



March 29th 2023 the author was entrusted by Mass Thygesen the task of involving writing in the artistic practice of 4 BA students of stage-directing: Terese Mungai-Foyen, Anna Jurinova, Lasse Lilleng and Nanna Bruun. The session hosted by the dpt. of theatre, happened on the backdrop of conversations with Mads Thygesen, Anne Holtan and Victoria Meirik at the dpt (in search of ways of involving the expertise from someone *not* from the theatre field). The course came in the wake of a project in which the students had been challenge to task a full production on their own.

What we are currently discovering with the contemporary surge of AI is what—from lack of a better word—I would call *sensitivity to medial conditions*. Not the initial conditions, not the final conditions but another trigger to avalanche-like behaviour, linked to conditions in the *medial zone*: *between* the beginning *and* the end. When information has started packing and *before* it is fully compressed. The location of the *human* ‘hive-mind’ *before* the computer. That is, the 6th wall.

I conceived the 6th wall during the ARW-22 with the following definition: if the 4th wall in a theatre is the audience—which, in architectural terms, is “next door”, or adjacent to the stage—and the depth of the stage (with its nightmares and spells), then the introduction of screens on stage (as ubiquitously in Tore Vagn Lid’s plays), which creates conditions for intra-action between virtual and actual elements, features the 5th wall. And finally the 6th wall, with video-conferencing.



Illustration by Rolf Groven of a fiction film created without manuscript alongside the political protest against the damming of the Alta-Kautokeino river. In dramaturgical terms—making a fiction film before the existence of a historical narrative—it has an interesting cross-reference to [La Bataglia di Algeri](#). The movie [Let the river live](#) was recently shown at the National Library of Norway in the §112 series.

While the 4th wall is the standard Antonin Artaud *vade me cum*, the 5th wall will act as a *placeholder* for the extended rehearsals of yore (e.g. the Berlin ensemble, w/Berthold Brecht, 2-year cycle)—feeding *materials* to the play—the 6th wall, in my book, is referred to the pandemic: since we, in a period of 3 years acquired the collective experience of working with video-conferencing/zoom. In some sense, this brings us back to Artaud because what he had to say came with the *plague*, and the depth of the stage as a place of prophecy.

Yet, what is new with the plague—in the Covid 19 version—is the word *work*. We had to work differently and make it work, through a video-conferencing platform. During ARW-22 I observed (in sessions I chaired but also other sessions) that spontaneous collective behaviours to emerge across the windows, as ripples in water from the blowing of a wind. Such

observations are easy to pass over because they are so unwieldy. We ask: what to do about them? And, indeed, we *should* ask. Because they *may not* be glitches.

An alternative letting such phenomena be marginal and unexplainable is to *zip* them in by using them as our fundamental premise: our point of departure, in this initial query on the media zone. What I have to suggest is that—by starting with the 6th moving through the 5th and ending up with the 4th and 3th wall—is that we are then in the space-time of dramaturgy: proposed as the reflective zone of performance tethered to research, in-house critique and some production-aspects.

That is, reflective in the concrete sense of the mirror, but also in the sense of moving with the compression of information—w/stage directing and/or choreography—before it is complete: not upstream (as the angels in investigative aesthetics) nor downstream (as the cats of the same), but midstream: like teeming water-proof termites who are busy with the architecture, while others are building up the event. That is, alongside each other and in real time: which is the learning theatre.

This family of questions came together during a session with 3 (of 4) BA students in stage directing, as we explored how a series of writing exercises—from the floor up—featuring a series of transpositions that will generate stage materials, could be done solo by the director, alongside by a dramaturgist, or distributed in a variety of choreographic designs to the whole set (scenography, costume, actors, audience), which of course—in difference mixes and varieties—is already done.

So, what I am doing here is to develop a question—since I am no expert—allowing to the pick such ‘hive-minds’ that may emerge in many contexts: not only in theatre, dance and opera, but in new configurations of work-and-audiences, that may have come in the wake of our experience with video-conferencing during the pandemic, and most certainly in how we conceive learning-processes in a practice-based creative school as KHiO, all the way to how we run evaluations.

For instance, working with two Romanian editors of a two-volume issue of DAC—Arts, Culture Design—an initiative to make an exhibit of the rich imagery of the two issues, attach a QR-code and access the the double-issue in this way, came as an extension of the publication, and before most of the readership has had the time to even look through it. That is, to prompt a different audience-access of the issue before the people likely to engage with it are done reading.



If we oppose fiction to *illusion*—rather than to fact—we must define it anew: what have we here? whereto is it going? how far has it come in terms already achieved? 3 questions that together will define and develop *fiction*.

We could imagine the exhibit taking place in different places at the same time, and also extend it by video-conferencing to round up with all parties involved in the work. So, in this configuration of work-and-audiences the need to plane-travel could be effectively substituted by other forms of travel: even with some distinctive benefits. This is, of course, not the occasion to be overly optimistic about anything. But it does highlight a medial zone where spectator-/readership combine.

That is, in the trans- and pre-individual dynamics (Simondon) where the free-play of ripples—the rules of the fun palace—is not only allowed, but actively encouraged: indeed, a condition to work up materials for performance, pieces, plays, events. The reflection (mirror reflection) from the protocol of effective procedures, operations and decisions unfold. The processes that engage with user-involvement, usership, readership, spectatorship can concentrate decisions on few hands.

Still, what can be achieved by mirroring these stern realities—which we see with social media, Spotify and AI (etc.)—is our ability to even spot them at all, working with and on them, change them into desired directions: according the definition of Herbert Simon of what design does: “Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones”.

Here, engaging with the theatre in order to highlight the work of reception: which is particularly well operationalised in the role of the dramaturg, and the field of dramaturgy. If we work with action related as content, we may be baffled of that that content does. Or, we can work on it continuously: as an ongoing reflective and generative counterpoint. Perhaps it could be conceived in terms of Arnold Schoenberg’s retrograde series. An element with variable importance/impact but that must/should always be there.