one where: there is a man who can make glass bend with his hands! He touches his female friend who is sitting quietly in a café on her own reading a book...by bending the glass! She's in a café a bit like the one on Home Street called a 'Touch of Class'. Behind the counter in 'Touch of Class' is a man who wants to be an MP. He says that the bloody council never do anything for Home Street!

Ooohh! And...I love the one where a man falls from a building. He starts very high, up in the sky and he falls with the mobile attached to his ear, but when he hits the floor all the slabs of pavements

¹ 'What in the end makes advertisements so superior to criticism? Not what the moving red neon says – but the fiery pool reflecting it in the asphalt.' Walter Benjamin

ripple as if they were a giant water bed! The building is a bit like the big glass bank on the Tollcross corner.

In the same ad there are some young...*gorgeous* young people wearing long skinny jeans. Their jeans go right over their shoes! They walk in a trance and the buildings move around *them*! So, they can all meet and smile at each other, without having to look at a map or even turn a corner! In this advert it's a sunny day. And there are other people who are older who do not wear jeans, they wear suits, so that tells us 'it is a working day'! That means that it is either a Monday, a Tuesday, a Wednesday, a Thursday, or a Friday...and so we now know that these *gorgeous* young people don't even have to have jobs! That's so *splendid* and *gorgeous* and *brilliant*. Don't you think?

It's Saturday evening. (*Use whatever day it actually is*)

The advert on the telephone boxes on Home Street outside the Bank of Scotland is for the Internet Watch Foundation...the picture of a little girl's chin it is reflected in the windows of the parked cars. These cars will soon have paper wrapped in plastic bags placed underneath their windscreen wipers, because these cars are parked on red lines that still have bits of yellow showing through, from the times when they used to be 'yellow lines'. There are packs of the public servants called 'traffic wardens' who do this job. They do not have mobile phones. But they do have 'walkie – talkies'. It's a dangerous job. It ignites great rage in the drivers of cars, when they are given these tickets. This is why Traffic Wardens travel along Home Street in yellow-jerked-florescent-flocks. They protect each other. They love each other. It's them against the world. They have their own issues too. But they deal with them privately. It would be too dangerous to show their weaknesses in public. Imagine the chaos, if Public Servants started arguing amongst themselves in the street...What would you do? Sometimes a weaker, younger member is picked off. But you have to expect some losses. It's ok. Everything is still in balance.

Nothing will ever *really* change. On Home Street.

Zippy

(*She is very angry.*) Since that nightclub opened everything on Home Street has changed! It's called Ignite. That's brilliant isn't it! We don't need a fire on Home Street. It used to be peaceful here.

Jane

Everything...every object has a story, if you look in the right way. I started making my documentary three years ago. It's for the T.V! Nearly finished. So nearly. It's just, I need...an ending. I need, well...I need a spark.

Rod

From here you can see the Castle. This is the best view of the Castle in the world. If you stand at the telephone boxes and look at the castle you will be able to see the celebrated Tollcross Clock! It's so beautiful! With the blue lady and stag on top. Also, there is a gorgeous keep left sign on the bollard. It's blue too. It's the blue of a magpie's egg. But not at all mottled. This blue is the same blue all over.

You can also see the traffic lights, the crossing, the big glass bank, the two thin ladies café. You can see Jane and her high quality Digital camera. She's just there. Looking for her story. Looking at all the *things*. Waiting for a flash fire of magic to touch her story. Then she can come home.

There was a German writer who died in 1956, called Bertolt. Bertolt Brecht. If he'd lived in Britain, you probably would have called him Bert...because you like a nice short name...don't you? More friendly. Eh? In America he might even have been just 'B.'

One day Bert wrote about an accident in a street. Imagine if that happened now. Imagine what would happen if that old, old man, over there. Do you see? That homeless guy. Let's call him Fred. What would happen if Fred were to step off of the edge of the curb, like this...

The actor demonstrates 'Fred' being knocked backwards by a car. The first time he does it quickly, shockingly violently. The second time he does it in slow motion and we see in more detail how he fell. The actor playing Rod suggests that 'Fred' didn't really look where he was going, that he was distracted, perhaps drunk.

I'll do it again, so you can see exactly what he did, I'll do it in slo-mo...he staggered...like this...off the edge of the curb, just as an ireful driver throws a plastic bag with a ticket in it, out of her window and reverses back.

You show us Fred.

Give us your death.

The actor playing Fred very carefully and in slow motion describes with his body the impact of the car with his body. There might be a significant difference with Rod's interpretation. Perhaps Fred demonstrates more clearly looking both ways before stepping off the curb? When he has finished the company claps or murmurs approval.

That's brilliant. Really impressive.

Gorgeous.

Poor Fred, knocked backwards onto the pavement, flung much further than you would imagine likely from such a little knock. But he is frail. He is old. He has been intoxicated since 1999. Poor Fred. Here he lies. And the people begin to gather around him. A black pool of blood plumes, slowly, from underneath his head.

It is *exactly* like in the movies. We are 11 steps (the steps of a woman of average height say 5 foot 6), away from the Cameo Cinema. Someone in the crowd notices this irony straight away. 'It's just like in the film I *just* saw.' She says. And there is this ripple of recognition so strong that *that* woman, who is called Bungle by her friends, she steps forward to actually touch the blood which is now almost by our feet. 'Don't.' (*He points*) *She* says. The woman who did it gets out the car. 'You mustn't touch.'

The actor playing 'Bungle' performs the action of going to touch the blood and being stopped.

And another ripple of remembrance shivers through the crowd. Of course, Colombo, Tennyson, Holmes, Rebus, if they've taught us nothing else, they taught us not to touch. Clues could be lost. Must not to disturb the scene.

Things on Home Street will never be the same again.

...

The woman who knocked over the man is very angry.

Zippy Yesterday, I lost my mobile phone charger. And the headset, so now I can't make calls when I'm driving into work. I lost a bunch of bananas, in a plastic bag. I lost my lunch yesterday, before an interview for a job I didn't get. Lost a tiny, pink, butterfly hair clip. It snapped under the spare bed in my B&B room the night before. Lost 4 black biros. 3 cigarettes.

Lost the black and white photograph of a woman who looks a bit like me. I like to imagine she is my mum. Then I imagine what my dad might have looked like, in order for her black-silver face to be the proto-type of mine.

I lost the first key, to the first door that I first locked the world out with yesterday. I kept it around my neck like the others wear their stars, moons and crosses. I lost my nerve yesterday in the city centre. Walking back from Waverly.

I want my life to be as well managed as a nunnery.
But I lose my cool.

Jane (On her mobile phone in the street. Dead Sippy.) Noooo. Baby. I love you!

Fred My love is as old as oil and as pure as a flame.

Jane Something is happening. Got to go!

Rod bing bing bing...booong bong b b b bring...grr...grree

Do you remember the brilliant bouncy-jazz-pop of the 'dial-up' internet-modem?

It reminds me of the summer of 1999. I was only thirty – *two!*...it made you laugh. You danced to it. I would 'log' on and 'send' mail. Imagine that. I used to write all my messages off line and then 'dial-up' and send them all together, back in the summer of 1999.

Fred I loved you first because of your hair, then your body, then your smell. Next I loved you for your humour, your dancing, you're were so energetic.

I still love you for your forgiveness in two thousand and three. And for your *intervention* in nineteen ninety eight. Didn't work though. Did it? Then I loved you for the gaps between the furniture. I spent a whole year outlining them with the tip of my finger.

Love is waking up and going to sleep. The changing-same. The never ever changing...the loose change-ing...the same ring...ring tones...the same ring-ring, ring-ring.

The public telephone rings. Rod picks it up and sings his dial up tune down the phone.

Fred Love is the unique facsimile
a single coupling again and again and again and again and again
On our wedding day...I gave my love a rose...

Jane speaks the names of the shops on the corner of Home Street as Fred speaks about giving a rose.

Jane *Three Coins: Launderette: Shut*
Omega Travel agents: Chinese.
Edinburgh Central Apartments
Edinburgh Chinese elderly support association
XL ltd. Electrical
The News Shop
Blockbuster Video express
Flat 2 Let
No 1 Sushi Bar...not even open yet, can't wait to try it!
No. 11 Bus. Ocean Terminal. Lothian voted Scotland's best busses.
Your locally owed Bus
Debra working for a life free of pain
No 27 Bus. Silverknowes
6 bins.
Royal Bank of Scotland.

4 telephone boxes
Subway
Simones' boarded up shop
Statements Hairdressers
Cameo Cinema
2 ATMS
Three man holes.

Fred (*cont.*) When I gave you a rose I gave you the world
When I gave you a rose I gave you the whole of nature in all its
infinite variety and splendour.
When I gave you a rose I gave you the earth, each molecule of
matter.
When I gave you a rose I gave you my body.
When I gave you a rose...I gave you God.
I gave you everything.
You left me.
And now here I am, on Home Street.
It's not far.
Not far down
To the ground.

Rod I love that nowadays you hear all sorts of unlikely people saying 'I
love you' in public. Bluff Yorkshire sons tell their mums they love
them, on trains, buses...in the street. They sound so sincere. They
sound publicly lost in private moments. Mobile phones have
brought love out...out of the...telephone box.

Jane Yesterday I captured that woman arguing with that young girl.

The actors playing Zippy and Bungle talk to each other.

Zippy 'You think you're above the rules?'

Jane She said.

Bungle Rules?

Zippy Common decency

Bungle I don't know what you mean.

Zippy That...is quite clear, dear

Bungle What about the common decency of letting me have a piss in your
bog? It don't cost you anything.

Zippy Money's not everything

Bungle It is.

Just let me pee.
You're here on your own. You can do what you want.

Zippy Remember April? When it was dead hot? You and your mates running up and down Home Street like a flock of drunk gulls? Do you remember?

Bungle No.

Zippy Throwing shit around.

Bungle No.

Zippy You were very rude to me.

Bungle No.

Zippy You said I was ugly

Bungle No way. Not me.

Zippy Yes. Well. I might be ugly. But at least I've got a fucking pot to piss in.

Bungle You were looking at me. I don't like people looking at me.

Zippy You're right there! You're there! For all the world to see. Why shouldn't I look at you? There's no law against it. If you don't want to be looked at then you should go and find a room, in a flat and live in it.

...
You'd feel much better if you had your *own* toilet.

Bungle Makes you feel good looking at me?
Makes you feel better.

Zippy I don't *want* to look at you.

 You're a fucking road accident. I don't *want* to look at you...getting thinner every day. Loosing more teeth.

 Dying. In front of my eyes. I don't want to look at you. If I wanted to see that...I'd watch the fucking news!

Jane That was this morning. Now, there's the body of the homeless man, who she knocked over and a viscous red puddle.
There's a crowd round the body, there are two girls in their twenties with big blond hair-dos and black goggle sun glasses. They're holding their bags on their arms at angles, inside wrists turned up, studded pose of relaxed consumerism.

Something has caught...here, something is catching...here...

There's a little boy and his Dad who pass by. Dad makes boy go on the other side...so he doesn't see the blood. The man is wearing faded, light blue jeans. He has very straight legs. The boy is just like his dad. They swing their straight legs in *exactly* the same way. Wish I had straight legs.

....mmmmummmm...ddddadddd

I record and play back, edit and play back...just like that kid

Ma ma. Dad da.

This man (*points to the dead man*) was sitting on the floor, on his own, first thing this morning. I went to the pub for lunch and when I came back he'd been joined by that girl. He is about 60. She is standing next to me now. She is about 20. She wants to touch the blood. He was looking quite ill. She was sat on a plastic bag. She had a cover for her legs and a clean Chinese take away box with about ten, two and one penny pieces. She was smoking and trying to talk to him. He was far away. His skin looked as delicate as ice, taut because he was so thin, but also weak.

In the rest of the world I have seen that there are different ways of asking for money on the streets. In Turkey I saw men up on their knees, as if in Church, as if about to be beheaded, head bowed and face entirely hidden, hands outstretched. Made me physically sick.

We're standing in shadow. Now. It's dusk. The lens on my camera adjusts itself automatically.

We can't see in real darkness. The human eye needs a minimum of five photons to see objects. As night falls, civilizations rules loosen...or change.

I asked a stranger for 15p once, for bus fare.

There is only one bird in the sky, a seagull, very high up.

The clouds are mottled. No stars tonight.

The street lamps are on. I didn't notice them coming on, but now that I've looked, the retina of my eye has a small orange doodle implanted on it; burnt by too many photons going in too quickly. I shut my eyes and focus on the doodle, It shakes, doubles, redoubles.

No one has come yet to move the body or cover it up. That can't be right.

When night time comes it won't be dark...darkness in the city is only ever a metaphor. There is just a different *kind* of light. The council makes sure it's not dark, so that we can be safe.

Zippy Who do I talk to? When I talk like this. In my head? Oh. Please. Let it be alright. Let me be alright. Let Gergo and Alex and Sarah be alright. And please, please God, make this all alright. Please god.

(*To Fred*) I'm sorry. I didn't mean to knock you down.

Why don't the police come? Why don't the ambulances come? Why must he stay like this on the floor? And now this child...this child wants to touch him. We all know you can't do that. They'll think that *I* tried to cover it up. I don't want to do the wrong thing.

Bungle You can't leave him there on the street, like a piece of meat.

Jane She takes off her jacket and puts it over him, then picks up a few pieces of rubbish, a white plastic bag, a crisp packet an empty coke can. She arranges these around and on him. She puts two bottle tops on his eyes.

Zippy What are you doing?
The police. The police will be here soon. They'll need to collect the evidence.
It was an accident. I've got to prove it was an accident.

Jane She knocks the objects away. She even takes the bottle tops from off his eyes.

Bungle It'll all be on camera. What you did.

Zippy You think? It's pointing the wrong way. Look.

Rod Everyone looks up at the camera on the lamppost on the island in Tollcross.

Zippy I ask and I ask them to point it this way. How many times do you think I've been threatened in there, on my own?

Bungle You'll not get away with it! Bitch.

Zippy Come on love. Put your coat on. You'll catch *your* death next.

Jane She appeals to the crowd.

Bungle Please won't you help me to move him? We can't just leave him here.

Rod You've touched him, they'll arrest you, if you're not careful.

Bungle *(As if Zippy has said it)* I'd rather go to prison than let my brother lie out here in the street.

Zippy He's not your brother.

Bungle What do you know?

Zippy You're a liar.

Bungle You don't know me

Zippy He's three times your age.

Bungle Looked after me today
Makes him my brother.

Zippy You're just a stupid girl. You don't understand. He must be left, so that the police can do their job. What would happen if the police couldn't do their job? There'd be chaos. That's what.

Bungle You're just a selfish old cow. You don't care that his spirit is going to get trapped, forever, if you don't cover him up now. At least his eyes. Eh? Don't you think he suffered enough? You want him in pain for All Eternity.

Zippy That's not true.

Bungle I'm not a kid!

Zippy I'm not...Dear/

Bungle /He has rights. His spirit has rights

Zippy For God's sake. He doesn't have a 'spirit'. And even if he did. I'm sure 'God' wouldn't be so cruel as to make him walk in pain for All Eternity, Isn't 'God' love?

Bungle No.

Zippy I'm sure he is.

Bungle God is fierce. /She's

Zippy /You're mad
...
We're just waiting a few moments for the police to arrive.

Bungle It's been hours
Zippy no...only a few minutes

Bungle It's getting dark.
 God doesn't like it.
 ...

Zippy You think...?!

Bungle It's unnatural.

Zippy It's what happens when the sun goes down. It gets dark.

Bungle It's a sign. Bad stuff's gonna happen to you.

Rod (*To Zippy and the crowd*) She's young. She's in shock. We all are, probably. I've never seen that much blood before.

Bungle Don't you act like I'm not here.

Zippy Oh, we all know you're here, dear.

Bungle I can't bear it. I can't bear to see him, look at him, so drained, so horrific, brutal...dead.
 You killed him.

Zippy Who are you? Eh? Who are you to question what should be done? You. You haven't even got a pot to piss in.

Fred I thought I had accepted failure. Failure is like dyslexia. Part of my NDA. Eh? HA HA!

Bungle He prodded me in the ribs when he made jokes.

Fred I was made redundant in 1996. I changed. All the bits that make the 'I' loosened.
 Lost my home.
 For a while. You know. Relied on Margaret's friends. To sleep sound.
 Funny how I didn't notice not having friends of my own, before.

Bungle What you miss most?

Fred Smell of the leather seats in my car.
 Home Street is my Margaret now. Details of her body. Hairline patterns in the pavement slabs; the whorls of grain in wood doorframes...her fingerprints... The reflections of the sun in windows in all three stories, from cars, bus stops; from the puddles

in the gutter. These are a thousand glances from behind her dark glasses, even on rainy days.

I know all the unfinished conversations that pass me by. I know her talk, talking endlessly on the phone, secretly in the public box and publicly on the move...I know the war of gulls when its nesting time and the shouting of the drinkers when it's hot. These are our spats that used to end in body fucking body.

I'd known it was going to happen. I'd known for a year. I thought I was prepared. But when he handed me that letter. The letter of failure. When Simon gave me the letter after...after all I'd given him...the school. I. 'I' was lost.

Jane

My camera's gone. Someone's stolen it. Shit. I wasn't thinking straight. It's night now. I can see the orange light on the pavement and the ash blue shadow of my body. I look like the foothills of a mountain I dream about.

My camera has gone.

I dream of being balanced on the peak of a mountain, camera in hand, the stars spin around my head, I'll fall if I stop recording, editing, *transforming* there's just so much of it to capture...this *real* reality.

What am I going to do now?

Fred

(Talking to Bungle)

We estimated on our tenth wedding anniversary, we estimated that on an average day, we kissed twenty times. We kissed before falling asleep,. 'Night-Night.' Kiss-Kiss. Then, 'Oh. Did you turn the heating off?' 'Yes.' Kiss-Kiss. 'Night-night then...' Kiss. 'Yep. Night-night.' Kiss.

There's eight without even trying. Then in the morning before I went to work. 'Bye love.' Kiss. 'What you wearing that tie for? Wait. There. That's better.' Kiss-Kiss. What we on now? 10? 12? Another five on entering the house and another one for the dinner she cooked me or two...if it was steak..ha ha (*he pokes Bungle with his elbow in the ribs*) and a few more because I washed and dried up. 20 easy. Now that makes 140 a week, 7,280 a year. We got married at 18. If we were still together it would have been 298,480 kisses. Approximately. But I only had 232,960. I haven't been kissed by anyone for ten years. Ten years yesterday.

I don't know what would happen if someone kissed me. Might wet myself.

I'm missing 65,520 kisses. It takes an average of 2 seconds per kiss. 131,040 seconds, that's 2184 minutes...that's 36 hours, so only a day and a half.
It's not so bad when you look at it like that.

Bungle

Have you seen the devil above number 34? Weird init? Why would you want a devil above where you stay? It *is* a devil. You can see the horns! You can see the empty eyes.

Yeah. Definitely the devil.

See there. Just in front. There's a metal manhole cover. The pattern on it goes IDIDIDIDIDIDID. Now. Does that mean.... I did. I did. I did?

Or ID ID ID? Like in identity?

Or does it mean didi didi didi like small?

Or DI ...DI...DI like detective inspector?

I don't know.

Something else that I've been thinking about. What other places has this scaffolding has been? Some of the poles are bright orange, some bright yellow, were they like once part of a bright orange or yellow scaffold? And you can see bits of plaster from other jobs if you look up outside Subway.

And why did they change that bus stop so that's got a big arch, and then a post on top of that? What was wrong with just a sign on a post?

Rod

(To us) In 1.5 minutes the sun will be 6 degrees below the horizon. It will be civil dusk, it will be the time when civilizations ties loosen and we all enter the dark together. Civil dusk is the time when objects can no longer be clearly seen by sunlight. It is the time when it starts to get dangerous for human beings to be out, with out a torch, or even maybe even under street lamps.

(To the crowd around the body) About fifteen seconds ago a beautiful girl walked past. Tall and thin. In black boots, a mid-length leather coat and green berré. She had short, dark hair, which curled out of the hat and against her neck. Just as she past the bus stops and stepped into the road, where it says, 'Loading Only', she turned and looked upward. I thought at first, a romantic gesture to a new lover, who was able to stay in the warm this cold evening. I turned and saw an elderly woman leaning out of the window of a second floor flat. A mother, perhaps, still *could* be a lover, or friend. It's an act of love, to watch someone leave. It demonstrates a

commitment to the existence of that person beyond your own present.

That's all she's trying to do. This young woman is just trying to love someone. Honour his life. She's young. She's maybe spoken rashly. Out of turn. But, she's not wrong. The law should be here if it wants a piece of the action.

You can't leave just leave a body out like that.

Bungle starts to kiss Fred. Two seconds per kiss. He may be lying down in the position he died in. He might not.

We don't know what to do.

Zippy

I'm standing at the end of Home Street. It's the end of the world. If I had an infinity of lives I would be able to think about the other lives I might also be living. If I hadn't been so angry this evening, I wouldn't have minded getting that ticket, I would have looked in the mirror before I reversed. I've never done that before. I always look in the mirror. Maybe I did. It all happened so quickly.

I have killed a man.

Here I am, looking at the yellow hatching on the road, at the Tollcross junction. I should not be here. Which way do I go now? There are six directions.

The yellow lines criss-crossing the space is a net.

The yellow lines criss-crossing the Tollcross box junction is a trap.

A prison.

The blue lady and stag on top of the Tollcross clock are laughing at me.

If I had decided to get married last year. This would not have happened. I would be in Skye, now. Not here.

If I had had that baby when I was 16 I would not be here.

If I'd known my mum and dad I would not be here.

If...If...If...

If I had got that job yesterday I would not be here.

If I hadn't lost the first key to the first door I locked the world out with yesterday...I'd be at home right now. Safely tucked up in my bed with some hot milk and Ian Rankin.

But...

Sod it. It wasn't my fault. He was drunk. He came out of nowhere. I did look and he wasn't there. He threw himself in front of my car on purpose. He wanted to die. That's suicide....the most selfish thing in the world. To make someone else kill you, just so you don't have to live. You know. None of us like it. But we all have to. What would happen if everyone who wanted to die, just did? Imagine all the bodies...piling up in the streets...if all the desperate...

Shit.

I killed a man.

Oh God.

My life will never be the same.

I will never be the same.

I can't move.

I can't stop looking at the box junction...keep clear...it means...I passed my test first time.

Jane

A police woman has just arrived in a car. I must remember everything now. She has brown hair. She has a tired face. She is maybe 30. She is thinking about leaving the force perhaps. Perhaps her marriage is breaking down. Perhaps she's getting married next week. Perhaps she's gay. Perhaps she's getting married to her girlfriend next week.

I can't remember *anything*. I miss my camera. I can't even *see* anything. Thoughts keep getting in the way.

Bungle

She did it. She did. I can id her Detective Inspector

No. Don't do drugs no more.

Marm.

I covered him because it was the right thing to do.

No. No. I didn't know that.

Why? I ain't done nothing wrong.

But, it was her.

I am calm.
Me and my man got a B&B place.
Been waiting for a home for 6 years. Offered me a place in Pilton.
But I told them, what's the point? I'm trying to stay *off* drugs. The
B&B costs five hundred pounds a week! It's a good spot. Here. By
the machines. Near the pictures. Near the phones. Loose change is
moving around on this corner. You know.

You been to London? London is rubbish for homeless people.

Not me. Never been. He'd been everywhere.

He was dead romantic. You know? Liked to talk. About stuff.

Eh?

Fuck it.

...

Yes.

I won't do it again.

You got kids? I want 'em. Yeah. Before I'm 30. We'll see. See
what happens, with me and my fella. Way she's looking at me it's
like I'm a traitor. I was just trying to look after his spirit. He's still a
human being...still got a soul. Can't take that away from you. No
one can.

I'd rather die than let him down. I wouldn't do this for my real
brother. No, nor none of my family. It's because he's a stranger.
It's because I only known him from today. It's more important to
look after people you don't know. It won't benefit *me*, to look after
him. That's why I got to. If you can't look after someone you've
only just met, what hope is there?

Hope is fierce. It's the only *thing*.

Fred I see the space between the buildings on Home Street filling up.
Raspberries have been filled into the carton of Home Street.

Rod I told you. Home Street is gorgeous.

Bungle You better get out of my road, if you know what's good for you.

Rod You'll need to go with them now. You shouldn't have touched.

Zippy Yes officer. I'll make a full statement. Here is my driving license.
He stepped out in front of me, on purpose. Yes. I'll do a breath test.
Yes. A tragedy waiting to happen. He's been here for 10 years.

Fred Love floods out of the windows and into the street

I was an English teacher once. My favourite stage character was Hedda Gabler. She said, 'This room's flooded with sun'

This street is sunned with love. It's full of RED. The street floods with berries, with petals, with blood. This home is roomed with streets.

Bungle I can see the end of my story. I can see where I am going. I'm being sent down. And I can't stand it down there. In the dark. Away from the noises of the world. I'll go down. And when I'm there I'll tear my clothes apart and necklace my head to a bar, or bed leg and if I pull hard against my throat, I'll die. And that will be what happens to me. Because it is always what happens to me.

I'm like Princess Diana. I will be buried, so that things can go back to the way they were before.

Jane With out my camera I've got no reason to be here. It's not for the TV. It's just for me. Is it a miniscule civil disobedience to stand here, at night on Home Street for no good reason? Not for money. Not waiting for anyone. Not making a TV show. Just enjoying the show.

Fred (*Indicates Bungle*) She's like Hedda. She will be buried so that things will go back to the way they were before.

Zippy She could be my own daughter.

Rod She is like Persephone. She's like Isis.

Jane So many like her before. She'll come back again.

Rod It's a gorgeous-splendid story.

Jane The stars are coming out tonight after all. I can see Virgo descending, behind the church spire, on the way to Bruntsfield. It's a sign.

Rod But Jane. You know. You know that they're only balls of gas. They don't mean any more than the keep left sign. Less in fact.

Are you going to come home?

Jane I don't know.

Zippy (*to audience and to the rest of the cast.*) I need things. I show love with things. I could give you a towel because I love you. Or, I could

show you a towel, and say ‘this is my love.’ Or, I can wrap my towel around you, not because I love you, but because I love your body. Or, I can whip the towel at you and sting you with it after we’ve had a shower, perhaps after playing some sports, because I want to touch your body, but don’t know it yet. Or, I can wrap my towel around myself after we have played some sports together, and put my knickers on underneath my towel when I am near you, because I want you and I do know it; In fact I know it regularly. Sometimes I know it in the bath. Sometimes I know it on the sofa. Sometimes I know it on public transport. But I never know it with you. Because, you don’t want to know it. You don’t need to know it. You have your own towel and a cupboard full of fresh soft towels for another day. I only have this little yellow towel that I stole, from the gym.

See...objects, items, goods, materials, paraphernalia

Things are good.

Rod Verisimilitude

Fred details

Bungle /stuff.

Jane Tonight I will lie on my bed in the B&B on Gilmore Place. I will listen to the wind and the seagulls. I’ll try and understand what the birds mean. I’ll imagine the waves on the beach, not far from here. I’ll imagine the light disappearing over the waves. I’ll think about the night as time emptied of photons. I’ll wonder if there is an opposite of the photon...if the dark is not just an absence of light, but full of dark particles, dark *things*.

But if the dark is only an absence of light, then that is the time when, *ww*when, maybe, I can love you without *anything* other than love.

Rod You want to love me in a vacuum? No air, No light?
Sounds like death.
We used to
Do you remember when
It’s got to be your *ww*way or the high *ww*
I miss you.
Come home.

Jane I’m here.

C: Civic Couch on Hope Street

Text in italics was added away from the bench, where the rest of the text was written.

19th February 2008

Hope Street. Actually I'm on the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope. Makes it sound like Manhattan when you say it like that. I'm on a diet today. I hope that one day I'll be thin and beautiful.

Wii is written on the back of a boy's jacket. The sound of suitcases being rolled and of the street sweepers brush being dragged behind him. People talk. There are a lot of people.

Bright, bright, sunshine but very cold. I had to buy a hat from the poundshop.

My bench is black, with forty thin round bars. The tips of my fingers are already numb.

Beep Beep
Traffic
Reversing lorry burb burb burb

Hardly anyone wears a hat despite the bitter cold.

The Sauchiehall Street sign is right in front of me. I think I'm facing east. There's a tiny old woman wearing psychedelic Wellington boots, in black and white. It's a bit overwhelming. All these people. Men go around in 3s and girls in 2s.

A guy with a Mohican shaved at the sides...he must be freezing.

Now with a coffee, with warm fingers I have to remember Hope Street. I want to start just beyond Hope Street where the river is. Today at 13.52 the water was calm. Soft and slow beneath the Casino on the river just beyond Hope Street. West of the bridge just beyond Hope Street there are giant pillars holding up nothing at all. On these pillars is written 'All Greatness Stands Firm in the Storm'. It's written in Greek above it and on the other one it's written in English and then in Greek. So it's like a mirror.

It started to get a bit scary on the other side of the river, less people. But there was a great mobility centre. A man was demonstrating a chariot with a completely straight face. I suppose if you demonstrate mobility (cars or scooters?) all the time they stop being as much fun as when you knick them from outside pubs and cause traffic accidents. At the top of Hope Street is a pub called Mac Connells. There was a tidy little mobility parked outside in the fierce white light, it shone like a Greek God's chariot – honest. It did. Psyche is the God of Hope symbolised by the moth or butterfly, such a chariot might belong to the Sun God Zeus. Because today the sun is shining. Psyche is also the soul.

Let it shine. Let it shine.

Sung a band, copying the Beatles in the toilet of MacDonald's just south of the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope. There aren't any Public Toilets on Hope Street. Is there anything more desperate than needing to wee (or worse) and being out in Public? Judith Butler who is a very clever American woman offered the barriers against defecation as central to most notions of 'civilization'.

Because I'm on a diet I need to wee all the time. I was on the Bridge looking west, taking photographs and a boy walked past. He said in an American accent 'Don't do it. It's not worth it'.

Well. I smiled at him. Because I didn't have any plans to do anything. But he looked even more serious and he said. Don't do it' in that version of an American accent that a dude from Glasgow would do.

Hope Street looks like New York today. In this bright light with the trails of airplanes ribboning the sky: White trails of Hope from here to there. I've always wanted to go 'there'.

I've always wanted to go to New York. Everything is so much realer in New York.

Mr MacDonald must have been a Scotsman originally.

Well...Dick and Mac Mcdonald had an Irish ancestry actually, that according to Wikkipedia goes back to 1820, but they might be connected to Glencoe, perhaps before that?

Still Gaelic though, which ever way you look at it.

WATTS Brothers is just like Macey's. It is. A bit smaller perhaps. But there's exactly the same energy inside in the morning of a week day, as you make your way past the displays of perfume towards the old fashioned wooden stairs and wrought iron lift.

How do you know? I thought you said you've never been to New York? Ah but I was being someone else then.

The walking man at the crossing isn't exactly the same. But it's similar.

On Hope Street there are lots of theatres. Well the Arches Theatre is just at the bottom of Hope Street. You can see it from the traffic lights at the bottom of Hope Street. You can see it from the last Hope Street sign on Hope Street. And then there's the National Theatre of Scotland's offices because they're not a building based company, which is brilliant. Then there's the RSAMD, which teaches theatre and other performing arts and then there's the Theatre Royal right at the end opposite MacConnells and the sun Chariot.

What is it that we hope for when we go to the theatre? To leave ourselves? Get on a plane, fly away to another world or find ourselves? Recognising reflections in the shadows on stage? Some people come to the theatre because they fancy the actors. I had ...not a stalker exactly but not a fan either....somewhere in between...(Pause) I

had a lover who liked to see me on stage...preferred it to the real thing s/he said I was better looking under the lights.

20th February 2008

It's not that I think that what I see is more important than what everyone else sees. A moment ago, before the double decker bar, when I was hungry and cold and just wanted to go home and get in a nice warm bath, a moment ago...when my sense of confidence was bottoming out because there wasn't any sugar in my system, I might have said a moment ago that my point of view is less important, because I am not from here. I might be here in the future though. I know what I'm hoping for. I know what stories I would like to play out here now. When I say here, I'm meaning a more general here. I mean in Glasgow. I don't have to live on the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope forever. I bought a hat yesterday from the pound shop. It's a thinsulate. I'm sure I'd be colder without it. But still it's raining right now.

There's a pigeon at my feet right now. It's doing a dance: two steps in, poke head, turn 45 degrees, two steps back. Sometimes he does an extra one step in. I look down and realise that a few crumbs of double decker have fallen under my feet. Dare this young pigeon risk my foot coming down on its head for a crumb of chocolate covered nougat and biscuit? In the end the answer is no, but more because the sudden intensity of street cleaning machine and traffic. It all gets too much for my lindy hopping pigeon.

James Robertson Kiltmaker on my left one floor up about Thornton's

'The art of the Chocolatier'

(If I were drawing rather than writing would I look less suspicious?)

There is a beauty parlour on the second floor. Cut and Dried. Male and Female.

And then somewhere in there is Aarasy's Inch loss clinic

www.inchlossnow.com

Then, of course, optical express on the corner. All the better to see you with my dear.

On my right, there is Watt brothers a Dept. Store it would seem for older women who don't buy hats. They don't sell hats. 'Shut up' someone (a Goth girl) just said and then, smoking as she passes 'I'm not crimping.'

'I'm not crimping'

I tried to buy a hat there yesterday (in Watt's). They do sell gloves, tights, scarves, coats, boots, other shoes. They have a floor for the outdoors. But no hats. There are three party balloons outside Cut and Dried. Purple-pear shaped, green-round and red-long.

A woman just came out of WATT brothers. Sat and lit a fag. There's a lot of smoke in the air on Sauchiehall and Hope. Occasionally I look up, as the green man comes up and feel the surge of pedestrians coming towards me. It's impressive. A little overwhelming perhaps.

There's a laminated A4 sign pointing the way to the kiltmaker.

There's a cctv camera pointing down toward the Buchanan Galleries. John Lewis etc. I don't know if I can be seen. The camera is on top of a pole – a police pole. You can tell this because there is a chequered pattern in blue and yellow that has been 50% picked off and a sign saying Help Point in White on a blue background.

Further up there is a notice and a telephone number 0141 2879999. Above that another unpicked off yellow and blue checked pattern. I might need to get my eyes checked. I couldn't read one of those numbers. Above the pattern are four grey speakers, they might be loud speakers, but I've not heard them. I got here at 2.04 it's now 2.39. It's getting colder.

I sit between two spindly trees. Bare and set in little squares of stones. Great clumps of grass at the foot of the spindle, on the left hand side. On the right there are 3 cigarettes. There's always someone with a wheeling suitcase on the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope.

There's always an old man who can't pick up his feet properly on Hope Street and so scrapes the tiles of the street with his slip on shoes.

A gang of men behind me are singing using the word 'oh'. I sit in the centre of a black metal bench, at my feet back slate squares. Then a square of pink stone with inset night-lights, which circumscribes the trees as well. Not a closed square though. It is closed with a grey row of squares three spindle trees down where to my right and behind there are 3 green protection barriers. The kind you put around open man holes.

Two tall, grey, street lamps in front and equidistant to my left and right. Then just in front of me is a diamond of pink stone tiles smaller than the squares. There's some kind of cover carefully set into this diamond. A blue and white plastic bag is blown in the wind from the pedestrian crossing directly in front of me. Down toward Buchannan Galleries on the right The Works arts and crafts. Orange communications. MacDonald's fast food. Logo clothes. Sports direct. Clothes.

On my left: Savers Health Home Beauty, Clarks Shoes, USL Clothes, Priceless: Stuff

Hope Street has traffic, but Sauchiehall is for pedestrians. They have to negotiate at this point who is more important.

Red man. Green man.

There's an evening times newspaper stand on my right. When they're finished they park their stands behind WATTs opposite the Universal Bar in Sauchiehall Lane.

The man is stood writing. He has a hat on. He also has an umbrella attached to the stand printed with Evening Times pictures.

There are very old bits of plastic caught in the branches of the trees. There were three screams, then I turned. A young man, with perhaps cerebral palsy, is being pushed by perhaps his parents?

I don't think anyone lives on the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope. The rooms above Subway to my right, up Hope Street are 'To Let'. At both ends of Hope Street there are flats. (*By accident I spelt flats, fates: Which is more true?*) Opposite the Royal is a high rise being clad with the most beautiful mustard coloured insulating material. In the sun it looks as golden as an Inca temple.

All the satellite dishes clustered at the top of the tower, at the bottom of Sauchiehall Street. At the other end of Hope Street by the river there's a new development of flats. City living.

15.42

I warmed up a bit in WATT brothers. I accidentally caught the eye of the guy on the door with an ear piece. Like an FBI agent. He followed me into the shop. Thought I was shoplifting. But when I took off my hat, he left me alone. Then, I went into Waterstones. Hope Street is so named because of Lord Hopetoun of Hopetoun House. Over by the firth for service etc. Some battle somewhere a long time ago. I've bought a collection of Taggart through the ages from HMV. Edinburgh has Rebus and Glasgow has Taggart. Can't wait.

A Chinese man, quite fat just walked past chewing gum. Is it rude to write about people? Is it rude to write these things? What between a thought and a word? Football supporters sing 'oh' as they go past.

At this time of day Sauchiehall is quite old. Middle-aged and retired. A few office workers, Grandparents with young kids. And at night it's very young: Here be Teenagers here. Like dragons who have learnt to breath fire for the first time. Schools out now though. So kids are starting to go home. Two guys, (gay students) both dyed hair one blond one orange. Short. With jeans hung under their bums exposing the lycra cotton of their pants to the air. I've got a thermal vest, jumper, wool coat and blanket wrap and I'm cold. But it's sitting down. It's fine if you move. But you can't write if you move. You can't see as much if you're moving around.

It's interrupting the constant flow of one movement to the next, which allows you to see where and when you are. Here and Now.

Sound of seagulls laughing. More Spanish football supporters singing oh oh oh and gulls wa wa wa. What is it that I want on Hope Street? Hope is all about want isn't it? Want rather than need?

Crying baby in pink and man walking across the mother's path balancing 8 boxes of sweets for Newsbox. Where I bought my double decker. Perhaps I should get on a double decker bus tomorrow and do a tour?

15.57

Hope and theatre. There are four theatre institutions on Hope Street. The Royal, the RSAMD, the NTS offices and I am going to count the Arches. Also Lion Chambers the beautiful derelict white building one block down was built as offices probably for the railway company, the Lion was their symbol, but on the top floor it was always supposed to be an artist studio.

It's raining again properly now. My words are dissolving slightly in the droplets. I guess I'm going home. I'll be back tomorrow.

A man with a wooden walking stick makes his way towards the crossing. He has a black backpack. One strap has fallen off his left shoulder. His legs bend outwards permanently. He wears a tweed peaked cap.

I'm looking at the bench I was sitting at before. I'm seeing myself, grey, wrapped up woolly figure scribbling, being stared at by the passers by, but for the most part not seeing those looks because of the writing. It hurts your arm and the force of time and inability to even notice every moment let alone record it. But in some way I'm feeling that this part of the process. The embodiment of time and space give me a right to use it.

The Theatre Royal was burnt down a lot. 3 times. Built first in 1867. The last time a fireman died, falling into the pit: The orchestra still have superstitions about it.

Man behind me rolling a fag (in this weather) yawns and it sounds like whale song. When he finishes he talks quietly to himself.

What is there to hope for?

A little old woman with slightly pink hair stops in the centre of the pedestrian crossing and looks in her handbag.

It's ok.

A man with super thin legs and really tight jeans walked past carrying two identical shopping bags. A male figure of justice?

The street cleaning machine is cool. Lime green. Two big front brushes.

Can't take any more cold.

21th February 2008

Who is speaking?

I dreamt last night that all the actors in the world were having a trade union meeting. I recognised some of them. I had worked with some of them. In what other profession can you be sharing a bed-sit with a colleague one year and the next see him deified in the sunniest place in the world? The most golden place in the world? He got a golden globe, my friend. My ex-friend. We haven't spoken for some years. But you have to be bigger than petty jealousies. You have to xxxx.

He has become a demi-god and he has a golden icon to prove it.

I held one once. They're heavy. Not real gold. Gold leaf. I resisted saying anything when I picked it up. There it stood amidst the detritus of a dead man's house. Next door to his hats and a vast hat collection he had!

I hesitated to pick it up. I didn't know what I would do. I was scared I'd say something. That someone would overhear or see me saying something. God. Even. Thanking someone.

I didn't say anything. But my back did straighten. You know. Like when Clarke Kent takes off his glasses in Superman 1 on his first date with Lois? And you think wow. He really is two different people!

And now who is this?

I am such a terrible flirt. Really awful. And I can't stop myself. You know like how those really thin Goth lads from London who are dead funny and you know how they like to say they are addicted to sex? I'm addicted to flirting.

It's a dead dark thing, by the way. It's not as light as it sounds. It's all about control and manipulation.

I stand at the bus stop pretending to wait and I catch people's eyes. Man and woman I want them all to notice me. But of course once I've caught their eye I look away quickly, as if I just happened to be looking in their direction but was in fact 'miles away'. I might be able to pretend to be 'miles away' but I'm not. I'm right here. With you...baby! xxx

Is it really flirting? It's somewhere between sexual and lonely. But it's not friendly. I don't want you to be my friend. I just hope that one day you will, will, will love me.

Someone else: She's looking at me. I'm not stupid. I know I'm not allowed to play her game. I'd loose if I played her game. But I see it. I see her turning her cards over.

We all know.

But she is so young and beautiful. She is allowed for now and most of us have already had our turn.

22nd February 2008

How many: Hotels, bars clubs on Hope Street? Offices. Solicitors. Derelict buildings?

The signs say Hope Street. City Centre. One block away they say Blythswood Hill.

There are two crossings where Hope Street meets Sauchiehall Street. Pedestrians wait by the buttons to press. They both go at the same time. So good citizens are supposed to either go in between one or the other? Of course everyone just goes when there's no traffic. If you manage to stop traffic coming through so much the better.

The man with the mechanical brushes in a lime green chariot is in fluorescent yellow trousers and jacket and bright yellow ear protectors. He is beautiful. But passes by so quickly like the sun.

The person who painted the pole, who painted the pole black which holds up the 'pedestrians: no vehicles' sign didn't mind about getting his or her black paint on the back of the grey sign. Ah.

The yellow-green cleaning man is back. He circles the black metal civic couches south of Hope Street. You don't know what a civic couch is? Do you? It's what I like to call a bench, a public bench. The street is my living room.

Two middle aged persons of above average height just made a dash for it across the pedestrian crossing. When will they grow up?

When will they understand that's why there's a pedestrian zone? To keep people like them safe! It's the middle of the pm and people are already dicing with death! Is it because it is raining? It's getting prematurely dark for the time of day.

Getting dark now. Raining. Raining enough to take me off my no-back-24-black metal rod couch and squash me into the doorway of the Kiltmakers and body and skin care centre. The Evening Times man has moved up the street. Under the shelter of Mothercare and his umbrella and his hat. A man with a plastic life bag and a thick plastic black brief case goes by with his tongue in his cheek. A piece of food? It makes him look dead stupid. People catch my eye. I look dead dodgy. It's not too cold.

A man with two plastic bags twisted around his wrist come out of the 24 hour News plus shop. Is it really?

The black metal plastic bins are in the same style as the benches. There are silver metal ashtrays on the side. 'Stub it' has been punched through the metal. There's a few cigarette butts on the floor A chicken bone, lots of patches of white chewing gum on the tiled pedestrian paving. Some square s are pink some dark grey, others green grey.

A man in black leather with steel wrapped around the base of his shoes. Wearing a flat black cowboy hat in his 50's.

Two women stop and talk a few metres from Hope Street then they turn away from each other and walk in opposite direction. One, towards Central Station or the river, the other towards the royal. Or perhaps the beautiful tower block just over the road. Some of the tower blocks in Glasgow are being wrapped up in fibrous insulation, clad around the grey towers. It's the colour of damp mustard seeds. Then suddenly the smell of a cigar. Make me feel good. Reminds me I smoke. But cigarettes not cigars. And not all the time.

17.39. Time is going slowly at the moment.

I yawn too loudly and a young man looks up.

Perhaps I'd started to think I was on my own?

Sneeze twice.

Still feathery rain. The cars have put on their lights. The trundle of suitcases on wheels.

The chimneys on top of The Works. There are 8. They are all different sizes like mushrooms with thin hats and surrounded by a loosely looped wire fence. In case they fall down I suppose.

No. I don't think any one lives on this bit of Hope Street

Perhaps above the offices above Dunfermline bank?

Perhaps they are balconies up there. That would be nice on a Sunday in the sun. To be in the centre of the city. For it to be so quiet.

The lights have gone off in the storerooms above Mothercare at 17.46.

The white shutters are coming down now for Mothercare.

Two girls, about 18 and 16 wearing the same cream padded jacket with fur-lined hood go past. They look happy. Excited even. The evening newsman keeps his newspapers in a plastic bag on top of a red stand that come up to the top of his legs on either side are two red poles. An umbrella is attached to the right hand side, that's his right hand side. Not mine.

No 20 bus. X7 bus 119 bus lots of people get on.

I'm standing right on the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope and it's really cold in the wind. Is it my imagination? Can I smell the sea? Ladbrokes, Molly Malone's, savers; Health, Home Beauty

Does anyone live above Molly Malone's?

Optical express, Hot Dogs (snacks, Tea, coffee) Jack McPhee, fresh from the sea.

As dusk falls on Hope Street I'm eating a Fillet o' Fish. Ronald MacDonald has been replaced on the piece of paper they put on the trays in Macky Ds by Mark Hoskins 37 St. Austell. MacDonald's are doing the same thing I'm doing. Look. Do I feel like I know Mark now because, now not only do I know his age, but also that his dogs are called Bill and Roy? I think it's Roy who looks up at this master shouldering a heavy looking 'sack of feed for his cattle in their warm dry barns'. The other dog, a Colly is a bit blurred running ahead. But you can still tell he's a dog. The blurring makes it all seem just that little bit more real, doesn't it? It makes me think that this is just like a snap that the guy who buys the meat from Mark just happened to catch, because, you know what, deep down that guy who buys the meat from Mark. He loves him really. This is just like a family snap of Mark for that MacDonald's buyer's personal collection. But of course when he accidentally dropped it in a meeting with his boss, his lovely boss thought 'I know what...Mark can help us reach out to our audience'.

Mark might not even be 'Mark' he might be a background artist. I used to be a background artist. Standing around in corsets. Eating from the third canteen.

3 young people walk past. One who wears a blue woolly hat is carrying 6 large umbrellas. He carries them on his shoulder. Just like Mark. 37. St. Austell. Carries his feed to his cattle. But this young man is smiling. He looks happy with his two girlfriends. One of them is carrying a similar umbrella. Do you think this means something? Will it mean that one day they will get married and have children together? Do you think that the other one the other girl want to go out with the girl who's carrying the umbrella or the guy? Or do you think she's not bothered?

This might be only a very temporary triangular relationship. Brought together by umbrellas in a slight shower on Hope Street.

MacDonald's chips! There's nothing like it. I chomp on them like a cow on a wet field. And the rain comes down. Much harder now.

It's nice sitting in this bright warm dry atmosphere. Easy housey pop pump pumps in the background. The window rattles ever so delicately, like a knat caught in a jar.

People look in the windows. Their faces in the space where your own is reflected.

18.19 Dead dark now.

I'm allowed to sit inside and write but when I go outside I'll be treated again with a lot of suspicion. If I raise my eyes I can guarantee that some one will catch them. Then look away, unsure.

Another green cleaning chariot goes past. Another man but this one sits inside a covered cabin. Night wear or rainwear for street cleaners.

A young mixed race girl just past a wiry white boy, they were both carrying umbrellas.

A woman with straight dyed blond hair and a bruise in between her eyes just jerked her head away; a bit like in a dance move but more like with impatience.

So, this drain that lies just beside the triangular puddles that shakes in the wind, it has 3 concentric circles and a solid circular centre. It's silver in the light of the shops neon lights. When the rain stops you can clearly see the S of Clarks.

A black plastic rubbish bag is caught out in the street. Blown occasionally by the wind knocked about by the rain. It rolls along. Two tall folk hold hands. They are walking away from me. Both wear hoodies. One Red one blue. Are they girls? Boys one of each?

The light is so strong.

Inside Mac - y- d's and its got so dark outside that it looks a bit like the fat boy and his father and the blond girl and her boyfriend or brother who are sitting at those screw down brown cushioned seats behind me are actually out in the pavement. And then a cyclist rides straight through them. Like magic.

Behind me. Someone is clearing up very nosily. I'm just going to listen to one more song, then I'll go. 'I remember when...remember when...I lost my mind...crazy'

Fat boy sucks at his milkshake, man presses buttons on his mobile phone with his thumb.

18.34

Environmental Protection Services turn up with a great big green truck.

A man in yellow florescent trousers and jacket empties red dustbins into the back of it.

Well driven? 0800 373625

It's bitterly cold now. Outside in the doorway of Orange I'm on their TV. If I turn I'll see myself on a little screen. There's a number under the screen but I can't make it out. They have a fish in their show room but it's not orange. I suppose technically it might be a gold fish. But its cream and black with a red spot. Not orange.

A skinny man from India in a black hat just stopped for a quick chat. He's been here a year, studies IT. And he knows I don't want to drink coffee with him. He knew before he asked me. He asked me while shaking his head and walking away. 'Do you drink coffee? With me?' He asked.

Always the sound of a suitcase on wheels.

The black sack has make it over the crossing now and making it's way up to the fish restaurant. An old woman in a grey green overcoat white permed hair holds a 'metro' out at right angles to her waist as she walks. She has the air of someone walking home.

It's defiantly got more night time. Things are just a bit bigger some how. A teenage girl walked past swearing 'would she fucking do that?' A man just asked me for 60 pence. I think he was North African. A bit like my old housemate Alan, who's Dad came from Morocco but smaller. Now everyone is on the phone and everyone is having a go.

We're all a bit tired eh? And no had a drink yet eh?

Then it's quiet again at 18.46

The swearing teenage girl was with a tall skinny silent lad in a white tracksuit and hood. There's one bike left on the bike stands and three bike locks.

28th February 2008

On a morning like this when the sun casts a 45 degree shadow across WATT brothers, when it's 10.30 in the am and the jagged triangle of blue sky is perfect as I face west towards the CCA from the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope, my thoughts turn to the solar system. The place of the sun in the east, warming the feet of that man on the bench opposite. He's got a small red bag that he rests his arms on. He rests his smoking arm on the other. He has white hair, a white shirt, a black jumper and blue jeans. His pink face is in sunshine now. So many people. So many different people. A woman with only her eyes showing from the black robes, old man smoking, mother and daughter shopping, large woman smoking, old couple: the woman has a stick and her arm through the man's looped arm. Woman with long hair and sunglasses. Queer boy student. Bleached hair and jeans with attitude. Black man singing to his ipod. Bearded white man. Middle aged listening to his ipod. He has an Australian herders hat.

Sinewy hard looking middle age guy, white.

Three posh shinning girls.

An Asian woman. Dressed for the office. White boy age 8 drags mum in bright green jacket to look at games in The Works.

Old couple. They don't touch each other. But she walks just a little ahead of him. He is talking, so he has to bend down and she to bend back, while they walk. A queen and her advisor. Just like Cate Blanchett and Geoffrey Rush in Elizabeth or CJ and Josh Lyman in the West Wing.

A dyke, round and short. She looks fine. Behind her a Chinese man; thin and looking like he is about to cry. In some pain, but who knows what?

Funny that I'm being watched at the moment, that the police want our DNA and retina maps but I feel guilty recording these mundane events on Sauchiehall and Hope. The judgements and records made by the state are no less subjective than mine.

The people I record here as they are contained in these words on the lines of this paper are perhaps just as controlled by the street that provides the option of east, west, north or south. There's a weather vane at the bottom on Hope Street on top of the beautiful hotel: Particularly beauty at night when you can see the elaborate staircase through the windows.

Cheap food here, expensive clothes there and obviously NO HATS. A flock of pigeons sail north.

At 3pm all the school children in green blazers spread across the city like a stop frame film of a fern growing. Making their green blazered way home. At the top of Buchannen Street I always feel flushed with hope. Often there is a busker. Making a rather good fist of the latest Scottish pop hit.

7.30 pm

No bikes, but still three bike locks. Young pedestrians in general. Silver reflections on the street tiles. Always a big queue at the bus stop by WATT brothers.

Real Radio advertised on the taxi going past. 'That's the way ah huh ah huh!'

A family of five walking down. I'm sitting now on that bench looking west, again up Sauchiehall Street. An old couple, her on the left of him, with her arm linked through his. He carries a green bag.

A young couple, him on the phone, carrying 3 plastic bags. A girl with four plastic bags, one enormous one from Top Shop. As I waked down Sauchiehall Street the shops were pulling down their gratings. Late night shopping?

There was a police van, Strathclyde Police parked west of this bench. No one in the driving seats. Perhaps they have surveillance equipment in the back where they can't be seen?

It's quiet. A gentle, cold breeze soft against my right cheek and a blast from car horns out of sight. Two tall guys lollop down into town laughing, twice the speed of the others. A man nearby, 'Hallo there' on his phone then passes out of earshot. A man in a long black coat looks in the window of The Works. 'Working together, building safer communities.' A police car pulls up beside me, then turns right into Hope Street. A young Indian couple.

There's a light on the top floor on the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope. Perhaps someone does live here? Another wheeling suitcase. A large girl in a black beret and grey rain coat. A young man in grey, jogs down and then a woman on a bike with a florescent yellow jerkin wheels past. How long can I sit here?

Slight headache: Slight stomach ache. Used the toilets in MacDonald's and Molly Malone's. I could sleep. I would like to go home.

Aren't all the people so funny looking? Nobody on the corner of Sauchiehall and Hope Street looks like they're in a film or on TV. Young Chinese guy with Mac.D's

bag. Wears jeans and a white top. I should be here later. I should spend time watching the flower /cowboy hat ladies. I wonder if the woman I gave 90p to earlier today does cowboy hats and flowers on Sauchiehall street?

19.52 A man at the pedestrian crossing strokes his long white hair flat. 'He fucking might have know,' says a young man to his two male friends on my right. Two young men sing together sharing their ipod. Back is starting to ache. Starting to get cold. Also I'm going to have a wet arse when I stand up. I have to work a little bit, not to be seen; stare straight ahead don't make eye contact.

In the dark sky you can just make out the satellite dishes on that tower. Red man at lights, now green. Purple HMV sign. Green neon in the distance is it Dunnes stores? Yellow light inside the telephone boxes. A conversation with a stranger, whom I told something I'd only ever thought. It wasn't until I said it that I realised I'd only ever thought it. And then I went red. Then I said I'm blushing and became even redder.

The Glasgow airport bus. The flight path often traverses Hope Street in parallel to the pedestrian crossing. East to west. ADT scrutiny alarm over SAVERs Health, Home Beauty.

Tiny's hot Dogs.

A tall man with a limp speaking on the phone. Is this getting me anywhere?

Should I come back tomorrow night by car perhaps?

Another wheeling suitcase. A Chinese man with a Lydles bag waits by the bus stop. A plump white boy in only a t. shirt his mate has a red hoody that says FREAK.

Two Chinese men. One in a cap. Walk deep in conversation. The man in the cap seems colder. He pushes his hands into his thin jacket pockets. 6 friends in the 30s: they are all white. Four of them are in couples and they are holding hands, two of them are men who have their hands in their jackets.

Getting colder. Going to walk up Hope Street.

20.06

I'm sitting at the original bench now. The lights sunk into the pinkish tiles have come on, there are 23 diodes in each one. Each emitting a spot of white light. There are smears of mud on the glass and a reflection of light in the rim. The same thing Summerfield plastic bag is caught in the tree on the right. In front Neon. Yellow. Mac. D's right left red and yellow Chinese restaurant. Pink changing to blue John Lewis A

A wheeling suitcase. Always.

Young nerd in glasses and thick straight bob cut hair. Black velvet jacket and denim jeans. As he walks he adjusts his glasses. A man just stopped and looked at me. I wonder if it was the person who made the noise that startled me a moment ago?

Quickly a small wiry guy caught up to him: They had the walk. The walk of danger..of being capable of the unexpected.

Street plague reads: Glasgow city Centre Millennium plan Sauchiehall Street Public Realm Project. Part financed by the European union. Supported by Atlas investments, Capital and regional properties Marks and Spenser plc.

Two blue plastic bin bags in the doorway of Thornton's.

A policeman was looking in the bins with a torch outside the RSAMD. On Hope Street at 08.14.

20.24 all v. quiet.

Another suitcase wheels behind me. I don't even turn to look. Orange neon in the orange shop. Fair enough. The man and small man have been joined by a woman who's giving directions.

Circulate.

The fire hydrant is loose outside Vero Moda. It makes a great clunking sound when you walk on it. So quiet now that I can hear the footsteps of pedestrians in trainers on the other side of Hope. Noise ebbs and flows. A nose blows!

A man looks at the jewellery in the window of WATTS. On the corner of West George Street and Hope there are two angels with their breasts exposed on the second floor. The streetlight highlights their stern, almost masculine faces.

8th March

The boogie Bus – 20 people. The passenger side – man calls and waves at girls at the crossing. Down SH there's a Barkleys cash point. Boy with broken finger asks for a light. I have to light it for him. The ambulance pulled up outside Mc. Ds. There security bemoan the fights. 'Why?' they ask. Do they know? Really?

A family out selling flowers and pink sparkling cowboy hats. A boy now outside Mc. D's in a silver cowboy hat. His mate has a t. shirt that has lights in it red and yellow diodes flash. A disco on your t. shirt. Huge queues outside Studio. (night club)

The flowers on the second story of optical express are caught in the flood light in their permanent pastel bloom.

Disco boy is 21. At 11.29 the bins on the corner of Sand H are emptied. A party of boys and girls waiting for a mini cab try and catch m&m's in their mouths. They end up throwing them at each other, not even trying to catch them.

A tall policeman at the crossing. The police woman with him is much shorter. She comes up to his shoulder.

They wear fluorescent yellow jackets. Midnight

A woman walks past hugging her clutch bag to her chest. The cigarette in her hand has burnt right down but still hangs on as she walks.

The man eating has stuffed his pockets with salt sachets. There was a drunk old man who staggered up hope street toward the Royal Feet like weights, walking under water, swayed by unexpected currents. Clutching now at the scaffolding outside McFees: Fish from the sea. Girl asks smoking man for a cig. He wears blue arms, white body, herringbone, black and white satchal and blue jeans Unshaven few days wavy longish hair. Half running down sauchiehall in high black heels. Sliver boy bag around neck. Young guy with the pips of his straight black hair bleached blond. Just over the collar. The catwalk of SHS. Tall black guy. Expensive black wool ocat. On his mobile. A long scarf hangs at his knees on either side.

Guy 66 Blasted asks a couple smoking for a fag. His neck is covered with blood. Scratches. Police van. Slowly moves down sauchiehall

At 11.45 really busy in Mc. Ds Now at 00.05 quieter. Out of the pubs and into the clubs. Queue stretches for studio now past priceless shoes.

4 girls in dresses exactly the same length just under the bum. Flating numbers one bright yellow one black and white print, one black one blue. Out of no-where coats appear as they join the queue for studio. A macdonalds balloon green caught int eh tree. The helium keeping it high in the air. NO stars.

Videos of food set into the pillars of mac. D's sofe fade from an abstract green pull back its lettuce, now a tomate small but not on the vine now buns hundreds of fluffy buns as dusting now with white floor lovely.

Stated raining and the umbrellas are out. Girls hold their arms high above them their coats flapping protecting them from the might shower. The droplets sparkle on the pink and grey tiles.

The police man woman are walking down Hope now. Black scafs pulled up past hteir chins.

Women in scarfs – enormous silk scarf dresses floating in the bitter wind an drain. Gorgeous. 00.12 fealy noise again in Mc.DS. A man with books. One big hard back an da large soft novel. All my life – America

Blood on the floor. Washed away by the rain. By the way

Road warrior on the back of a girls t. shirt. She says bye to boy covered in blood.

Her mate has a gorgeous gold clutch bag. No. Theydo all need...chips

Boy bangs on window, wants to know what I'm writing. His mate drags him away. Two male policemen, same heifht. Theywalk quicker.

Hot pants in old gold

12.45 10th April

See the Evening Times Traffic Wardens until 4am from the 2nd May. New clamp down on late night illegal parking. The works lease is available, Eric Young and Co. Blue, yellow red green squares, EYCO. Lease available all enquires 0131 226 2641

Evening news headline, Late night parking crackdown but in CAPITOL letters. Different man now on the corner of 2nd h fatter wears a green woolly hat with a pink stripe through it.

Now in the works all those tempting games that pulled mums by young boys hands over to its window have gone. Replaces with satin slippers encrusted with sequins. Healed and backless, there are ties and belts, a white teddy bear in a blue t. shirt. Jewellery, sunglasses

I love the way Watt brothers is scald across the doors like its been written with lith a giant fountain pen, a broad, flat nibbed fountain pen.

News Plus. The pus is written as if with a round nibbed pen, maybe a ball point, which is appropriate for an emporium which stocks amongst other items modern stationary.

The spindle trees have started to sprout leaves. The one on the right is only budding, but the one on the left, as you face east has leaves of 2-3 cm in diameter. 'everyone is very friendly. But sometimes they are drunk and cause trouble' the lovely man in 24 plus said.

And if anyone parks illegally people help them, call them over if the Traffic Walden comes. You grow to love the ting you become familiar wwith, and then one day you stop looking

'did you ever look at a saterit disk and think what does it mean?'

I know no more about the white puffs of h₂O that pass over them than I do about the saterlie dishes.

Cluds have a perpose of their own.

If you sit on a bench long enough you start to imitate budda.

Plastic bags on the right hand tree, one: Gregs at the top, quite new. In the lower branches its sommerfield.

In the right hand tree, still thank god those few shreds of grey plastic that have long since lost their identity. One day they may become molecular again.

R31 marked underneath the two floodlights on the brown façade of Watt brothers. Flood lights just beside the redundant flag poles.

A young man attempts a minor par court move and jumps over the bench, gently resting his foot next door to my arse for a moment.

Bless

All the pikes on top of watt brothers, uncomfortable for pigeons and seagulls

The tree on the left gets a bit more sun I guess.

The reflections in the windows above Saves Health, home beauty bend so beautifully like fairground mirrors. But you'd have to be looking out of Cut and Dried Hiar design on the second floor of the building on the left as you face east on the corner of S&E.

Caution wet paint on Optical Express. A white mudge under the H on the grey silver sparkle granite on the corner of optical Express.

The sun catches the random patches of silver quartz in the granite pillar and they shine like stars. I can make a wine glass if I relax my eyes and focus just on the spots of light.. A burly man in a red anorack is giving optical express a spring clean. The paint at the bottom of the front, where it meets the street is flaking away, there used to be some blue, beneath.

Kilts flash in red neon. James Roberston.

The new evening standard man is more friendly, or perhaps its just because the weather is better, there's always someone chatting to him.

I went up to the top of hope street to look at the flats. The yellow insulation cladding, called rock wool is being covered over with a special paint. I met a man who was waiting for a man and he explained it all to me. He took me to see another tower block which is already finished. He read my body language well. He said, 'don't worry I'm not going to strangle you. Everyone is scared these days that people are going to do something to them'. He had the broken eyes and skin of a drinker. I met his mate who came down presently. He's selling his flat for 200,000 pounds. 'you can see all over Glasgow!'

D: The civic couch on Market Road.

The civic couch on Market Road, Canton, Cardiff was a stone wall on the corner of Market Road and Market Place with black railings to lean back on.

2nd February 2010

I'm looking up,

that's my inclination

I think about the optimism of having more than 90 degrees between your spine and the ground and the pessimism of having less than 90 degrees between the flat earth and your face.

I feel strangely depressed but it's not strange really. My partner's brother died last week and we spent the week in France for the funeral. But now I am here in Cardiff at Chapter Arts Centre and I'm trying to find something. I'm looking for something, but my brain doesn't seem to be really working and all I want to do is go shopping. I signed up for an iphone yesterday. I have the object of desire for the new century, the object that connects me, that will put a pin in a google map for where my feet are, I can take a photograph of those feet and send it to someone far away, via outer space, there are so many satellites in orbit around our planet, it's like a metal cloud, I'm looking up, I'm tipped back, like in a deck chair, the sun makes you lie back and the rain makes you lean forward, I'm inclined to think that there are many other ways to look at the world.

What is this feeling when the earth shakes? Crumbles underneath your feet? O, I thought I was so sure, but it was only a foothold and it's given way.

If I could fly, I would fly into the storm, through the atmosphere and sit on the side of an orbiting satellite dish.

It's still raining. There's no point going out in rain like that. I can't write in the rain. I can see the white flashes of light as the water bounces off the pale yellow drive.

My back hurts. I wish I could sit. Because it's raining I'm standing in the porch of Market House.

12 noon. It's been raining all day so far, I got here at 10.30. I've eaten toast and drunk coffee played with my computer and phone.

A man in an army coat, an orange shirt underneath, a hat and backpack walks past and looks at the bin. Strange bin. It has something sticking out of it, an umbrella perhaps. I'm standing in the porch of Market House. How will I explain myself? Double yellow lines, cigarettes and chewing gum. I'm always looking down. Man in black jacket walks with a limp, silver Mercedes, soft top, white van. Mondeo negotiations. Two cars are going in opposite directions have to negotiate the parked silver Ford Focus.

EASY SHOP, Lifestyle... life is in white, it's on blue with a green arch. A blue Picasso leaves and a blue-grey saloon takes its place outside the window printed with Easy shop, Easy shop, Newspapers, Wine, Confectionary, Frozen Diary (there's a picture of green peas)

The Easy shop door goes, burberb when you open it. Sim cards £4.99 with free credit. Attention all property security marked and traceable.

In the two windows above, one window has a stereo, the other a computer monitor the curtains are closed.

A woman with a blue rain mack, hood up, uses her shopping trolley as a walking support, pushing it in front of her. My nose is sore.

A young girl, in a blue mack with a white wooly hat. She walks down Market Place and then down library road. A Tesco bag flies in the bare branches of the tree, just as you turn right from Market Road towards Chapter, a girl about 17 lights a cigarette and moves on down Market Road towards Cowbridge.

A woman, in a green woolen jumper stalls her silver car just at the turning, she sighs and looks around.

Jackdoors rattle.

A woman with two enormous blue bags of washing, I looked up and she looked at me, grimacing. My elbow itches. In the distance a truck goes down Llandaff Road.

Another old woman also wearing a blue coat, but not waterproof, also pushes a red trolley in front of her as a walking aid. She passes a younger woman pushing a toddler in a waterproof pushchair. Silver Vauxhall, two men, pink furry pigs to protect them on the mirror or to make them smell nice. The old red brick of the school must be Victorian from the time when there stopped being an actual Market here.

An Indian man with a folded up black umbrella walks very purposefully passed. He really falls from one foot to the next. There is a pile of old leaves gathered where the noses of the parked cars on Market Place are. These leaves must have mulched here since autumn. From here I can see a green thing flapping in the leaves. A woman in heels opens her car, by the mulched leaves and puts in the boot two small bags of groceries and a French stick. She has brown hair grey at the sides and a ponytail. She might be in her 40s she looks tired.

VEST Voluntary Emergency Service Transport van is empty as it turns right out of Market Place. A woman with two dogs one black and one golden. Are they spaniels? Cute! The first of three bollards on Market Place leans forward. If you are going towards Chapter. I think someone might have hit it with their car. The direction it's leaning in suggests that someone did in fact turn right from Market Road onto Market Place!

It's so cold. I'm wearing two hats I've lost one glove, the brown leather one, but I've still got the old grey woolen ones. Why do you always lose the best things, while the ordinary rubbish hangs on?

Are you mad to wear two hats in the cold or not to? There's a good question.

At least it's not raining now.

I like the colour of the blinds on the first floor of Market House. There is a white p inside a circle with an arrow pointing to the right as you face it – I think it means there is parking to the right. On the other side, the left of the building there is a P with a circle around it with an arrow that bends at a right angle indicating I think that there is parking at the first right turn.

A yellow star on the ground: someone got a gold star and then lost it. There are two telecom covers by the no entry sign to Market Place. The no entry sign is old and weather worn. The iron is corroded at its base. Dark brown rust underneath the peeled back, pale metal and an orange stain over part of both the rusted base metal and the alloy covering. It is the same colour as the lichen on a sea wall. It's as if the metal is leaning towards an organic old age: Bits of broken glass on the floor. Audiences Wales' is on the first ground floor of Market House, its colours are purple (cerise) and lime green. I like that combination. Makes me both thirsty and think about fruit salad.

A few berries from the tree above are on the pavement. The pavement on Market Place is a tessellation of 4 inch by 10 inch pinky grey tiles made mostly out of some kind of concrete. Stones no bigger than the size of a little fingernail are kept together with some finer stoney medium. But at the corner edge, there are other tiles the same size but without the pieces of stone in them. The corner edge slopes down to the road. Probably for wheelchair access. This was an adjustment made at a later date than the pavement of stoney tiles.

Around the base of the no entry sign they rupture, they don't look too solid and then around the telecom covers there is just plain cement. Between the edge of the telecom covers and the poured in concrete a thin field of moss grows, hiding in its crop two pieces of broken glass, a flat outer casing for the butt of a cigarette. A few twigs. The road looks now pink with tiles.

The girl with the big bags of laundry is back, walking in the other direction. What does it feel like to carry big bags back and forth all day?

My bag with my computer is very heavy. I carry it for an hour here this morning. Back hurts. My head hurts. I feel sick.

The Echo is on sale here. Keep driveway clear, residents parking. The high call of seagulls. (*Lucy: Not as high as me though!*) The smell of the sea as I walked up Cowbridge Road. Cows because the medieval market became a cattle market, replaced now with car dealerships.

The seam on the side leg of my leggings has gone. Shall I just sew them up or buy new ones?

A guy comes out of the blue door of Lifestyle express. Opens the bonnet of the red car for sale.

Twins! In push chair and older sister only just walking.

He comes out with a pale plastic teapot shaped vessel. I think he might be topping up the water level.

A woman about to pull left also into Market Road sounds her horn, it makes me jump. She seems to do it to warn any on coming traffic, but how would they know. I'd think I knew her and she wanted to say 'hi'.

The houses on Market Road make me think about the phenomenology of inside and outside. How queer it is to be outside all the time. How queer and how hard, physically and mentally. The houses are the perfect image of family and domestic privacy. The doorways dark, the porches lines with gleaming ceramic tiles. Welcome mats. Three bedrooms I would guess. Mum, Dad and the kids.

The guy from the shop is only asking for £499.00 for his red car.

Parents line up behind the church. There must be a nursery there.

The houses on Market Road seem to be made of stone. The corners and around the windows have bricks, it reminds me a bit of the embroidery that I used to do at primary school.

I don't feel like I'm really bothering anyone here like I did when I was in the Grassmarket in Edinburgh or on Sauchiehall Street in Glasgow. I think sitting on the edge of an art institution allows me a bit more public license.

It's a well known arty area. Also lots of Indians and Pakistanis Wikipedia tells me. Lots of parents and children and lots of old women using their square shopping trolleys on four wheels, to help them walk, keep them upright.

I'm not upright. I incline to the sky, back, my front more than 90 degrees away from the earth. My inclination is obtuse.

Lucy's character might say something like: 'I am obtuse and happy. My eyes are pointing up, although if it were still raining this would mean my eyes would be wet, but not from crying. Before, when I was acute I cried a lot.'

A pigeon flaps down from the spire at the end of Market Road.

No. The runner of the curtain has fallen down. Perhaps they can't get up there to change it. Valerie always wants me to do anything high. A pretty girl laughs with a boy and tells him, 'oh Fuck off.' He wants one of her sweets that she must have bought from Lifestyle express.

Their mate is a gangle of 15 year old white boy, cheeks as red as strawberry jelly. He crosses the road towards them.

The three of them. She loves him, he loves him, he loves her, well that's how it was in my day.

A man steps outside in a thin grey jumper to take a phone call, I would regret the coat. I've got two hats on and I'm still cold.

But I've been sitting here now for nearly an hour.

Am I hoping one of these art/media businesses is going to give me a desk with a view. Would that be the same though? Could it be as good?

'It's no good if you do things like that.' A young mother says to her 4 year old son; big cheeks, red hair: 'It's not good for you.'

I can hear water falling underneath the AIR TIGHT INSPECTION COVER behind me.

The wail of a police siren, no an ambulance. The royal mail van goes past.

The grey thick clouds pass by. Day soon to become night. A beer bottle top embedded in the concrete around T DAW FW 925 covers. Water cover just up from my sitting place.

She walks down the street. Famous.
Sick of all the peasants, googling all over her.

3rd February

I'll need a new note book tomorrow. It's 16.39 and I've just found a place to sit and work. The very far corner of the front of Chapter's entrance. I can just about see the corner of Market Road. I've bought a ticket to see 'Nowhere Boy' at 6. I'm knacked because I just walked up to Victoria Park with my computer bag, v. heavy in the rain. The wonder of an umbrella though. Helps with looking up in the rain. Oh thank god I've found a place to work, to write and people might come and ask me what I'm going here, but I can explain, here. It's alright.

I can see the backs of the houses that run from the police station to Life style, Easy shop, over the top of their four chimneys, 32 chimney pots, red orange, clay ceramics.



As it gets darker outside it is harder to draw. I haven't drawn anything for years. Maybe 18 years. It reminds me of being 17/18 years old, just finishing my A levels, about to go to Art school drawing on my month inter-railing in Europe. Drawing Eastern European market squares, struggling then, as now, with perspective.

5.10 pm. It is so much easier to sketch in public, than to write. Not necessarily so easy to take pictures. Interesting isn't it?

I feel really happy when I do this process. I miss V. of course, but I'm really happy finding my place, discovering something, being in this dynamic and creative dialogue with the time and space I'm in.

I walk past those eight houses and I'm scared. If a curtain moves, a light goes on, I jump. Here from the safety of my protected public place in the corner of the arts centre I saw the silhouette of a man in a room above Lifestyle Easy shop when he turned a light on.

A real dramatic moment.

I was captivated. What will he do?

He turns the light off again.

People come and go, across the flat square entrance to CAC under the fine rain.

You need an umbrella to hear it. Under a large, finely sprung umbrella the droplets are so fine they could penetrate silk, but they sound lovely.

The forecourt, the veranda, the terrace that draws the subject forth from Market Place to the Glass Menagerie of CAC is inflected with angles of tarmac and yellow concrete. It seems to be perfectly flat but the rain forms growing puddles of water in the slight dips in the lie of its land, in the closing light.

5.25. It is the disruption of the fine fine rain on the puddles that allows this watcher to know that she still can't go out to write.

Can't write in the rain. Can't write standing up. I tried standing in the doorway of Bafta Cymru/market house, but it wasn't that effective.

Part of the process of writing and probably why I like it so much, is that it changes the relationship between my body, my subjectivity and the time and place. Even when I am writing about my body as I am now, with the tendons in my right forearm aching, with an itch in my feet from the rain that got into my trainers when I went to the park, with the uncomfortable roll of squashed fat under my bra and my right leg shaking as it acts as a table for my little black note book, which is just running out...even in this most phenomenological of writing moments, I'm also somewhere or something else, in a kind of trance, consumed by the desire to come to the end of the sentence, to finish it, to make it make sense, and still enjoying the ride getting there.

I was thinking about ecstatic writing the other day as I read Benjamin's essay on the Storyteller. The structuring of his ideas induces a kind of ecstasy. The leaps he makes from field to field, from material detail to theological reflection so startling and true; not true in the sense of veracity, but true-like I suppose, like when one bell is struck and then another and the chime truly satisfies the ear and so the whole body.

There is a kind of sensuous delight in this structuring of thought.

I try to make any space I sit in for a long time writing reveal its construction. I make it other by my other relationship to it. The longer I sit and write the more people notice me and the longer they don't know why I'm there, the stranger that time and place becomes for them because of how I direct attention in it.

If 'place is a habit' then sitting on the 'Civic Couch' breaks that habit.

How heterosexist is Market Road? How obtuse is market road, how acute? How curious or strange?

Style of life: 'Style' then can be seen as the everyday performance of a subject's relationship to and in power. (Butler)

Thinking about being in a place at night, makes me think about the way power embodied in people flow through that time. How at night on Sauchiehall Street there were small family groups of drinkers, serious street drinkers: people who had a kind of territorial claim to an area and who would circle it during the night. There were two men and a woman I remember. They noticed me more than other family groups of fun

makers did, who were younger clubbers and giggers, less habituated to that specific place.

Now it's about the time it was yesterday, when I came to Chapter Arts Centre. It's so easy to sit inside, undisturbed hour after hour, working, using the web. I wonder how easy it is for people who are dirty and/or don't have laptops? How easy if you're not white? Or if you are working class? Or even if you don't feel very comfortable around 'Art'?

I was looking at the doorways of the homes on Market Road; beautiful doorways, with Welcome mats: mats with the word Welcome written on them. I wonder how many have 'Croeso.' I will check. I wanted to take a photograph, and I felt bad about it. I thought about the street view van, who didn't care, it just went ahead and took it's photographs, but I felt bad and when I saw the shadow of someone behind one of those frosted glass doors I ran away. I went and bought toothpaste in the corner shop, 'Lifestyle Express'. There's a young guy in there, watching a Bollywood movie, maybe, maybe not, maybe it's something newer, cooler. I will have to ask them what they think of Market Road. I will have to think about how to do that well. But the music is noisy and alien to me. Me who had problems ordering toast from the café this morning because I've been on my own for too long or because I'm too focused on the process, and also I suppose because I've just spent the past week at a funeral.

'two women penetrating each other has to be unthinkable for western metaphysics to get going' (Butler, Judith, Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex', (New York and London: Routledge, 1993) p.49) how can a queer metaphysics get going? Is the answer to step out of the discourse of sexuality and into the discourse of inclination, orientation, intimacy, friendship, not in/out but 360 degrees of potential relationship with the Earth? If not a binary then what? A constellation of angles, satellites and front doors?

Does the urgency of survival make me obtuse or just laid back?

It's 20.35 on the 3rd February, I've just eaten the rather fabulous Welsh wild mushroom ravigoli, scrumious...I'm going to do a bit more writing on the chair, see what's going on, but I'm interested in trying to record a little bit of what is happening inside as well.

Everyone is so beautiful in CAC. The light is low after 5. I wonder if they time it to coincide with dusk? It co-incided beautifully today.

There is a group of mostly younger men standing at the end of the bar, there is one woman with them with glasses put back on her head, she is nodding as the man talks. He is wearing a soft hooded jacket. The hood of the jacket is white and furry. There is a lovely young man with a serious haircut and serious glasses talking to another man who is drinking a bottle of beer but I can't see him because he is hidden behind a white column. The serious man has a ticket in his hand that flaps when he gesticulates. It's nice writing and looking. No one would know what I'm thinking about. The wonders of touch typing! There's a girl with a gorgeous figure, walking towards the cinemas now, she has a scarf around her neck but it is undone. She wears a large pinstriped, waist fitted shirt, over trousers. So cool.

There is a woman reading a paper and eating. Wild mushroom ravioli I'll bet. You know it's so good. Perhaps it's the ravioli that makes everyone so beautiful. That and the lighting. Are these people rich? Are they just naturally happy because they have such a beautiful place to live their life? They are beautiful as a kind of, 'thank you very much'. A beautiful place deserves a beautiful population. Beautiful relaxed bodies smiling at each other. Outside, the bodies are heavier, in their homes leaden but here, wow. There's a girl who's wearing a wooly hat indoors. What style.

Some lads like the geek look. Ironically bad hair cuts and scardonic spectacles. You can almost hear 'you want it all' snarl in the background of their aura, styled by the bitter break up of a band in the 60s: 'make me smilllllllee'

Running willllllllldd

'And the unemployed look. I love that. That's kinda my look, I suppose normally, although I was going for something a little bit more 'look at me' for this event.

But, I've had to give back my iphone, so it's a low-fi look this year. The library on library road, why do you think?

I can still face book.

20.50 really tired. I can feel the weight under my eyes. I've eaten too much, and it's making me feel a little bit sick. My bra pinches. I've put on weight since I lost my job and I can't afford to buy new underwear, also I don't want to. I don't want to admit the changes.'

Who was that talking?

There's the parental look. A man in his forties with his son 6 years old. Second year at Welsh language school and Dad (who's from Essex) is struggling to understand the way his son thinks sometimes. 'Would this be the case anyway?' He wonders.

But it's good. Dad is finding new ways of thinking too, with parenthood the look is cashmere jumper from Marks and Spencers, because we can be sure that no little fingers have been snapped off in a Moldovian sweatshop for it.

There's the middle aged university team discussing the football.

And people they think of as 'real' wondering if their hand is really their hand.

It's all happening.

One more hour. What is happening outside?

What is the everyday work of being at a slant, or at an incline?

I am like an eye that is in a dark dark room. When I sit for the first time on the corner of Market road and Market place I find it so hard to see anything at all. I start by

counting how many cigarette butts there are on the floor. Before I finish I hope to have travelled to the beginning and end of time, but right now, all I can see are these cigarette butts on the floor, a few bits of glass. It's hard to believe that I will enter that other time, like diving from the google satellite into street view the journey is surprising and nauseous. But you never know what friends you might see when you get there.

'I love's looking at the sky, see. Except when it's raining. Then the rain gets in my eyes and I can't see.'

I have agraphilia, that's love of Market Place.

Why do we only give things a word when it's bad? It's agraphobia or pedophilia bad fear, bad love, why don't we have more words for good things?

Socrates had agraphilia. He sat on his bench in the market place every day asking people stupid questions that he didn't know the answer to. I wonder why he did that? He was executed they say, Plato says, for corrupting the youth. But was it because he was a nuisance in the Market Place? Was it because he was getting in the way of the lines of transaction?

What is Bafta Cymru?

What is lifestyle Easy shop?

Why do the doorways on Market Road have such beautiful tiles?

Why is the Police station shut after 11pm?

Everything can be connected to the Greeks. But what about the geeks?

Why is Market Road called Market Road, when the ancient market that stood in the Canton area for nearly a 1000 years was where Victoria Park is now? And isn't it amazing how many Vicky parks there are in the UK. My grandmother was born next to Vicky Park in Hackney, London.

Everything goes back to the Greeks via the Victorians. In generations to come people will look at their own culture and make connections back to Google times and the ipod era. All the things of each age crash at our backs, the urns and statues, the iron bridges and trains, the iphones and satellite dishes crash at my back, I lean back on the wreckage, I love looking at the sky.

Coming back from Chapter the night seemed full of such vivid images. The stone animals outside the Castle, with their amber eyes, their malevolent shapes hunched over the wall in the beating light of the passing cars. Modern dreams of mediaeval animals, no mediaeval gargols of *seals* leared out of the corners of cathedrals a 1000 years ago.

I walked across the bridge and looked to the North, the stadium was behind me in all its phosphorescent glory, but I looked in the other direction across the water that runs

through Bute Park, no lights line the river. You can see joggers and cyclists going through the park to your left, perhaps some anti rape municipal measure. Something that Leeds council never managed in Hyde Park, despite the Ripper or the rapist of the 1990s.

The dark though of the river looking up stream is almost perfect. Great swaths of space undefined, infinite possibilities of what could be there. It reminded me of the Timi that runs through Timisoara in Romania, where at night 1000s of crows would gather in the branches of the trees that line the river, invisible in the dark but their vocal wars so present that they would send you away with a beating heart.

Judith Butler: *‘gender parody reveals that the original identity after which gender fashions itself is an imitation without an origin.’* Butler, 1990.

What if phenomenological parody could reveal that the body as the original point of commonality is a troublingly unsharable event?

I am here to collect material for LRE on ...Market Road. That material is created out of the sensuous transformation of the objects in and of this time and place. They put plastic bags over the seats of bicycles here to protect them from the rain.

A choir is practicing a round. Beautiful sounds the laughs of a woman in the distance, cars driving on tarmac still wet but its not raining anymore so I am outside again.

La la la la la la la la la la la (Typing that a month later makes it’s own rhythm.)

Twigs dance in the fresh damp breeze. Gossiping girls coming this way. A car, two cars go past.

There are two CCTV cameras on lifestyle express it is an off license after all.

The colour of the first lamp on Market place is pinker than the second, which is yellow. People are still working in Market House, TY’R FARCHNAD.

It’s quiet round here. Laughter of two guys going to Chapter. Will he sell his car before 20th March?

A dog turd just as you take the turn up the diagonal path to CAC. Can I get up tomorrow morning at dawn? So tired now. Blond girl in car listens to beats while she waits for car coming the other way to pass. Three women leave with yoga mats. I could work upstairs there’s a good view up there. I’d be in no one’s way. I draw the pattern of the yellow and grey triangles on the forecourt of CAC. Suddenly stars, after all that cloud and rain: clear skies. Are they flies or wasps up there on the front of CAC? Why are they so big?

20.11 Middle doors open automatically. A car’s engine ignites, doors open, sound of the bar. People talking. Two men say goodbye to each other. ‘I really hope it works out. Thanks Bob, brush up on your politics eh?’ A young man, with v. black hair,

dyed as much as possible blond walks purposefully towards the doors, suddenly stops checks his phone and continues, less of a machine walk.

I feel sick.

A nippy blue car spins out of Library Road and then right out of Market Place, confident that the one way street will be observed as such. How does power travel in this space? In this vast black and white triangular space? What/who has right of way here? There's a bouncer on the door of Chapter. What time does he start I wonder? He doesn't seem too bothered by me.

The lights echo the reflective material on the bollards. There's something so discreet about them, hiding this light under a little metal cap. I burnt my tongue on the raviglioli. What are the plants to left of CAC? I can see the flowers, I want to say gladioli, but its wrong. The ground is all freshly dug. Ahh ahh the choir go to Hollywood, the stone tablets come down from the mountain; the clouds break and God's face is revealed.

Or at least the stars. I'm standing up and I'm working. I said I couldn't. A foreign woman, an eastern European woman walks past with a quiet friend... 'and then he said I couldn't do it.' They stop and talk more at the curb. I can't hear their words from here, just the rhythm, cadence. Ah ah ah ah.

They part, 'see you tomorrow, goodnight,' she coughs, twice, three times, four times, she turns back, five times, goes back into CAC.

Someone comes out for a smoke passes her at the automatic doors.

Ahh ahh ahh

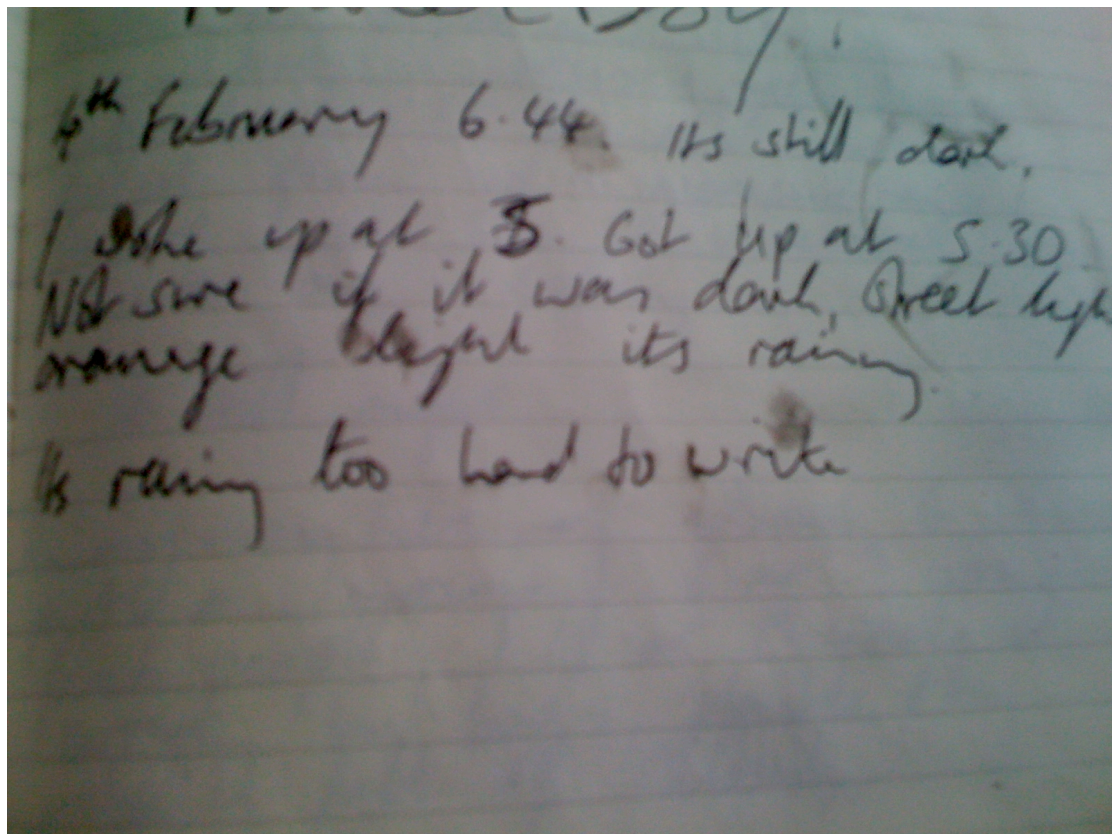
The spire of Salem Church in between the two chimneys of numbers 2 and 4 Market Road the cloud in that direction is lime.

9.26 It's enough. Someone cycles up, locks up their bike the sound of the restaurant as the automatic doors open and the heavenly choir spirals up the scale a bit more of a chant. WOW!

Man in blue, blue jeans, blue puffer jacket, smoking a roll up, walks with wieght forward like a teenager in the 60s like John Lennon in 'Nowhere Boy'.

4th February 2010

I woke up at 5, got up at 5.30. Not sure if it was dark, street lights orange light it's raining. It's raining too hard to write.



I'll try again in a further corner. CCTV cameras just above my head. CAC is full of light. All the chairs are up on the tables. Men in jeans mop the floor. A man with a beard is putting the chairs down now. I can hear the faint echo of their scrap behind me. In front of me behind the homes, the cars build up the rush hour traffic and the extra slip and slide of the wheels in the rain. The movement sensitive light has gone out above my head. I wonder if anyone is watching me right now? I'm wearing uncomfortable trousers with tights underneath for the cold and I pulled them up a moment ago. Before I saw the CCTV cameras. I'm pretty sure no one is looking.

It's still night really.

On my way here, at about 6 am I past a group of 8 or 9 young people, 18 or 19 years old, all black, all carrying bin bags, probably full of rubbish. They were playing, pretending to kick each other and bash each other with their rubbish bags. End of a night shift perhaps. What would it be like if that group walked in to CAC? I wonder how disorientating would it be?

A Primark van was loading pale beige raincoats into the store at 6.05am fresh from ...I wonder? And at Iceland at the bottom of Market Road the bread was being delivered. I stopped a while at the library, checked my satellite position on my iphone. The one that is a blue spot pulsing on a map read Canton library. I was there. It felt good. But the street view is of at least a year ago, before the new CAC appeared. I'm there, but I'm not there. Does that feel good?

Someone is walking their two spaniels, one black one beige. I've seen these dogs before. She stoops to scoop. I've been noticed by a tall man. Is it dangerous here?

Seems ok. More likely to die of a cold than being attacked. It's getting lighter but the rain is getting to me again. I'm getting cold now that I'm not walking.

7.06 what time does CAC open?

A man in jeans, a grey jacket and a black hat walks past.

A young man stops, puts down his umbrella, does up his laces, walks on.

7 lights on the left of the CAC forecourt.

Man with red deerstalker hat passes, smoking.

17 bike rails on the right. Library Street is no entry. I can see two church spires from here. Silver birch on right, by the side diagonal path. 2 cctvs above my head. Welcome (yellow poster) Croeso (tangerine) Sound of gulls, rain, plinking on the drain pipes, dripping off the blessed bit of overhang above my head. Black and beige spaniels go back home and the lights are turned off inside Chapter. Cleaning must be done.

7.16 and all ready for a new day. I fart. It feels good.

The sky is lighter now, street lamps are still on. Man in florescent jacket and umbrella walks down Market Road. Well prepared.

Yield. Yield.

My back hurts.

In the light that is just proud of the CAC forecourt you can see the rain bouncing off the tiny grooves and crevices of the pale sandy concrete.

A woman leaves her home. Gets into her car. Work time. Time to go to work. The exhaust clouds like a snorting horse in the cold. I fart again. It keeps me happy.

The car lights of a car coming up Library Street blind me for a moment.

9 homes on the left of Library Street. I really like the glossy ceramic tiles in the door ways. Kak, kak kak go the gulls.

A high pitched rattle of a smaller bird in one of the back gardens of Market Road. I must be mad! 7.25am

Duffle coat man with orange plastic bag.

8.07 got a day pass for the bus and now I'm at Cardiff Central. I've just had an almond croissant and I'm waiting for my regular but also enormous coffee to cool down.

I've got really cold standing in the rain for not quite an hour. My legs hurt from walking from Splott to Canton and back every day. It's good to exercise of course. And I got a taxi back last night, so it's actually only one day I've done both trips on foot. My hand is also starting to hurt from all the writing.

I'm going to get a bus back to Cardiff bay. The coffee machine whirs. Too slowly my coffee steams, cooling down. I'm damp and cold. But I've got a new notebook.

Later:

A pretty woman puts on make up in the audiences Wales office. Leaving early? James said its mostly about the traffic, the cleaner said there are a few bumps, specially with the ice, cos there's a blind spot.

The cleaning ladies outside CAC. Two of them smoking. One doesn't want to say anything. The other one is more chatty, but reticent: 'its brilliant for the shops Canton, there's no need to go into town' I think this is funny because I go through town to get here every day. I feel sick. Period coming. Long way still to go. Planning to stay until 1. Then I've only lost four hours.

'There's bother here, like anywhere, a girl was raped on Cowbridge Road East. Safer in town. More people. There's the Forest, known as The Mad House, there was the pub by the bingo had to be shut down because the woman who ran it kept getting into fights. That one on the corners not any bother.' The chatty lady continues.

A woman with a purple scarf over her grey hair. Black clothes and purple socks. Can see as far as Cowbridge Road from here, past the liberal club and Tyres shop. Bunch of school kids amble along. Taxi. A revving engine coming down Market place, Iceland Van.

Man carries baby in carrier to car. 4 pigeons on the roof right now. Because it's not raining anymore. Clouds, grey and white. Jazzy music as a woman in a black Picasso pulls in she must be so happy to have a spot. The red car that belongs to the shopkeeper isn't there. He must have gone to the cash and carry. The ford focus gently crunches its boot into the Renault Clio's bonnet.

Nearly a crash then. A woman was going to turn, where she shouldn't right off Market Road as another car pulled out.

Push chair and mother come out from behind parked camper van.

The right indication light of a blue Ford style reflects in the parked new camper van it turns left then stops in the middle of the street for 30 seconds then continues. Not a Camper van, a 30d granvia. What does that mean?

The curtains are open in the room above Lifestyle Express. I can see some clothes on a clothes rail. Eight chimney pots on top of the chimney. Three aerials.

The wind blows the clouds towards Market Road.

Police van parked still at the end of Market Road.

It's calm and repetitive. The cars go round, the people come and go. People aren't too bothered that I'm here. A man who looked slightly nervous, looked at me out of the corner of his eyes. My head is getting cold even though I've got a big wooly hat on. A green car purrs grrr grrr like its back is being stroked. Opera in a car parking on Market Place.

James says it's difficult to get big vans and lorries for 'get ins' to Chapter. I wonder how they managed with Princess Margret? Metal sign for the Echo (Echo written in red) Smell of pot goes past mmmmm...love the smell of pot.

White metal sign rusting on the corners, a dragon, upright, on right hand side as you look at it. ON SALE HERE

Grey dragon above red one. Is it a shadow or an echo? GEM security light flicks back and forth. The cars have their head lights on now. Dusk is coming. It's nearly here, nearly right that's when I can really lay back. Look closely and you'll see stickers which say I AM FAMOUS and FREE LOVE.

How big or how far away would you need to be for those flies on CAC to look the same size as when you are about 6 foot? If I were in scale with those flies I think I would be 340 metres tall.

A white woman, late 30s short hair dyed red. Red nails, blue dress, glasses. A stretchy blue dress showing the lines of the wire in her bra. She writes with a red pen, leans her cheek on her left hand, her elbow on the table as she works with her right.

A woman with a long black bob holds her cup four inches away from her mouth and stares into the distance for 5 minutes. Then turns to her right and stays there for another 2 minutes. As she turns her little finger escapes from the handle of the cup.

She puts

'and I now have enough points' young girl goes past

the cup down and fold her arms. She is waiting in Egypt. A hot night on the Nile. Two white grey faced people look at a lap top together. A white woman with red ear length curly hair comes in wearing a much coloured scarf. She meets her pink faced friend rosy from the cold outside.

16.58 Everyone in the bar is white.

A toddler sucks at a green plastic beaker half filled with apple juice. He holds the top of his head as he drinks. He doesn't know why he does it. It feels nice.

He will do it in his sleep when he is an old man dreaming of sitting on his mother's denim lap. When he is 82 there will be places to eat on the moon.

Outside. 6.05 Indian guy in a wooly hat goes by, smell of smoke. A fire near by. A girl looks at me out of the corner of her eye.

Lifestyle shops are all over Cardiff (and in Glasgow too) I thought it was just on Market Road. The bin is empty on the corner of Market Road and Market place. Tesco bag is still in the tree. It still got its stripes.

Oh, the smell of burning, lovely.

Environment agency Wales white van goes past, turns right.

Bar beep! The door of Lifestyle Express easy shop beeps. Do all of them have the same beep? Nowhere on Earth is like this. The spire of the church at the bottom of Market Road is barely visible against the dark sky. Click click high heels walk past and a car goes up Market Road. A Landrover pulls into a parking space on Market Place. The man who just walked past, his trainers squelshed with each step. Perhaps he was out in the rain all day like me? On the second floor of Market Place I can see a white forehead and a curly bounce of brown hair over the top of a computer. My last day tomorrow. I should do lots of interviews. A dustbin truck goes down the far street and Environment Wales, white van goes past again. Perhaps it's looking for a parking spot?

From here I can see the top shelf of booze in Lifestyle Express. Grand Manier, blue drink, Vodka, orange bottle, Cognac, and then above the posters in the window all I can see are the tops of the bottles. Lifestyle Express easy shop has a logo, a jagged spiral it is a silver frame that makes it look like a blue spiral.

One way street by the side of Market House. Dried creepers twisted around the black metal rails on the wall on the corner of Market Road and Market place. There are three lots of eleven bars on the corner.

The light from Chapter throws shadows of the dried twigs onto the rusty no entry sign on the corner of Market Road and Market Place. A big camper van piles so much exhaust fumes into the area that it seems like its foggy, a girl in a red jacket sits on the other end of my wall. Waiting? Is it Juila wait for Tariq? A man with wild white hair on the sides of his head, bald otherwise comes in running his hands together wearing a long grey coat.

People who have spoken to me today: Grocer, 'hello' 5.45 am. A man changing the signs in the bus stop 'hello' George Orwell Street 9.30 am. Two men cleaning the decking just above the shallow grey water, they didn't say anything. But I know they knew I was there. A black man, in a good water proof jacket, writing in a notebook. A fellow 'outsider'? He refused to look at me. Perhaps an artist? Good shoes, better than my trainers.

I watched Gavin and Stacy in the window of Richer Sounds, at 5.30 this morning.

The Cod Father is the best name for a fish and chip shop ever!

I was out on a crazy mission to walk all around Cardiff. I got up at 5, woke up at 5 got up at 5.30 left the house before 6. I was trying to use the Google maps on my new iphone, which took me to a motorway that I couldn't quite muster the courage to cross

The people I talked to outside.

A man opening up his grocery shop

He said 'hello' I responded in kind.

I'm tired. My eyes are shut and I can't organized my thoughts.

Friday 5th February 2010

12 noon. Sunny sunny sunny! Just talked to the shop owner of Easyshop. Been in Canton four years, loves Cardiff like Chapter has a few drinks in there now and again. The shop keeper says that he knows what everyone wants. Saturday is the busiest with the dancing. 16 pigeons sitting on the roof in the sun, on Market house. A bicycle clamp around one of the bars of the wall.

Tarriq wrote his name in capital letters on the first brick pillar on the corner of Market Road and Market place. Julia wrote the first letter of her name with a capital letter, the rest in lower case. They wrote their names in tippix pen on the orange brick.

Are they in love? Are they 14? Do they go to the same school? Will they have a boy and a girl or will Julia get off with Tarriq's best friend when he is on hoiday with his mum this summer? Will Tarriq decide he needs to concentrate on his rugby? Previously on Market Road...1020 AD a girl sells some manure to a passing florist and the market is born...

There's a hole in the same wall, perhaps a place for a dead letter drop? Perhaps Tarriq and Julia are Canton's Romeo and Juliet and they leave secret messages for each other in this hidden place. Like spies passing on secrets.

At noon the sun shines directly above the church steeple, if you are at the corner of Market Road and Market Place. Everything is so much better when it's sunny. A cyclist puts his/her bike against the No Entry sign. They have dreadlocked hair, a red goretex jacket. The broken glass shines in the sun. It's hard to look up, the sun gets in your eyes. A bus goes down Cowbridge Road, making its way to the bay, goes past 2 Lifestyle Express shops on the way. The man hole cover in the centre of Market Road shines reflecting the sun.

I passed green machines on Queen Street as I came to Chapter this morning. They were 'Made in Scotland'. Green florescent jackets that match the cleaning green machines. The red dragons look amazing on them. The red and green goes so well and a little Saltire, four blue triangles making the white cross...Green machines are a symbol of Wales and Scotland working together. The cyclist a courier, male white, dreds, comes out of the shop, stops and thinks, what does he think: Where am I going? What am I doing? Off he rolls. A man walks along with his head leaning back.

I talk for seven minutes with an old woman with a square shopping trolley on four wheels. She talks to people when she goes to Tesco Metro. She came over from

Ireland in 1947, lived in Canton 40 years. She's had her red shopping bag from Argos eleven years ago. 'I'm 80 now and I retired when I was 69, I bought it when I retired. I used to work in the kitchens with the nuns but it's all gone to wrack and ruin.'

12.38 Last night going home a tiny but very mouthy Asian kid shouted at someone as he crossed the street. He joined a gang of mates and they were all having an argument with the Italian restaurant staff. As I walked on, there was a crowd of people, mostly women smoking outside the bingo on Cowbridge Road.

A man on a bike, with his phone to his ear says, 'but what about the goat cheese though'.

The sun goes behind a cloud and I'm suddenly cold again. An older and younger woman talk and smoke just outside the shop. A man in a pale blue coat and a cloth bag walks past, his glasses balanced on the end of his nose. A young man with red hair drives a van for Bute property services in partnership with Cardiff council. The woman with the red square trolley has never gone in to Chapter. I was going to once, but it just didn't happen. I knew it when it was a school. Canton is a happy place.' It's cold with no sun. Two women with short grey hair ride into Market Place, they might be twins: road signs are for cars. They chat to each other as they ride. Two men who look exactly the same, but one is shorter than the other, they get into a car. They are big and square. They have no hair.

Double yellows on the corner. A little girl learns how to cross the road with her mum. The Easyshop shop keeper has dry cleaning he's bringing home. There are three lights in the top right office in Market Road. Just above the lights, the pigeons are starting to flourish. Spring is coming. Time for nesting.

16.09

If Woody Allen made a film in Cardiff he'd set it in Canton. These clever ladies with long straight hair and unusual noses who worry with each other about the sequins on their hats. Too pink, too iridescent, too childish? School for Dylan, Welsh or private? 'It's no good, pretending you're not middle class anymore, now you've got kids.' Someone said to me last night.

Does she love me? Does he love me?

The gossip, the worries, pass pleasantly. It's a happy place, Market Place, and the dark heart...?

Irritating woman just floated in, big show off, floaty floaty, no gravity at all. Girl with nice smile and huge bottom carries her lunch number to the end of the bar. Outside, sun, sun sun.

A tiny baby with grown up's face.

I look at the site where three boys sat together talking in the dark on the wall last night. Tranquil now. I look at the mosaic of glass scattered over the top of the wall like a detective. The small collection of cigarette ends, one smoker or they each had

2? I'm so tired. My eyes droop, my legs ache. Do I have enough? Man on bike two baskets, one piece of polythene under back basket.

23.17 last stand. A glass of wine. 2 pennies on a bollard. Can I write having had a drink? Too late to talk to the bouncers. Bar shuts in 1 hour 10 mins. Look at someone's back they turn around. Tiredness, hidden by a glass of wine and cigarettes. Valérie. I miss her. Going home tomorrow. Why am I doing this?

Cold wind. I'm at the top of Libray Street. A Sikh man just went past in a car and really checked me out. I'm in the lamp light.

Sikh guy just came and talked to me. Would like me to go for a drink with him. It's starting to rain again. Taxi picks people up. Four people come out.

On the grey end of the library road. Beautiful silhouettes of trees. The turn left sign is bent towards CAC.

Last night tonight. I'm really looking forward to going home. I haven't been home for such a long time now. Valerie sounds like she is doing well at work though. She has sounded happy on the phone.

When I was in France last week I went for a walk one very bright beautiful morning. I went up the hill and then down through the woods into Jean d'Estesac then right to Jean (the other one) and then I cut back through the woods and as I was cutting along, a deer, a young buck ran out of the bushes on the right hand side. Such noise and power out of the bushes. My first thought was that a lion was chasing it. I still can't believe that my first thought was that a lion was in the bushes. When I realized that wasn't possible, I thought there must be hunters out, shooting at it. In the distance I could hear dogs barking. I was worried that I was going to be shot. I imagined being shot in the head. And then I thought 'It's me. I am the lion.' It was me who disturbed the buck and it ran out, away from me and every time it turned, trying to get back into the bushes and shrub trees it was confronted with me again.

Imagine a lion in the French countryside!

Imagine a lion in Canton!

8th February 2010

I was thinking about my failure to do the night time sessions and how difficult the day was in Cardiff because of the rain. How the night made me sexually vulnerable. There was that Sikh guy who wanted me to go back to his place and it made me wonder how long you had to sit in one place before someone would come and try to have sex with you. But who else hangs around, on their own on street corners at night apart from prostitutes? Sitting anywhere on your own even in the day can be dangerous, like when I got beaten up with I was 13 because I was sitting on a park bench on my own.

Lucy thinks: 'How oppressive the inside is. But how soft, how warm and comfortable. How much harder it is to be outside. I wear the triumphs of surviving outside like diamonds in my eyes.'

Open the show with 'I'm Lucy in the sky, James at the piano and Dan is in the box...'

'Inside it is dark and warm. The front door is the best part of the house. There are ceramic tiles on each side of the doorway, they shine, I used to polish them with my breath when I was young and forgot my key. Perhaps that's when I started liking the outside. It's not the great outdoors, I'm scared of mountains and the Bay, when its raining I get the bus to the bay and go and look at the horror house, and there's a man there, a black man with a note book. I think he must have put me in his notebook, he's an outside person rather than an outdoors person too. He doesn't look me in the eye as I go past. We know each other and we will never speak.'

How did Lucy in the sky come to be beyond 90 degrees to the earth? A car accident?
A bolt from the blue?

She will be a satillite who comes down to Earth.

E: 'civic couch' on 'queer street'

Blond woman in her late fifties bright green jacket. Umbrella. Slip on faun tan shoes like moccasins. She's skinny. Not much taller than me. Looks at me for a moment in a hurry. Make up. Then a cyclist with a wooly hat on. It's not summer yet. Volcanic plumes. Maybe summer will never come again. A young mum, with beautiful silver grey grey hounds I can't help thinking she's a nanny because that dog is so beautiful, very expensive and she's only 20. She talks to the dog. 'No. No' as it disappears towards the river. Imagine that grey silver coat covered in the river's edge. Have you seen the edge of the river? Strange gods are worshiped there. It was raining when I slammed the door. Damp now, as the light fades and the smell of fresh garlic hangs at the side of the Kelvin, just by the bridge near to my bench. There is a long branch that over hangs the river. It is strewn with rags. It looks like the shrine to a Celtic god that I visited in Ireland last year with my Nan. She believes in fairies. Isn't that insane! A woman who leaned how to shoot down German aeroplanes and still has more secrets than the IRA believes in little people.

My iphone says it is 8.04. I'm tempted to listen to a song. I don't have any earphones so I would have to go somewhere no one will hear me. Also, it's a real luxury. The battery is not going to last all night. So, I'd be a fool to use up so much energy on a song now. I already know which one I want to listen to.

A woman with a purple bag crosses the bridge, phone to ear. A girl, four or five on a scooter, followed by older kids with ...with...things, wooden, flat, wheels,skateboards. God. I'm loosing my words. I'm tired. So tired.

Birds, wood pigeons, starlings, thrush, blackbirds...my favourite. The noise from the primary school building site stops. I'm on the green wet bench on the left as you enter the park over the bridge. I'm sitting on the far right hand end of my wet green bench the War memorial to Soldiers in the south African War 1899-2000 is on my left, far left. On my near left is a green bin.

The woman in the bright green coat is over there! Going across the bridge now. Maybe she does a circuit of the Park for exercise?

A girl on phone moving towards the bridge.

Below me, down by the canal, a girl with long blond hair and a grey cardigan a dog, don't know the breed.

The tulips have flowered. A Japanese girl has just walked past, her coat is on back to front and half falling off. A bag on her back. She shrugs to hook the coat more firmly onto her arms, across her chest. She looked depressed, defeated, this thin Japanese girl with the eccentric approach to coat wearing.

It take about 20 mins for my body temperature to go down. I'm sitting on my hat because it of the rain and the globbuals of water still paused on the slats of the bench.

Two boys, about ten on bikes with helmets riding up from the canal. One pushes his, lazy bastard.

A man, in his forties catches my eye. He is putting his earphones in. Lucky bastard. I don't dare. Not yet. Not until I really need it. Our bench. Our happy bench. Now a sad, sad bench. 18 green sorrowful slats about 1 inch thick. 24 on the bin. To my left I can see two more benches and one more bin on my right 3 more benches and 4 more bins. It looks like one bin has lost its bench. No one sits on them apart from me. I don't know what to do next. If I knew. Then I would do it. But I'm stuck here. And the more I stick, the more I think the more I see...I'm not waiting for her to call. I don't want you to think that. Because that's not the case. I just don't know what to do. I need to think. But the world keeps tugging me. The woman in the bright green coat just walked past again. This time she really looked at me, a look of recognition. What is her story? I wonder if she can tell by just looking at me what has happened? I feel like that could be true.

A white man in his early 20s, walks with his hands in pockets, deep in pockets (to stop himself pushing someone I suddenly think) He looks at me out of the corner of his eye. It's fine though. I don't mind. It's still daylight, I'm in a public park. I'm not scared. Then there's a skinny bald grey man in a puffa jacket, blue Jeans bandy legs and a limp. Poor thing. He can't weigh more than ten stone, but his footfall is heavy.

A park vehicle arrives. A little girl with plaits drops her ball, it rolls near me. She looks at me...curious. I smile. Look away. Don't want to scare anyone. It's already weird enough that I'm sitting on a bench that is still damp from the rain. 3 muslim women go past. Two wear black head scarves, the other younger woman who walks 10 feet ahead, is in a cerise one. Perhaps they don't know each other, but from here it looks like the one in pink is having a strop with her mum and auntie.

Two Beagles go towards the bridge, and stop for a chat with a nice looking black dog. Very shiny coat. The woman with the black dog chats to the man with the beagles and the man who was in the park vehicle goes over to join them. He is wearing green, with white gloves. Green, because he works with nature. Is it camouflage? Is it reassuring? Is it political? I don't know anything. I used to know everything. Who designed this outfit? He looks like a butler in his white gloves. A servant of the municipal idea of nature. SD06zdm car vehicle.

Ooooh a wedding party. There's a bride in silver heels and long white dress, with a man's jacket over her shoulders. Because it's still not quite summer. Mum in cerise carrying a present, a skinny guy smoking. There's a German Shepard dog on my right. Police coming past. [www.strathclyde police.com](http://www.strathclyde.police.com). 2 guys. They look calm and peaceful. Nearest me there's a young guy. He's good looking. He looks at the top of the trees. You can see he's not worried, right now he doesn't look at me. So I can't be doing anything wrong sitting on the bench that used to be ours, used to be a joyful bench and is now the bench of doom.

A black guy goes past in flip flops. He has cherubian lips, dark sunglasses. I looked up as he goes past. He catches my eye and looks surprised. He is listening to music too. I'm so jealous.

2 old grey men go past just behind him, whispering to each other. The one on the left in black trousers has had a hip operation. You can tell he is fed up with the other one. I think they were lovers many years ago.

Park guy in green is back in his vehicle. The engine is turning over. The truck has got black plastic bags of rubbish in the back of the truck. I'm getting colder and colder sitting still. And it is surely dusk now.

The colours mute as the light fades. There's less depth. The bin is harder to separate from the path behind it. Everything gets flatter and then when it is dark it will become closer and the world will get bigger and bigger or I will get smaller and smaller.

The sunset makes the pale stone of the bridge pink right now.

The direction of the wind changes. It starts to move now from the southwest I can see the chestnut tree leaves on my right by the path leading up the hill. They ripple like hundreds of hands, stretching before sleep, or after but so calm. I could be happy as a tree. Why can't I be a tree or this bench? If I was a bench I could stay here all night and all I would need to worry about would be someone scratching the paint off me. Perhaps that's all that will happen anyway. Darker darker comes the night. Tender tender what is legal tender at night? The bell somewhere up at the university. My phone says 9pm. How time changes with the light.

I've stayed out all night. But not since I was 10.

The sound of the leaves the chestnut leaves whispering its alright, say here with us.

I've not even got money for a bottle. But that's a good thing. If I got drunk then I'd be really fucked out on queer street.

It would be alright for a bit, but then I'd get colder.

How far would a tank of petrol get me? Across the border? Newcastle maybe? I know people in Newcastle. I know people all over the world. I haven't met many of them though.

The tree in front and to my right has a bark that twists, like coils of rope up the trunk. The coils become different branches. Next to the coils the bark is more like scales or feathers. These tiles of bark tessellate up the first metre. Then the bark gets smoother, more like the skin of an elephant. Then about two metres up there is a black hole in the trunk edged with a flap of even smoother bark. It is like a monstrous, distorted elephant ear.

White blossom snows as the night light goes blue. It is from the tree in front of me, near the railing above the canal. Just over the top of it I can see the spire of the university. To my left over the top of the trees in the dome top of another grand Victorian homage to empire...Kelvingrove museum.

Westbank Quadrant: Home. Top floor flat. Can see Kelvingrove museum towers from here. I wonder if she is looking at the set from what is now her flat? A man just

walked past, he had a bag that said 'Steenway Haus' he had ear phones in and the look said something like 'are you really there?' I wonder what music he was listening to? I think I was just in the film of his trip through the park on the 4th (5th) June 2010.

Through the trees I can see cars driving along. 'Did you notice the renovated furniture' 'yer' All augh at the obvious. 2 men, 2 women chat and walk together holding hands. Perhaps they're going out for dinner? Double dating. They all know each other so well. Then four young men in sports wear go past. Don't know what language they're speaking. They are all laughing they are having such a great time. Is it Hindi? I've no idea. One of them throws a can in the bin by my bench and the sound echoes. There is a strange, self consciousness as they go past. I'm sure they don't think I understand them...but perhaps they still feel a bit shy talking so loudly in another language when there is someone else there, for a moment. Unlike the French who I have noticed talk more loudly in public in the UK than in France. They seem to assume that no one in the UK can speak French. When I was about 15 I used to talk about my fictional sex life on a bus as loudly as possible with my mates coming home from school. I hear the most extraordinary French things on Scottish streets.

Two women and toddler look at the names of the men who died in South Africa.

Tiny bird, blue tit in and out of the trees.
Seagulls high. Pigeons lower
Bluetits near

And it's getting so cold!

I'm going to walk for a bit and warm up.

Night. Now. Two police on bikes, fluescent jackets, safety helmets.

My stomach is starting to cramp. I reckon I've got about 12 hours before the flood gates open. What would it be like, to be outside at night and your period to start? What would I do?

I'm going to go down to the river.

I don't want to go East. I come from Denniston. Good big tenements, quite rough. I mean I say that now. But I didn't think so at the time. All the streets all called 'Drives.' I came from the good bit of Denniston. I loved to climb on the dykes. All the tenements had backgreens, with walls that were called Dykes. You could walk all along them and the women would try and knock you off with their washing poles.

There were wash houses on each green, some were more dangerous than others. I had pupils that I took on climbing expeditions. Also there were 'sausages' on the dykes that were circular, tilled and you could pull yourself along sitting, but you didn't do that. Because that would be crap. I could walk easily along the sausages. Climbing was a big thing when I was ten, in Denniston. We used to climb onto the school roof

at the weekends. If people saw you they'd call the police who'd take you home. All the streets were home. I'd always leave a stash of sweets or money in places outside.

At the old White Hill school the old building was derelict, there was a pole there where you could unscrew the top and hide sweets or coins.

And the old church in grounds, in the derelict Belfry was all boarded up, no floor but you could get right up to the very top. There were loads of derelict buildings oh and a haunted house Onslow Drive. You could go in and play there if you were brave enough. Play with the old photographs and the things people had left behind.

Blue sky, some clouds. 2 traffic wardens one short and fat one tall and thin. Mucic hall comedy, girl in cut off jeans modes cigarette. Big yellow truck, huge tyres SELWOOD. Man driving wears white hard hat. On a day like this, sunny, must be lovely driving a big yellow truck around. Must feel like a god. Litter rolls along the pavement in the wind from east to west.

Looking now over the bridge, towards the west, a dog goes into the water. Goes crazy. Loves it. The wrought iron plumes on the bridge are like a lowery face, a green man, a face in everything, her face in everything, in the dark, and yet strangely no face on the soldiers head. The holes where the eyes should be. A gap rather than a mouth. Poor boy.

Surprised eagles and sulky cherubs on the fountain. Clean water for glasgow coins in the water for each. Steal them! They shine in the sun light. The water magnifies the reflection, gives each penny a hallo. 2 Asian guys and a baby. One guy on the phone. The other one playing with the baby. Makes me feel sad and happy. My hair blows over my face, over my eyes, tired sad eyes. Boo hoo. Boo hoo hoo.

On Sauchiehall Street there are lots of girls and boys dressed up to the nines money short shirts and very high heels. Glasgow is the perfect place to have a broken heart.

The green bench is set into some concrete specially. It's a different colour to the tarmac, white blossom, cigarette ends some very very old

Two rattely birds chase a seagull. You don't often see that.

Theres been some graffiti done to the bench at some point. There's a flight dusting of pink on the far right some bird poo, old and dried some of the green paint has been pushed off, scratched away.

I imagine someone, a girl, with her car keys scratching off the municipal green paint. She was right handed and she sat on the other side of the bench from me, whittling at the paint with her car keys. The wind east wind I turn my back to the east wind.

A pistachio shell under the other side of the bench. EMP in the concrete. 'Khia is to'

What does it mean?

RHIA Erick ALASI on the concrete on the other side.

In memory of Claire at the tree behind, spelt with an 'I'.

The spire of the university over the tops of the trees opposite.

Can I hear the water of the Kelvin, perhaps I'm just imagining it.

Look closer. Get smaller.

Look up and the first thing I notice are the blemishes in my own eyes. Projected on to the clouds and powder blue sky. I'm getting old. Too old to have nowhere to go.

I'm in shock. There are pink, tiny pink tones caught in the crevices of the grey tarmac.

Max, a black colly dog is a 'clever dog' apparently.

I don't look up.

A man with bright ginger hair and a red puffer jacket rides past down by the water and so under the bridge.

Freedom is being shouted from the general direction of the university. How ironic.

Scotland Freedom. No one is laughing

Shock

How does something end, break so quickly. One moment in, the next out in the cold.

I believe they're all on her side. They might not be, but I don't want to ask. Not tonight anyway. So I'm here. Refuse to go East, to my mum's I don't have the words to explain. I don't have the energy to take her through it she prefers her to me anyway.

Tall Claire, with an 'I' the posh daughter she always wanted.

I said, if you wanted an English daughter you should have stayed in England.

And she said, 'Youse just count yerelf lucky yerse not been brought up on queer street like I was.'

She's lived here 50 years but you can still hear the cockney in her and behind that the Irish Ma...behind that it's all flax and tithes. We did a family tree a year ago. Never a bean from one generation to the next. It really is something to think that here on this bench I am fabulously wealthy I comparison. I still have my iPhone.

I could make her sell the flat. I must have some rights. Alhtough, it's all in her name and we're not married, cos I don't believe in it. She can take it all. I don't care.

The clouds are glowing from the setting sun, North West. I think it will move further to my left before it sets completely.

Two guys are talking on their mobiles walking towards each other. One Scottish One arab. The Arab is excited. He's nearly out of sight now, but I can still hear him. As they crossed each other just in front of me the Scottish guy couldn't hear the person he was talking to and he had to say 'huh?'

You can't hear the birds, if you're talking on the phone.

A really cool girl just went past in blue electric blue tights, red converse, a grey short shirt tweed I think and a big jumper mostly black with big white pom poms on it. She had dark straight shiny hair and white ear phones. So Glasgow. So cool. Breaks your heart. I tried not to stare. I just glanced and she kept looking forward, like I do when I know people are looking because somehow that is the easiest if not natural thing to do. Sometimes I forget and look at people who star at me and then I have to deal with the consequences.

The arab guy is coming back this way still talking. Loudly into his phone marking his argument like a conductor of a symphony.

The red light above the dept has moved to bhend the university tower. My toes are getting cold. Myarse is getting numb. I've got pins and needles in my fanny.

In my car now the two men in the coffee shop walk past. Still talking.

There's a ribbon of blue sky between the dark clouds just above the tops of the homes, the tenements lights go on and off in people's homes. For a few seconds there are no cars and the quiet is beautiful.

A click in the bone of my neck. Street lights.

Pain from the period in my abdomen. Slgiht queasy feeling from the caffine. Spots of rain. Dreamy and awake.

Trees now silhouettes against the darkening sky. Still that blue ribbon of pale bright blue.

Clouds hardly moving, stare at them for an hour as the ribbon disappears, what do I think in this hour?

Yellow behind me.

Different textures of road, reflect he light of the lamps

Sound of rain falling. Feet in soft shoes go past. I sneeze. Walk around the city. Walk through hell.

Bright lights of buses.

As I walk from one part of the city to the next I feel the identity of the area on my skin. As I cross over the M8 on Sauchiehall Street for example I move from bird song and the still green smells of wet parks to all the smoke of all the folk who are out for the night. Further down the M8, I'm heading for the Clyde, under the flyover where Andersen tube station is...I feel like I'm entering hell. The sound gets muffled. The air is weirdly still. It is cold the grey concrete is so big, so huge so brutal I'm like a penny rolling around in a slot machine. The cars are not driven by people but deamons. And then I have to laugh. I have to be relieved when a man in a van gets me to look at him as he goes past me as I stand at the crossing not knowing what to do, I look up and and he tells me to fuck off and sticks his fingers up at me. At least he's human...and it makes me feel better. Fuck you too.

Are you a curly queer, or a kicking queer?

I was thinking about how my dad calls me curly. Not because my hair is curly. My mum's hair is very curly. She doesn't like how curly her hair is. When I'm upset about something she goes to comfort me, put an arm about my shoulders and tells me 'At least you've got nice hair.'

Money is a good reason to kick someone I guess. Imagine being a kicking queer.

The girls wore heels that were so high, four inches at least, lots of strappy roman sandel heels, dresses made with stretch cotton that really didn't cover them and the boys in jeans, trainers and t.shirts. Not a coat amongst them. I am middle aged. Amazing. How did that happen? 37. No job. No home. No love. No kids. No money...I could take the money and the car though.

I'm gonna. I'm going to start again, again and again. I'm gonna keep on going through the night, moving forward and returning to the same place, every day, every moment forever and not for another second.

Blackout. Birdsong.

F. 'civic couch' on Hope Street Liverpool. 3rd – 8th October 2010

4th October 2010

56 steps up to the Cathedral with four bells. The steps are pale, dirty white. Rather than grey. The noise of the road works at the bottom of Hope Street. The sun is bright. My face is wet. I take my coat off and it's nearly winter. I'm wearing sunglasses, or rather the glasses are sat on my head so I can see to read. My back is sweaty. There is a cold breeze that chills the sweat on my back. But I'm still warm enough not to care. I feel good. This is good. This is the brightest sunniest day of the year. Here at one end of Hope Street. A girl walks past with flowery tights. Brilliant. She's walking to a lecture. You can tell she's a student. She's got a bag. She's got a look. She knows where she is going. Her lips are pursed. Not late yet, but no time to wander or wonder. Poor thing. Radio City tower is to my right. I'm at eye level with the fourth black dot up the white concrete column. It reminds me of Berlin. The sun catches the glass. It shines. If it were a silver globe the sun would shine in the shape of a cross. That's what I've seen, in Berlin. There are art students sitting up here drawing. This is so far the best place I've sat. I can sit here all day long. Writing in my notebook and no-one would think anything of it. Here it is normal to think about the world, whether through sounds or drawings or sitting looking. This is the place to do it. Paradoxical that the church, that set all the rules about what's allowed also is the only public place where you can stop, be quiet, think. The church is strange, it creates a strange place amidst the noise of streets. Every eighth step is darker grey than the others. It's like a rosary. Is this a catholic church then?

11.28 I've already eaten my sandwich. Delicious chicken and mayonnaise, left over from Niel and Gabby's Birthday party yesterday. I'm not too tired. I think of the blow up bed. The rocking movement. The air trapped into a miniature sea. That I drift off on. I'm inside the Cathedral now. It was a Catholic one. I was right about the rosary. I'm sitting in a pew. 7th one on the right, by the isle. I've put my foot on the knee rest. This is very wrong. But not as wrong as sitting back on your heels when kneeling on them. Lots of people are drawing in here. The sound is incredibly amplified. A button struck the wooden backrest of the pew in front like a tuning fork. The sound reverberated to the other side of the, what, what is it? It's not a dome, domes are spherical. It's round, conical, high. The sound reverberated and then echoed back. Almost like the sounds of a submarine, but how would I know? Never been in a submarine. 'Eeen' is my favourite sound today. I'm keeeeen on it.

I stepped inside and not automatically put my middle finger in the font of holy water. I made the sign of the cross. It's not automatic. I have to remember. It's 20 years ago. But I do remember. I stood, having blessed myself and I felt my place to be calm and quiet for a moment. I touched my forehead with holy water, then my chest, near my heart, then my left shoulder and then my right. The ritual put me in my place. I felt my feet on the floor, my body standing by the entrance. The light outside behind me, the quiet, stain-coloured light, luminous but not bright before me. Blue after light below a crown of thorns chandelier. What does it all mean? Not in a d. brown way. But in a 'I've got to get out of here' way.

I am who I am, because of where I am and when I am. I don't think: if I can help it. But I can't help it. So it's really important to me where I am. Here I am like a fly on a pin, under a magnifying glass. Even the soul of my button sings out to god. Here.

Here is a love that binds as firmly as body to self. Here I am part of the love of God, the scuff of my shoes, the weight at my waist, the taste of chicken in my mouth all part of God, and God is love, but a jealous, jealous love. A sulky love.

God: I did all this for you, you know.

Me: But I didn't ask you to.

God: But I did it to save you.

Me: I didn't want to be saved. I was fine.

God: You were drunk and singing rude songs in a field.

Me: I was happy.

God: You could have died.

Me: It wouldn't have mattered.

God: It would to me.

Me: (*To self*) Who are you talking to?

God: (*Sulkily*) I love you.

If someone loves you, they tell you who you are. I have someone who tells me that I'm better than I think. Perhaps I wouldn't need love if I was self loving? I'd be a hermit defined by my cave and its view from the mountain. It's a place I imagine as the purest – far from other humans- but I think still inescapably human. Bound I am to my body. So why not embrace that. Love that. Time to get out of God's home and out into the fleshy hope of streets, shops and parks.

13.09 oh the sun! As we coast down past the town hall on the tour bus.

Beatles. A hard days night hotel.

People laugh at people on tour buses

But doesn't everyone love a tour bus?

Conservation museum. How we preserve and restore heritage.

A class of kid at the greatest collection of civic buildings in the country, get over excited at the tourist bus. 'Ding ding' they mock, 'Ding Ding.' Empire theatre...biggest theatre in the country. Keep your ticket safe.

Half of England's Catholics live here. More coloured glass than any other build in Europe. Always comparing with the world. The rest of the world. People wave to people on tour boats, at people on busses. Why is that? Bell tower: Mathew, Mark Luke and John or George, John, Paul and Ringo.

14.32 In the toilets of the other Cathedral. The Great Space. The bell tower. Biggest and highest in the world. Isn't everything in Liverpool? 'I felt you and knew you loved me' written over the doors, the big doors that aren't open. We go in at the side. Imagine the love of those doors opening. 14 slats in the bell tower. Scared legs – mercury runs through them at the vertigo. The camera for disabled people can see as far as the Blackpool Tower, from North, up Hope Street to the Catholic place and West, over to Belfast and south West to Wales.

14.50 When will it end? Catholicism, like my gender, was given at birth. Sensuality arrived as a slap on the arse. I cried. Mouth open. Lungs: Great door of love – it will grow, get better and worse. Poor you. They coo. Poor you. I have no money on Hope Street. That is Lucy, who has no money. Perhaps she has a woman across town, who gives her things? Like in the Beatles song. I have money. I have a cup of tea. I've eaten some bread and butter pudding with custard. I'm feeling very English here. In

the café, in the Cathedral at the south end of Hope. Looking through the railings at the garden. Where you are is who you are, Lucy says and who you are makes that place what it is. WE're together in this. Stand or fall together. I'm sitting though. There's a moment of truce, of equilibrium. There's time, right now for love.

You make me who I am. I make you what you are, for now. We yield to each other, time and place in me... me in you.

Touching yielding, pressed together by the spinning mass of the earth in a space beyond imagination. The bench and I.

15.35 Hope Street south. Bench. 'She did all she could' The Catholic Cathedral makes the long Hope Street seem short. I'm facing north. Stone luggage to my right. Paul Macarntney's bango in stone. What if you didn't know who the Beatles were? Would it make Liverpool less than it is? The civic pride is palpable. Stars orbit the centrifuge of this civic pride.

Liverpool...what's this? It's supposed to be *all* the lost luggage. Lost travelers luggage. They look at the map. The yellow and orange map of the petrified lost luggage. If I came from Liverpool perhaps I'd be rude about it. I've noticed that people are often rude about where they come from. It's who they were as well as who they are, they want to extricate themselves from their place. I'm more than that...more than I can be here...here I'm not allowed to ...become...a journey, a banker, a ...here I have to be a version of John Lennon...when I go in the Phil for a pint, I know I'm not famous, I know I'm *not* John Lennon...that was his price of fame. So the voice on the tour bus told me.

People spend time looking at the petrified journey companions. A kid, 4 years old brown skinned, dark loose curls, walked up and over the pile of lost bags. The white paint on the 'Hope Street' sign on my left is crumbling away. But the black letters are perfect. On the other side of the corner there is a sign for Mount Street. From this angle I can see that the letters are indented into the white sign.

Then there's Rice Street in metal . Modern. Then Hope Place, where the old Jewish school is. The old Synagogue, now a theatre, a very good theatre, the best theatre in the world. The Unity Theatre. Where this will be performed. To my left and behind is the Liverpool Institute and School of Art. Three 'for sale' signs. Three houses...lovely posh houses for sale. On the lamppost to my right, republican music poster at the bottom. Then, 'you are in a designated public place.' There's a red circle around a picture of a green half full wine bottle, a beige cylinder, maybe a beer can and a glass. The cylinder is horizontal. This indicates the chaos never far off when alcohol is around... in public.

Above this, is a banner, red top and bottom, white in the middle, for the Liverpool Biennial. International Festival Of Contemporary Art. Touched. City States. What does it mean? But what does it mean? What does it mean to me? Or I to it? A Norwegian man explains the lost luggage to his daughter: 'lkdsjflkdsfksdflksjf Paul McCartney ckjlkjdaksdfdkjf'

'Paul McCartney?' she repeats. She's only 4 poor thing. Poor poor thing.

‘Ya’

‘Dak’

The bin in front and slightly to the right is full of rubbish. It is grey. It stands before a bright, bright yellow bus stop. On it is written ‘Liverpool’ and ‘Hope Street’. Even the bins in Liverpool know how important it is, to know where you are. The bins down Blackburn Place, leading to Hope Way are purple. So purple. In the autumn sun, with the still warm wind of ‘I wish it was an Indian summer’ the sweet, still-warm wind, carries this difficult to identify sweetness. Is it the trees? I don’t know why, but I think it might be the smell of leaves falling, just beginning to think about decomposing, the bark breathes out, as winter approaches, while it’s still warm enough. The purple bin, beneath the bright red and yellow autumn leaves is psychedelic. Far out. Man. Three men in their forties, arrange themselves for a fourth one to take a picture on top of the bags. They look ‘dead hard’. Paul said he used to hang out with John when he was younger, strut around, ‘being dead hard’. I appreciated this insight into the youthful psyche of a demi-god. There’s a thin tree by the far pile of luggage, bare, there are sticks, thin curly sticks, scattered around which must have come from it, but I can’t see how. On the far end of the bench I sit on is a white plastic bag with food in it. A banana, I didn’t like to look very closely, but I could see a banana on the floor. There’s an empty Chinese food package. The metal kind. Not plastic. Thick foil.

16.01 Open up to the place. Notice the reflections of the sun on the windows of the offices, now as I’m sitting facing East, on my right six front doors. A sausage dog barks at me or at a rolling leaf? He’s on a lead, pulled away by the girl he is attached to. A cyclist crosses the road. The wheels need oiling. They creek up Blackburn Place. Before just a moment or two, maybe three ago, a 5 tonne yellow and black, not a truck, a building vehicle. A man sits on top in the open. He drives down Hope and stops as a bus crosses. Magical Mystery tour bus stops to look at Mount Street. Twelve rows of people look west. Looking up. The guide can’t be telling them about the lost luggage.

A young man sits and reads a letter on the steps. Chewing gum. ‘Dead hard like.’ Another young man in black, with writing down his right black trouser leg, consults his digital communications technology. Maybe he’s trying to see where he is on Google? A woman in an orange jacket takes a picture of a man in blue, sitting on a stone suitcase. A couple sit on the steps behind me and look down the street. You can see hills in the distance. She sits inside the curve of his body. They get up. Walk away. They were only there for a few minutes. Now they are kissing. Now saying goodbye. She walks down Hope and he down Blackburn Place. She had straight auburn hair. He had a close, almost shaved cut, of black curly hair.

16.21 There’s a yellow bus, that’s also a boat that departs every day at 10.30 from Albert Docks. It’s very full lots of cameras are recording their owners’ journeys, on it, round the city. Four, ‘dead hard’ guys, not so young, but slacker dudes, lean and rest their skateboards on the cases. ‘Its good isn’t it?’ a man says to the woman he’s with, as they sit on my bench. My bench is like the spine of a baby dinosaur. 18 vertebrae. Cold on the bum, after a while. The wind blows up my skirt at the knee. I can hear a

clarinet. Small, belly lit clouds pass overhead, slowly. The reflections on the windows have gone. The sun is setting. I suppose its always either rising or setting. Can I wait until the crepuscular hour?

‘I swear its getting cold’ says a young guy. He’s wearing a woolly zip up cardigan, with his hands pushed into the pockets and a braced smile on this face. As if the cold wind he’s walking into were a kind of joke at his expense.

16.34 I’ve only been here an hour. I rub my cold nose. I check my body. In my abdomen the last ache of my period. In my ear the faint ache of the ear infection I had two weeks ago, in my calves the ache of climbing the bell tower. In my mouth the metal of my last cigarette, in the tips of my fingers coldness. The wind catches minisucle hairs disarranged by the vascaline to protect my lips.

An ache in my back from hunching over my notebook, this note book. Here I am in a moment focused on the lines I’m writing on this page. Looking at the black ink covering it. The lines, the circles and loops of thought being tranfered and a vague awareness of the space in my skull, the back cloud of space and the direction of the frontal lobe, that frowns underneath my silly, teapot hat, it’s not flattering. I stand, stretch, sit again, squashing my coat under by bum, to protect it better from the metal vertebrae I’m on. In the window on my right a plane flies by. 12 chimney pots above the offices on the east side at the south end of Hope. I might fancy a glass of wine.

16.43

16.59 Outside the Phil, just on the corner of Hope and Hardman Street. Glass of red looking south. The corner of the pavement dissected with early even sun. The 699 turns left. The 74 goes west. I fancy going to listen to a concert at the Philharmonic Hall. I like the idea of being taken away with music. Biting the nail on the middle finger of my left hand. Footsteps go past. I’m looking at the page. Glance up to see the bottom of a green skirt, black tights and a pair of DMs laces undone. The barmaid with red hair is on the phone. She’s drinking from a white china cup. Red fringe and Black glasses. It’s more noticeable that I’m here writing about here, where it’s busier. She goes in. She has pretty lips. The same colour as her hair. V. going boy with a red streak from neck to fringe in black, cut off sleeves. Must be cold. Cold but *cool*. Dead hard.

17.05 Two young girls with long-long hair walk, side by side, both talking on their phones. Is one of them pretending?

17.06 changes to 17.07. All day secure parking. A grid to my right on the floor. Lattice. Two hooks hold it. What are they attached to?

Nick Drake poster outside the Phil. Three people smoking in doorway of pub. Traffic warden, City of Liverpool written on his back. Turns right down Hardman Street. Busy. Busy, Beep Beep Beep as the pedestrians cross. Two men walk into the Phil, one man has a his hand on his belly, just below his heart. He’s nearly bald. He looks like he is in a gentle place. And why not? He’s about to have a drink...in the Phil. He’s not famous, he’s my brother. Now, the evening light on the corner of Hardman and Hope is partly masked by the building on the opposite corner, so there’s a corridor of orange tinged light that the people streak and bubble with their moving

shadows. I've had half a glass of wine now. Arch in writing hand, not much. Worse now I've noticed it. Two men with silly grins walk into the Phil. They are over 60 and funny looking. One gestures a jelly wobble hand to the doorway and they go in like their making their way through custard, custard with a tidal current. That is to say, they're not straight forward. 'London, London. You can't scratch your arse without it costing 80 quid' Two men in shower proof sports gear, one carrying a stick. Wooden. Old fashioned.

If you go out and buy a tonne of fertiliser and you're not a farmer, than that will flag up, that will flag up about 50 MI5...pub talk...love pub talk

The other guy, walked on a metal stick. They both looked homeless. 'It never fucking stops'. There are students talking I think. Boys. 'Really chilled. You'll like it. Lost of different artists'

17.20 The best of British Pies £7.45. It's good that it rhymes. It's cool. Dead hard.

Some red flowers on the floor from the baskets above. They look good on the pavement, on the metal covering, maybe where they roll the beers down? 2275 pints were sold on draft in the last week. 'Could you put that in a plastic glass for me?' Yeah. Sure. 'Thanks' I felt a bit tight, making him wait, as I dripped the last drips into the new container. He's right I could have an eye out with that. Safety first. A woman, with two guys on bikes, all Asian, one has a safety helmet. The other one doesn't but he is walking his bike down Hardman Street. Three girls blond, red, brown next to the guy on the bike, (red helmet) wait for the beep beep beep of the lights.

17.26 We're very civilized. The street lamp on the other side of Hope is on. But not its opposite. In fact it's the only one on, on Hope Street. Will I make it to 7 pm?

And if I do, what about my application? Tomorrow I'll do the early shift 5 am -12. 5 is before dawn. 'Are you paying through the nozzle?' There's still a shadow on the corner of Hardman and Hope, but its faint now. The sun must be lower now. And all the spots of chewing gum shine in this new moment of the day. You can see so much about people as they walk across the corner of Hope and Hardman. Does that mean that we're all different even in the same place? Never happens though. I am always by definition in a different place. You can't be in my body. And when we make love and are as close as is possible, we're still in a different place. On top, underneath, here, there, entered, entering simultaneously, still looking in different directions though.

Honestly.

17.36 The sun sets and my thoughts turn towards love. A warm body. As my skin notices the cold and my heels feel strange. I'm holding a mouthful of wine in my mouth. Why? Warming it up before swallowing. Velvet high heels clip clop in and a woman with bags and worried face enters the Phil just behind her.

17.40 Almost no battery on my phone. 17.51 Another glass of wine! And it's Monday!!! The two funny looking guys over 60 are standing by the bar drinking good whisky and talking about their illnesses. One of them has watery and wandering eyes.

Stray hairs flick in my eye despite my clip holding them back. And I talk about them being funny looking.

An older woman struggles slightly to park her silver car outside the Phil. Ok now it's not slightly. She's really making a meal of it. 3rd go. This wine is much nicer. Up on the curb. The wood at the bottom of the black square plant pots outside the Phil are stripped away. She's done it perfectly now. Wacker Quacker, a yellow boat/bus Tour guide making his passengers laugh RSY 883 off down south.

17.56 Evening light now up on the trees and the corner of the Philharmonic Hall. Lots of runners in Liverpool. Royal Mail van turns left from Hope, down Hardman. What on Earth am I doing here, when Valerie is upset in Edinburgh? Why is it so hard? The drama of Hope from the Catholic God to the Hard Man, past Unity Theatre and on to the bell tower view of 360 degrees of Liverpool, as far as the Blackpool Tower. The north Welsh hills and just across the water Dublin. The Labrador Sea... As I got in the lift (£3.50 for students) to go down a Man said 'Marm' to me I think Who am I on Hope Street? An escape artist? A Marm? Dunk? A writer? A student? A smoker? Cold?

'My identity has gone. My purse. My phone. My card. My bag. They dumped my bag and I got that back. So I got half my identity back. I wasn't very nice as I cancelled my things'

18.04 80A Liverpool airport. Bus watcher? People say the word 'Liverpool' more on the streets, than people say 'Cardiff' in Cardiff or 'Glasgow' in Glasgow.

18.07 Maybe I'll go to China Town for dumplings? Legs and arms cold now, but everything else is toastie. 86 Caswton. These exotic places! Halewood. 75E wow. A soggy tissue stretches over the edge of a cover. The stones match up. But there's a square of metal around them. The far (south) right corner has a small puddle of water, leaves are caught at the edge of the south edge of the square. A cigarette stub. Down at the North left corner. Indents at each corner, in the metal, on the north right corner that indent is bent, out of shape. Someone has had a problem here. Someone has forced it and bent it. Taxi with yellow light, hope on Hope Street. 18.14 The Philharmonic Dining rooms. Tonight. People are more dressed up now. 18.21 Liverpool airport 81a ALPHA private hire 722 8888. Noises, from below the grate, of glass clinking. Holding wine in my mouth again. Josephine Butler House. Body getting cold now. Chills up my back. Still pale blue sky. Shifts of white cloud. Last cig. Young Chinese couple look at the menu. Bar man in bad need. 'He's still having a go at me' same one who asked me to change my glass. 'Is it to do with your unpleasant landlord then?' The two women behind me leave. I hope she never loses her identity again.

18.27 I'll do the late shift on Wednesday. Suddenly everyone is eating crisps. Suddenly it seems so empty. Two men. Separate. Walk in different directions but in the same way. One in his twenties. The other 50s. Time to go.

Not red and blue, they had to stay neutral, but not distant, so they did both, red and blue is purple and that's the colour of your general waste rubbish bin in Liverpool.

5th October 2010

6.36 am left the house at 6 am. Studied Hope Street before Dawn. It was quiet, but getting busier now. I've changed my seat. I'm sitting opposite the Philharmonic Hall. Screech of bikes. Man's footsteps. Turn left down Hardman Street. B&M waste Management. Yellow and blue van. Shrill wind on my back. Starting to get hungry. Nose running. Sniffing. Birds just above the traffic. Car pulls up to lights. Turns left. Down Hardman. There's a short bench, like the mini dinosaur spine. But shorter. ALCOHOL FREE ZONE and old fashioned beer glass in a circle with a line through it on the diagonal. If you drink alcohol, in a public space in this area you could be fined up to 5000.00 There's a sticker over the £ sign. UK SKATE.COM on the light sky.

What, why, who the fuck is Grace...hear me now...on a grey metal box, with a triangular top. Weeds grow in the cracks. A tag on this side. 'Grace hear me now' on the other. The paper on the right corner flapping loose. Cold wind on my back. Tired eyes, hand hurts from writing yesterday. Who is Grace? Maybe I should ask what? Rally and social to follow. That's so northern. Believe, belong become: Liverpool community on a bus. Two men in their 50s walked earlier past. Both in woolly hats. One had a large, noisy bunch of keys that he swung as he said, 'must be 7 o'clock' at 6.50. Night porters at the hotel.

A young black guy walked down Hardman street. He looked at me, curious. There's someone who I saw run up and down Hardman Street. Terribly thin. Running on bones that had no bounce. Impossible to be sure of age or gender. But I thought m2f. Black rucksack. A soul in torment. Blackbird singing and dawn is here. The sky behind the catholic cathedral, Paddy's wigwam (do they really call it that? Sounds false. Sounds like its for the tourists...*those cheeky scousers*...hmmm... what do I know I am a stranger. The light behind the Met is blue. And it shines on the tiles between the struts of the cone.

B&M in white on blue square, on yellow truck. A lot of the big vehicles in Liverpool are yellow. I wonder why.

6.55 Light changing that blue very quickly now. And the street lamps look pink against the sky and now I've looked at them the tiny burnt cells in my eyes, particles in the cones in my eyes are sitting confusingly on top of the words. I'm writing here. And there are great shadows on the page as I write. Two from my pen, one strong and clear, grey. The other to its left, at 45 degrees is lighter. Light. Light. Dawn. Light.

But cold, cold, cold. Bald man, 50s converse trainers, canvas satchel. Chinese man, 20, running. Pigeon.

Caledonia Street behind me. Seagull. Above. A picture of a man playing a musical instrument. In the background the Liver Building and docks. Suddenly lots of seagulls on the road. And in the sky. Shadows of birds at my feet, crossing over me. The proudly held head of a seagull as it trots across Hope Street. There's something stupid about its expression through. It reminds me of someone I went to school with. Maybe I'm getting more used to it. Or maybe the people of Liverpool...street lights out at 7.04. Not all of them. Just the one near me. There's only one shadow of my pen nib now.

Yeah. Maybe the people of Liverpool just are *more* cool. Daytime now. It happened in 5 minutes. The light behind the tower is white, grey. Clouds. The street lamps yellow. The seagulls swoop. The traffic noisy. Lights still on. I'm properly ready for some food. And my head is cold. I haven't worn enough to sit out here until 12 noon.

8.26 waiting for the direct ferry. But have a day pass. Will do the day adventure later. 'The limit is my imagination.' I met a man who said he was a famous man. 'Take me photo.' He said. 'I'm a famous man.' I took his picture. 'Lovely.' I said. 'You are lovely.' He said. He followed me into the ticket office. 'I've been out on the town a few nights.' He said.

How can I describe the smell? Cough medicine. Cherry cough drops. Sweet, rotting fruit. Arseholed. Utterly.

He's talking to a woman queuing right now. Not all the people get off and go to work. 10.02 Doing the Mersey Ferry round trip now. It's overcast, but dry. I'm hot and sweaty from walking around for the past hour and ten minutes. Orange and red bouys in the grey water. 'Ferry across the Mersey' plays for a few seconds. 800 years of ferry. 7 miles of docks. 1710 first commercial wet dock. Industrial revolution. Americas. Race. Welsh, Africans, Chinese biggest...extreme sense of humour—chinese humour???

Corn laws etc. 1969 the beatles the beatles the beatles the beatles.

9 million people left Liverpool in search of a better life.

This was the age of the theatre. New Brighton had 8. 1900 – 1935 Arthur Asky, Gracie Fields, The Beatles.

Sad fate of the New Brighton Baths and ferry. But New Brighton is now experiencing a resurgence! Starting to rain, spots on my face. The tiles on the cone tower are still shining under the grey light on the north end of Hope. Radar 1947 first in the world to guide ferries. 10th most important site for ducks and wader birds in the UK. River Mersy can rise and fall as much as 9 metres, depth up to 24 metres. That is the largest river depth in the North West. Hamilton Square has got the most grade A listed buldings in the UK. Apart from Trafalgar Square. Unesco world heritage in the same league as the Taj Mahal and the great wall of china. Albert Dock great grade 1 docks. Wallace and Gomit. 3 Graces...most beautiful buildings in the world. It takes your breath away. 1830 – 1890 9 million emigrants left. Liver bird is it an eagle? 6 feet high, is it a cormorant?...the Liverbird is the interpretation of an eagle by someone who had only ever seen a cormorant. These (liverbirds) are the only two in the world.

The clock faces of the Liver Building are bigger than Big Ben. And the best in the world. A woman, south American saw me working on Hope Street. She was lovely. She explained how breakfast comes with a free drink. Life goes on day after day, hearts torn in every way, so ferry across the Mersy. Liver Building 1911. I'm writing a play. I said. Her face dropped and she didn't want to talk to me any more. I wonder who she thought I was? She liked that person, (who she thought I was). She seemed a bit scared, well not scared but distant to me, the 'me' I stupidly named.

Saw a side street earlier with rainbow flags. The gay area doesn't get mention. Chinese, slave trade, football, Beatles, imaginary birds, industrial revolution, where are the girls and gays? Let alone the gay girls? Gay place in Liverpool. On the tour bus yesterday. Queens way tunnel. Largest tunnel in the world, in x cost nearly 8 million pounds. Finest collection of Civic buildings. 14,000 books and manuscripts. 1st building in Liverpool to have electric lights. 'said to be' it is believed to have the largest theatre stage in the country based on one in New York. Liver Building based on a New York shy scrapper and Central Park in New York was based on Hamilton Square. French soldiers chose to stay here and marry local. France forever grateful.' Lions measure 14 feet in length. Obsessed with measuring and comparing. Maggie May prostitute... Cast Iron kitty famous with sailors through out the world. But don't mentions the dykes and the fags, the trannies or the hermaphrodites

Mirror neurons: mysteries of the brain. When I see you I feel disgust. I feel disgust. When I see you touch her, I feel you touch me. I used to think I was a bit of a monkey. Now I know I have an over developed frontal cortex. When a monkey sees me eating a banana, she tastes banana. When you sang about making love there was this strange but wonderful feeling. Heat in my mouth, a blankness in my brain, a cold fire across the hairs of each pore, like a runner who stops suddenly at the top of a mountain, or at the top of the Cathedral Tower and the cold wind suddenly catches the moisture filming the skin, pumped out by the heat. It's my heart that makes my body throb, but sweet love it's you, not me that does it, and it becomes so much that I feel impelled to do something, run at something, smack my body against something, oh against you! That would be great... a great idea... it would be great ... against your golden voice that like a spear goes into my skin, like the cry of a gull makes me look up in the morning, I want to fly at you and dissolve like the wave against the ferry. Turn blue like the light through Christ the King stain glass window, and upon the alter of your voice. Your song. I think I know what this means I think I want to kiss you.

Liverpool.

5th October 2010 7.39 pm

The cab driver knows the two guys stood outside the Philharmonic. Dirty Laughter to my right. A hundred paces. Can I count them without looking? 4 no 5. Yes. I was right. Five guys late 20s . No 6. So many men all of a sudden. There are about 50 men and no women right now. Oh there's one a small, blond girl with her guy. The man in the black suit sits outside the Philharmonic Hall and coughs. He sits with his mouth open. The blood vessels in his large cheeks, redder than they should be. Coughing. The same Chinese couple I saw last night perhaps they eat out every night? Perhaps they're on holiday and their hotel is near. The cone tower is lit for the night like a woman called Betsy waiting for a dance in 1957. She has lights on the bones of her corset. She's got no head, shoulders or arms. But what a figure! The two benches are under lit with 4 blue lights. I love the hue of that blue. Ooooh! But it is great. Azure. The electricity make the colour smear onto the pavement, my eyes can't cope with it for some reason, like a camera, the bulb is too bright for my eyes. 10 -15 Chinese men just turned down Hardman Street.

I've got a sore throat. Probably from smoking in the cold last night. 86a city centre goes down Hardman Street. The blue light under my seat makes my pen blue. A young man and woman in black suits, possibly the same ones as the man with the

open mouth are standing just beyond the awing for the Philharmonic hall. A man in a T. Shirt comes out with a business like woman. He has his hands under his arm pits. He is cold. I'm ok, so far, extra layers. Someone is setting up a camera. Something is about to happen. You know something great is going to happen when there's a camera...I mean a really big TV camera. Lots of people are coming out now. They're not really spilling, it's a gentle flow, I want spilling-spilling noise, laughter ha ah ha and someone to report it on the news, maybe on the BBC.

Oh this is better, this much-much more hubbub. I take it all in. What did they listen to? They are all in the same mood because of it. They're not the same, but they share something and it shows. I can feel it. I can taste it. It tastes of what? What chicken chow mein? 'It was excellent. Absolutely excellent.' Smoked haddock and fresh garden peas? NO. I know. Hot slice duck salad.

'Why take the M62 to Tokyo' Why indeed? KLM. It's on the bus. Going east up Hardman. Ah there's a tall thin man with grey hair. He makes a sweeping gesture with his hand over his head. Like it's a plane going to Tokyo. But his companions are looking up at him and shaking their heads and he is frowning and starting to show his teeth a bit and repeating this gesture of the airplane going over his head, as he walks away from the Philharmonic Hall. What did they see? Who did they hear? Who brought them all, well apart from the tall man in the grey hair, who brought them all together? Al Murray.

20.05 I've got a cold coming. The bar above is almost empty. A few in there, and an oldish man with his hat on! I mean! I didn't think it was possible in a place like the Philharmonic Hall. You expect it in pubs these days. I don't think a day went past when I didn't see a boy swiped round the head for not taking off his hat when I was young.

My hat is crocheted, which means its holey, which means I can pull my unbelievably long ear logs through the holes. Am I bored? Or is this just who I am? Sometimes I think the question is not who am I but 'what am I?' What is a human animal? I'm staying here till I work it out.

I can smell the same deep rotten fruit that hung by the fella who was arse-holed on the ferry this morning. I look up. No one looks arse-holed. Arsehold? Hold my arse? There's a man with a dodgy looking plastic bag. But he's talking to three totally straight people. Perhaps it's him. Perhaps he's not well. Oh my God. I've just farted so loudly. In public. Jesus. Perhaps I'm just an arsehole?

A tall woman in a leopard skin print jacket stands still for a long time with her long fingers over her lips. She could have been called a boy, when she was born. Why does she hold her mouth? Is it thinking? Or is it stopping herself from saying something? You don't know. Don't pretend. Because you don't *know*. There's a piece of chewing gum in the crack between the traffic lights in front of me and the pavement tiles. It's in a thin strip. Last bite down squashed it over at least three back teeth. Shadows go all ways. So many different lights, shining in different directions. Pink granite bollards. Nine. The tops polished so smooth, but the natural miniscule shifts of the material mean that as I gently rock my head from side to side the reflected lights from the Phil hall roll and bend around in its perfect 360 surface. Joy. Joy in the

unexpected ripple of natural things. Like a waiter's hand that can not predict when a guest will pluck an amuse bouche from her tray, and so so my mind rises to the chance of what this magic place takes from me, and what I give it in equal measure. Am I in control or am I addicted to this exchange, this intercourse. Am I imagining it or do I spend more time describing the place the longer I'm in it? Or does it always move back and forth? The three ushers in black suits are locking up now. Four of them, in fact. They've left the main door open and they're going round the back. The only girl is on the phone all the time. 20.30 A cup of tea I think. Google actually have an area coloured mauvy pink for the gay area. A cubist doodle. Date Street. Wall Street. Victoria Street.

21.08 Man packs away tables and chairs at the Phil. Can see the stained glass window colours on the cone tower. Feel a bit sick. Nice tea. In nice café. Lots of Turkish men and one young girl in a Ramones T. Shirt. I asked for another cup. She forgot it and as I left she said 'sorry.' I said 'It's alright.' Quick Chef. Best café in the universe. Two boys on bikes go down Hardman. A low plane flies over. 'Behave.' Girl with sparkly bag. Getting cold now. Cold and tired. Two guys go past talking about a baby sleeping. 'I put him down for a while' PKL Scaffolding 0151 495 1347. Three bike stands on either side of the Phil Hall. 'See you next Monday, anyway.'

21.15 Phil Hall all shut up now. But didn't notice the doors shut. Whose stupid idea was this? 12 strips of stone across the road at the traffic lights. Opposite my bench. Reflection of yellow yellow street lamp on polished granite circle of the big bollards. Pedestrian gay quarter...caused somewhat of a curffuffel apparently, according to wiki.

21.20 Taxis go past. A man eats chips. And walks down Hope all quiet, all cold. Hel's ACES. Wheel. On the grey box. The bin behind me. Liverpool Hope Street. Cigarette butts. A plastic top, purple from a water bottle, maybe Lucazade? Double yellow lines thinner than usual. Worn away in places, two drains nearer the corner.

21.24 How much longer? Man jogs. Looks at me. I'm more noticeable now, sitting here, writing. For some reason I imagine pretending to be a cat hissing at someone. Dry leaves flutter north. Is a north wind going north or coming from it? Caledonia street. Home Scotland. Hmmm. A man walks his dog down Hope. He is big. His dog is black and white. Street view was here in 2008. When will it come again? May it never do so. They did the whole world and then thought of something better, different. Man uses the wall by the Phil poster to roll a cigarette. Puts his phone to his ear. Perhaps it's a joint. Brushes fallen ash from his fleece. 2 couples go south down Hope. One woman has an umbrella exactly the same colour as her bright tangerine jacket. 21.31 Enough? For today? Six young Chinese people five girls and a boy. Play and laugh. Mad! A girl with impossibly curly hair dyed blond in streaks.

6th October 2010 9.54 pm

Squeek of bikes. Car turning over and over. Quiet looking woman at the wheel. Opposite landing only 15 mins limit.

White silhouette of a man pushing a wheeling thing. Brain tired. Cold. Nose stuffed. Sore throat. Can tell the sound of a taxi without looking up. Pink streamers from a

present on the floor. A couple cuddle by the Phil Hall. She leans on him. He leans against the wall. Dead hard like. Wrapper from a chicken mao sandwich. A man opposite says. 'It's a joke.' Girl walks along looking at her iphone. Black leggings and flouncy mini skirt.

Above Hope Street looks a deluxe suite. You can see from the bus stop opposite the Phil Dinning Rooms. There are single roses in long stemmed glass vases. It's lit beautifully. It's waiting for love. Quick chef café bar, the f is missing. Welcome to quick chef it says in white on the red awning. It's written in florid script like a letter from Charles Dickens. He liked it here on Hope St. Apparently. Above quick chef there's an attic room, with a skylight window, open. Light on in the room. Can just see the top of someone's head. Soft brown curls. People having fun on the first floor of the Phil. I can see a blackboard in there, where it is written Great British Pies. George exclusively at ASDA, on a bus. 86A followed by 75B and Calender Girls. A large sycamore leaf, brown and dry. I know if I stood on it, it would shatter into a hundred pieces and leave the skeleton, like the bones of a three fingered hand. One bike, on either side of the Phil Hall. Each one in the middle stand. Symmetrical. The chewing gum is still there in the gap between the pavement tiles and the traffic light post. The beautiful blue lights up my little finger.

22.08 Shatter proof glass from the window on the ground floor and the vents four white slats and dark grey ones in between. Images of musical instruments, elegantly described in white on the doors. Loading Only, written on the road in white. A man rubs a woman's back on the corner of Hope and Hardman. A scruffy skater boy carries a bright pink bag and a black rucksack. The taxis stop at the lights very regularly. The CCTV camera still looks down Hardman Street from the corner of Hope. Is anybody watching? No one is looking like me. A woman walking, eating crisps. Lots of bags of crisps are eaten here. I'm tired. Not finding the words. Who am I here? Always a writer. On the corner of Caledonia Street there's a restaurant, Meditarian. Ego. It's called. It's quiet busy. Shreeks of girls. There was a gang of fancy dressed students when I arrived. A boy in a red dress on his hands and knees on the ground, as another boy pushed his pelvis back and forward above him. They like that. The young boys. Above the Loading Only sign, on the post with the banner, a8685 vertically black on white squares. Black man on a bike waits at the lights. Saftey helmet and a blinking red light on the back wheel. At the sky light a silhouette of someone drinking. The busses go up Hardman. A dry leaf moves a few centimeters in the breeze. Another smaller bike has been left on the right hand side of the hall. Small one. Collapsible maybe. Can I do better than this? Two skinny boys carry lots of cans of beer in the white plastic bags. The street lamp on the corner of Hope opposite the dining rooms makes the leaves glow lime green against the black sky. There's an azure blue, in the waist of the Catholic cone, the tower, 8 spires of a crown from this side. A man closes the doors of the hall. I hear him click it shut. There is a single ring of leak (the vegetable) on my bench. Two pairs of naked legs clip past in high heels.

10.23 a man with grey hair gets in a black cab with his Samsonite case. Silver. Club night? Lots of skin goes past. 'Sorry I was looking at that girl's arse and got completely distracted.' A guy says walking behind me. A window has been broken on the corner of the building behind me. What building is it? Amongst the crisp packets and dropped napkins the glass shines in a 1000 pieces. The most broken piece of glass

in the world. A strip of material, a black ribbon on the electric box floats in the breeze. The box has been written on. A boy jumps in a cab, waiting at the lights listen to the car engines speeding up and slowing down before the light. The window is badly boarded up with chipboard. The worst chipboard in the world.

22.28 how can it only be 5 minutes? Lots of people come out of Ego. Warm bellies cold faces. My knickers are too tight. Nose running. No tissue. Idiot.

I'm forgetting what I'm doing here. What am I doing? Capturing experience? Trying to catch something? Two red telephone boxes, one has a light on. Perhaps it works? Yellow light. Woman with big calves walks tiny dog. Another woman explains something to a man with a cigarette in her hand. The fag describes her thought. He is smoking too. Three cyclists speed down Hope, no hands. Dead hard like. There's light under the bus stops. Shelter from the rain, the dark, but no dark, just no sunlight. Sky is black. One star. I sigh and it catches in my chest. A double sigh.

22.36 There must be a club down Hardman Street where all these naked people are going in their bright best cloth. 'Is he taking you out for dinner?' The cabby asked. 'Maybe.' I said. I can see 21 golden harps on the red strip above the doors of the hall. There are more, must be, otherwise no symmetry. Three people waked past and I felt like one of them wanted to push me, like some people do when you're standing on the edge of a pool or of a cliff, 'saved your life'...ended your life. I guess I thought that because they walked so close to me. A guy really looked at me then. I'm sticking out more and more now. And the taxi driver who turned right onto Hope just then. Time for a stroll? A girl in black sits on the other bench.

22.41 She's texting. A boy joins her. 'Hi.' She has a material flower in her hair.

23.41 Who'd have thought it would take exactly an hour to go to the gay area and back? Two cars raced each other down Hope, north, dangerous. Large traffic cone. A guy swings his leg over it because he can...to see if he can. If that bollard wasn't there, he wouldn't have know. It's really quiet now.

A gang of four dangerous looking boys young walk down Hardman street. They're not drunk. They're not drinking in public.

A Turkish man stared me in the eyes when I stood at the crossroads, just now, unwilling to sit at this hour. I'm in the bus shelter now. It's an excuse to be here. Liverpool Chinese Disciples church opposite. No.30 Warning scaffolding alarm. I bet people like to climb it...see if they can. Smash of glass in the Phil. All shut up now. I wonder if there's a cup of tea in the cafe? A red taxi. That's unusual. Went down to Stanely Street just as one bar was chucking out its last customers. The classic drunk 18 year old gay boy and girl. Virgins. They've probably done it with each other but they still know that they're *really* virgins.

Is that the problem with gay culture? No received wisdom? Not *enough* stereotypes.

In the basement of the Lisbon bar it looked nice. But I didn't go in. Ambulance goes past. Police out in town Lime Street drunks on the bench outside the Adolphi.

Silver taxi.

23.50 Drinking water in a café. I can see my bench from here. Three guys put their thumbs up at me. Pizza, kebab meal deals. Bouncy music. Don't know the language. Melodic pop. Red door propped up with a bin. Four people spark up by the poster wall outside the hall. Five of them actually, moving off now. Six actually. Super cool girl with great hair, back combed, blond, red bow. 1950s punk.

23.57 Yellow light on pavement shadows of the traffic lights. 'Student special' Lanky tall boy with boxer shorts hanging out. Tired Bored. Valerie worried. I worried her. Called by accident. There are no accidents. Getting busy here. Band with animal heads poster 'Friday I'm in love'. Two floors of alternative indie and electro. Rock and roll animals take a walk on the wild side. Cheese burger, chicken burger, and student pizza.

00.01 you can tell if someone is walking home from the way they do it. A guy wanders past. What is he doing? Not drunk. Not going home. Hands in pockets. Walking towards town. It's dark down by George Square. Silhouettes of still metal men against the town hall lights. (It's at the heart of the city) I bet those gardens see some action. I'm at table No. 4. Lights still on in the Phill Hall. At the top. Would anyone be there now? Noone in the penthouse at Hope St. Hotel. Next door to the posh restaurant. The Carriage Works. Should look at people going in. An American blond girl chats to her mate. Four guys working here. Must be good business. Just sniffed ridiculously loudly. Like I don't know where I am. Hope Street is so grown up. Hardman is young.

Tall black man, 45ish puts cigarette in mouth. He walks through waves up to his knees. Time was heart...what was that thought? About a heart? Drunk students shout, bang on the windows. Heart stopping, breaking, warming? No. More of this.

00.11 Feeling with your heart, the sensous world. My poor cold, blue bench. All alone. And why the Unity? Do I know enough? Soft sentimental rock love song. Not heart felt...who's to say. Water nearly finished. Knickers too tight. Police go by in car. Down Hardman. New taxi.

00.14 woman with long blond hair turns running down Hardman. Awesome. 'How's it going my man I'd like some chicken.'

00.15.

00.30 It's a boy's birthday, he has a b.day hat. Two mates take some time to make him a seat, to carry him down Hardman Street. The taxi driver watches them. He weighed about 10 stone. A girl took a picture. They say 'happy b. day'. The taxi driver leaned on his wheel and watched. Inscrutable. Waiting to see if they'd manage the carriage. There's no way you can be still and alone on Hope Street. Even standing people want to know. Even sitting drinking water guys put their thumbs up at you. It's very friendly.

Thursday 7th 16.35 I have a cold. I'm very sweaty betty. My bench. My bronze bench, freckled with orange specks, freckles or burst blood vessels and the polished

golden brass of the edge and the darker greyer brass of the seat. The ring of vegetation still there since yesterday night. At some point it will rain and that circle of leek will be washed away or it will dry out and be blown away. But either way, nobody cares enough to clean it.

The metal between the spires of the crown, on the corset waist, of Christ the King, shines like a silver spider's web in the sun. The taxi lights burnish the mist that lingers at the tender place where Hardman meets hope. The mist, hangs in the tender space between the road, pavement, trees Phil, Phill Hall. The two Cathedrals are two hands at each end of the embrace of Hope St. I'm hot for hope. Sweaty betty. An old man in purple skin-tight jeans and old boots a black jacket and red shirt stands at the crossing. Caught by the perfume in the hollow under her throat. Grey foul-mouthed throat. He asks a woman to take something out of his eye. People go past with music on their backs. Double bass wowzer! And the granite white, grey pink granite, polished on top and green growing all down the north side. They all, all nine of them are sleeping with green organisms on their north faces. The wind is almost always coming from the south. Form the Anglican hand to the catholic, past the Jewish and Chinese Christian elbows.

16.50 what would it be like to spend you life in music, like these people who carry instruments on their backs like their shell-homes. When the cars stop passing you can hear the dry leaves tapping along the street, a thousand long nails tapping on the pavement like scratching your head, at night, in a dark room and listening to the echo, closed-circuit vibrations from head to ear to brain. And something else. What else? Joy to sit on my bench and be in the world, not just the world, but Hope Street.

Gary just went passed with the kids. I'm so glad I was here. Proof I really do *do* it. I'll go and eat something nice. Now the tree is bright green, lime green and orange leaves on top and underneath, where the light will come in darker. CC.TV. still in the same postion. Noone gives a fuck. Why don't we do it in road?

17.28 Quick Chef. Georgous girl with curly hair. On the phone. I wonder what I would do if someone realised I was writing about *them*? That's the second young guy I've seen carrying a walking stick. Is it something to do with Russell Brand?

17.54 You can't live on Hope alone. But without hope, life is not worth living.

G: Email correspondence from Cheryl Martin in response to queer street

Hi Clare,

Relationship between process and product is always difficult for me, because I'm largely product-oriented. For me, process is important, I think the actors especially have to create their performance, and that's what I'm there for. So I have all sorts of things I believe about that. But for me, all that's something for the floor, so I really have to step outside myself to talk about process.

Just been listening to Grayson Perry on Creativity on R4. A fashion designer was talking about the fact that the process is important to him because it adds layers, while most women buying his stuff just want a pretty dress. When I'm audience, normally, I just want the pretty dress. When I'm a director, I only want the audience to see the pretty dress. And to be honest, I can't explain afterwards how I directed anything.

Saying all that just to explain my perspective. For this, I'll try to think about the layers.

You asked about time and space. Time: mostly night-time, imagined as a queer domain; space, set and written exclusively in the locale.

Time: I don't see night-time as a particularly queer domain, except in the old, inclusive sense of queerness: an outlaw time, an illicit time, a time of world-turned-upside-down freedom, yes. And insofar as a perceived outlaw sexuality is part of all that, it can be seen as sexual. More a film noir sensibility. So yes, free from daytime norms, but for everyone. Nor just for us.

In your piece, it took part in that original, Carnivale or masque-like sense of freedom for the character. A potentially – and really – dangerous space to roam in and find yourself. The whole quest thing – to go into the dark wood to find yourself goes all the way back to Dante and Virgil, I think. So a woman runs off into the dark, loses one identity, and is forced to create another. Love all that. Just don't see how it would be different if she were straight.

You could argue that a lot of film noir tropes are actually standing in for homosexual content – probably true. Then. Not sure if it's still true now.

I'm not really up-to-date with academic thought. And I never studied sexual issues or gender issues, or even race issues as an academic. All my energy went into psychological and sociological themes. Primarily psychological, and that's probably still what interests me most, and probably colours how I talk about things to this day.

So space-time. Time is a space – that's how I've been thinking of it here.

Physical space -- Creating a play that is unique to a locality is wonderful, and that came across very clearly. But for me it didn't seem crucial to the success of the piece. I think I'm looking at it incorrectly, because for me the psychological truth of the work is most important. So for me it adds a flavour, but not a crucial element to the play as I experienced it. Fun. I think it may be crucial to the process.

What might have made the sense of physical space work more for me would have been to do it out at the bench where the treasure was buried. Even in the rain. In the dark, in the space-time that was being evoked.

I did love the proximity to the actor, and the intimacy of the small audience. I loved the play, especially the second night. I think you could over-analyse the difference between the two nights – first nights are tense, which is why you try not to make them press nights.

I don't know if this is what you wanted. I took so long to get back to you because I generally don't think at all in the categories or perspectives from which you asked your question. So if I've missed the point in my answer, just let me know.

X
cheryl