Module 1: Methodology and Project Description

Grounded Theory

The point of departure for the Re:Framing research project documented here was to experiment with and test a number of practice- and theory-related hypotheses about what can generally be referred to as the ‘framing’ of performance (as a lived experience for both performer and spectator).

The methodology for this research followed a number of steps. Firstly, a survey of contemporary ideas and theorisations relating to the general field of spatial semiotics of performance, as well as related areas (broadly tied by the theme of ‘framing of cultural practice’) such as theories of media representation, the relationship of public (institutional) space to discourse (and vice versa), issues of generic classification and theory related to cognition processes as framing operations themselves. The data gathered in this survey is summarised in section two, "Theoretical background".

A period of experimentation followed, centred around the creation of the first practical performance work, Shifting, performed at Plumpton High School and then later at U.W.S. Nepean. The first phase of experimentation, through a practical workshopping process, focussed on the question: What if there were no spatial divide (no frame) between the audio-visual space of film and the space of live performance? The workshopping process included analysing the nature of movement within both spaces, the manner in which bodies were represented and the manner in which the two spaces related to each other in everyday life. The workshopping team (myself as director, three student actors from Nepean and a postgraduate student of media studies) attempted to embody these findings and then to mix them across both media spaces through various combinations of live performance, video-recorded performance and live on-camera performance. We then attempted to re-examine our own embodiments and draw conclusions from them, often using the available audio-visual media to do so.

The second phase of experimentation involved a process of practical work in collaboration with a group of school students from Plumpton High School. In this way, new frames were introduced into the research: the
physical space of the school, discourses associated with Western Sydney youth culture and subcultures, and the discourse and practices of public education in New South Wales.

The initial terms of reference for the practical work in the Re:Framing project were to create a performance of a play set for HSC study that combined various media and genres so that its audience of highschool students could watch and interpret it in multiple ways, especially in ways in which they, as participants in a modern, urban, Australian 'youth culture', are skilled and comfortable. But, also, the project sought to explore non-traditional and non-dominant modes, which are potentially revelatory and empowering to an audience often quite marginalized from the production of mainstream culture and seldom exposed to systematic critique of dominant models of representation. This attempt to open up alternate ways of looking at performed drama was also applied to the process of developing the production in which school students were invited to participate and in which a range of non-traditional learning and dramaturgical methods were proposed.

The practical work was later extended to include two additional productions, building upon the results of the first experience. These two productions allowed further experimentation across the 'film-live barrier'. They also allowed the concepts that the productions embodied to be tested more widely on a range of audiences.

Throughout this documentation, the focus of much discussion and analysis is on the first production. The later two productions are drawn upon only where they offer additional examples, clearer insights or a greater development of ideas and processes. My Secret Life With Hamlet remains largely a performed statement of research outcomes, and is not treated in any great detail in the written analysis.

It was in one particular area of the research that these two later productions were able to address some critical questions, and provide outcomes for them: How can the narrative structure of the texts used be redefined through the use of intertextuality (specifically using the power of the audio-visual media to provide, instantaneously, multiple intertexts)? Can the narrative itself be retained while the structure is radically manipulated and opened out, recoded and redefined? What form would this take? The
multimedia section of the documentation draws more strongly on these two later productions in an attempt to capture some of the emergents that cannot be reduced to words.

Project Outline

The Re:Framing project includes the development of three, separate interactive media performances. The first of the three was more process oriented while the second and third were marketed to Sydney highschools.

1 Shifting (Removalists / Crucible)

A) SET-UP

Several alternative options for student participation in a process of developing a mixed media performance were submitted to Rosina Grieves, drama teacher at Plumpton Highschool. The alternatives varied in the amount of commitment and the type of material her students might make. The broadest option that was considered involved Plumpton students in developing significant amounts of their own original material as well as adaptations of Arthur Miller's The Crucible. The Plumpton students' work would be in response to the parameters of the project and the initial work that the group at Nepean had done adapting David Williamson's The Removalists. In defining the process, details of time-tableing and venue availability also had to be negotiated.

In the end a more limited model was worked out that would involve her Year 11 drama class in developing responses and parallels (all based on the script of Miller's The Crucible) to our work on Williamson's The Removalists. These would be combined in the final performance. The idea of encouraging students to approach a set play intertextually was considered a particularly valuable and unique educational experience.

Afternoon workshops were scheduled twice a week for four weeks and two performances were planned. The project itself was made optional for students as it was conducted in their extra-curricular time.
B) THE WORK AT UWS NEPEAN

A team of university students was assembled at Nepean to prepare some preliminary material that would provide the starting point and framework for the workshop process at Plumpton.

The three student actors (Kate Little, David Williams and David Attrill) and myself as director, spent a number of weeks in exploring video-inspired movement skills (attempting to move and carry out actions in live 'rewind', 'fast-forward', 'slow-motion', etc).

At the same time, I completed a draft adaptation- for interactive media production- of Williamson's play. The script closely followed the essential story of the young Constable Ross. Because of the visual storytelling power available from the audiovisual media, it was possible to find a very concise narrative style, reducing a great deal of the spoken exposition.

Scenes were rehearsed and shot, with a student production crew (Paul Savage, Chenoeh Miller and Lara Hogg), on Hi 8 video. Paul Savage, a Media Production postgraduate, set about editing the material and, as it arrived, the live elements could be rehearsed.

C) WORKSHOPS AT PLUMPTON HIGHSCHOOL

The process began with a presentation of our 'work-in-progress' to the Plumpton students, letting them see the unusual style we were working in. The initial workshops included generalised performance workshops and exercises. These 'broke the ice' between the two groups and a relationship began to be forged.

Plumpton students were given the options of learning video and sound recording skills (from Paul and Chenoeh) or devising performance sequences from The Crucible (working with myself and the three actors).

The 'tech. team' learned basic camera and microphone skills as well as ideas about shot construction. This included the opportunity to take the cameras and shoot their own sequences.
The 'acting group' explored stylised physicalization of actions and ideas. This was generally a new approach for the actors and extended their knowledge and range in performance.

Unfortunately the class had not had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with *The Crucible* (as had been planned originally). The result was that the process of developing material from this play became more directed and less self-devised than planned. A number of dialogue excerpts were taken from the play and randomly assembled on sheets of paper. This became the raw material for the Plumpton actors to devise some short sequences from. They were assisted in this by myself and the three Nepean actors.

The final workshop day was a long afternoon of shooting these sequences on Hi 8. The 'tech. team' participated in the set up and was responsible for sound recording and monitoring while their classmates performed for the camera.

D) THE PERFORMANCES

This final material was edited into the show tape. Rehearsals at Nepean continued as this tape developed. Chenoeh Miller became audio-visual operator, responsible for the sometimes intricate timing of tape playing during the performance.

All participants, Nepean and Plumpton, worked together to set up the performance space in the Plumpton High Performing Arts Centre.

The first performance at Plumpton was on a Thursday morning for all the HSC students (approximately 120 from Years 10 and 11). I introduced the concept and the experimental nature of the project to them. A question/answer and feedback session followed the performance.

The second performance was on the Friday night for friends and relations of the participants (an audience of approximately 100). The 'tech. team' recorded the performance and then used the cameras to conduct feedback interviews with the audience afterwards.
II Multi-Media Macbeth

A) CONCEPT

This production was designed to build upon the knowledge acquired and discoveries made about mixed media performance and the volumes of feedback received from participants, teachers and other audiences.

It was also to be highly portable, able to tour from school to school. The aim of marketing it to highschools meant that, once again, it needed to relate to syllabus criteria. Another aim was to test a more ‘sampling’ based approach to the use of video. This could link into youth cultural genres like music video and also offer intertextuality with paradigms far beyond the playtext itself.

B) DEVELOPMENT

The project employed two professional actors, Eliza Logan and Joshua Young. Together, with myself as actor/director, this initial group of three devised an adaptation of Shakespeare’s play.

The filming was far more ambitious than for the first production. Many Nepean students assisted as character actors and as crew. Stafford Wales, from Media Production, co-ordinated the cameras, and, once again, Paul Savage took charge of editing the show tape.

C) PERFORMANCES AND PEER REVIEW

Multi-Media Macbeth was performed a total of 28 times:

1 audition performance for the Department of School Education
1 showcase for teachers
1 conference of drama teachers
1 colloquium of postgraduate students
19 highschools
5 venue performances for groups from local highschools.
III "My Secret Life With Hamlet" - Young Aussie Tells All!

A) CONCEPT

Again, this production was developed as a touring piece for highschools. This time, however, the aim was to take the intertextual, 'intergeneric' and 'intercontextual' approach to adapting a playtext to the point that it became a performance text and a story of its own.

B) DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Morgan Lewis was employed to collaborate with me on the development and production of this work. As such, it was to be an even more portable piece, just one performer and one technician. Morgan brought to the project his gymnastic ability and his passion for and skills in Hiphop. On this occasion I felt that my skills had developed sufficiently to shoot and edit the video myself, in collaboration with Morgan. Jane Little, however, took charge of creating the animations and the project became very much a collaboration of three on the technical production.

*My Secret Life With Hamlet* was performed:

1) An audition for the NSW Department of School Education at St Mary's Senior High School.

2) At U.W.S. Nepean for peers.

3) At three high schools.

4) At the multimedia performance festival, Theatremundi, at Sydney’s St George’s Hall.

A full touring itinerary of highschools and teacher training institutions is currently planned.

Dean Tuttle
Module 2: Rationale

Live performance is undeniably a great place of meetings (and, therefore, mixing): of people and points of view, of disparate artforms, of cultures, languages, of community ideals, mythologies and ontologies and, of course, the archetypal meeting of performer and audience. Obviously these meetings, be they sublime or conflictual, need a place to occur - from simple common ground to a symbolically invested ritual site. It is the nature - the creating, consuming, transforming - of this space of meeting, in both its physical sense and its 'discursive' sense (cultural/ideological), that has been the focus for applying theory to practice throughout this research. What happens to the space when crucial elements of its frame are mixed, altered, transformed?

The physical space for the Shifting performances at Plumpton High School was the school's performing arts building, a large hall with a stage at one end and the auditorium partitioned by black curtains behind which was stored trampolines and other physical theatre and gymnastic equipment. It had recently been built as a result of initiatives by the school's drama staff, particularly for providing tumbling and physical performance teaching space, and it gives the school something of a performing arts profile amid the vastly under-resourced Western suburbs. The application of semiotics to the study of theatrical performance has helped to 'denaturalise' considerations of the space of performance, that is, to make it clear that the venue and surrounds that a performance takes place in are not arbitrary and inconsequential to the ultimate meaning of the performance. The venue, its geographic location, and its internal layout are powerful frames around the interpretation of the performance (in the same way that the genre of the piece, or knowledge of the performers' reputations, is.) This is the theoretical starting point for the discussion of various dimensions and manipulations of spaces in Re:Framing.

Importantly, this 'spatial frame' has a political dimension in that it helps to classify (thereby hierarchizing) the performance and either to reinforce or else to oppose, 'de-naturalize', or offer an alternative to the dominant expectations about the performance and the role of the audience. This last point is never as simplistic as the 'either...or' suggests, but can be influenced by other elements of the performance and production and by the spectator's
own, active participation in creating overall meaning. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White in *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* make clear that it is essential to examine beyond the physical spaces (Western Sydney, school gym, video screen) to the integral relationship between space and the other elements that frame the performance as cultural event. To this end they have developed a theory of 'spatial discourses' in which public spaces are encoded with social rules that reproduce the dominant power structures.

Each 'site of assembly' constitutes a nucleus of material and cultural conditions which regulate what may and may not be said, who may speak, how people may communicate and what importance must be given to what is said. An utterance is legitimated or disregarded according to its place of production and so, in part, the history of political struggle has been the history of the attempts made to control significant sites of assembly and places of discourse (Stallybrass & White, p. 80).

These spaces are, however, not completely closed to oppositional or 'counter discourses' that arise from transgressive use of the space - in particular the 'crime' of mixing and hybridising (112-13). This expanded model of interacting space and discourse provides a useful starting point for an analysis of Re:Framing.

As far as its most visible and pervasive forms of enacted drama are concerned, Western industrial culture is still at a moment in its cultural history where measures of Realism and authenticity, where the allure of the sensual/erotic and violent image, where a linear narrative structure saturated with the recycled myths of Hollywood (with a few new, marginal entries for political correctness) and where the naturalistically spoken word constitute the 'dominant mode'. In terms of the act of performance, such a dominant mode defines a passive, consuming audience and an active, but inaccessible performer. On the other hand, Western educational institutions (as well as much of the more privileged sectors of the theatre industry) tend to give dominant status to the power of the written, 'literary' text. And in a third 'discursive space' - that of Contemporary Performance (as a self-defined, oppositional area of practice which bridges a number of the traditional categories of the arts) - a 'dominant mode' prefers such qualities as physicality, intertextuality and an immediacy of performer in relationship to their audience. It is apparent, then, that the concept of an overall dominant mode (with all other ontologies subordinated) is only valuable in so far as it stands as a reminder of the enduring social and economic power-
relations behind mass cultural production. It is too simplistic a term to be useful for any specific analysis or generalisation. In this light, a canonical play performed at a Western Sydney highschool by a cast of university students and local school students, with a fractured script laced with 'samples' from another canonical play, performed in interaction with a very large video screen, is certainly likely to offer complexities in its framing in relation to 'dominant culture'.

The recurring point that in the 'post-industrial', 'postmodern' late nineties it is an oversimplification to speak of a binary opposition between 'dominant' and 'alternative' (or 'marginal', 'oppositional', 'resistant', whatever) can be found as the argument of a number of prominent cultural theorists. In Room For Manoeuvre, Ross Chambers, for example, lists acts of trespass and infiltration as aspects of 'oppositional behaviour' that use the dominant system and power against itself (6). Chambers believes that certain oppositional practices, in particular those drawing on the power of narration, have the ability to make progressive changes even if, at a structural level, they may remain in complicity with a dominant system. This is largely because the narrator can, in a sense, have a 'foot in both camps'. A stronger insistence on multiple positions within any cultural interaction is Bakhtin's notion of 'heteroglossia' (as used by Robert Stam in Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism and Film):

Within a Bakhtinian approach, there is no unitary text, no unitary producer; rather, there is a conflictual heteroglossia pervading producer, text, context and reader/viewer. Each category is transversed by the centripetal and the centrifugal, the hegemonic and the oppositional (Stam: p221)

Elsewhere, Anne Freadman and Amanda MacDonald speak of good 'strategic moves', drawing on Lyotard's work to describe the potential for non-dominant perspectives within the regulated informational flow of postmodern culture (What is this Thing Called Genre?). The 'other side' of the transaction (ie. reception) is focussed upon by film theorists such as John Fiske (Television Culture ) and John Tulloch (Television Drama: Audience, Agency and Myth ), who take into account the viewer's ability to reframe, to make interpretations counterposed ('deviate') to those structured by a dominant medium and its genres. These theorists all find room within apparently dominant structures and institutions for challenge, opposition
and difference. Live performance, as the great social meeting place, has much potential for such multiplicity to emerge.

It is informative to note the spatial language and metaphor so often employed by these writers ('trespass', 'margin-centre', 'framing operations', 'liminality'). The importance of the actual physical space of a performance or event, as an interpretive frame around it, and its role in either eliminating or opening up room for these multiple, dissonant 'voices', is very clear, because, how can an oppositional text or performance be anything other than an act of complicity when the very defining frame on the space in which it is produced and received speaks of the dominant system? No wonder, then, that much of this theory, and the focus of the Re:Framing project, has been about manipulating, reappropriating or transforming this spatial frame and, therefore, about the discursive 'ownership' of a space of performance. "Only a challenge to the hierarchy of sites of discourse, which usually comes from groups and classes 'situated' by the dominant in low or marginal positions," write Stallybrass and White, "carries the promise of politically transformative power" (The Politics and Poetics of Transgression, 2011). Once again live performance has much to offer an analysis at this level because of its role as transformer of space. A mixed, interactive media event such as Re:Framing still widens these possibilities.

The Plumpton High School performing arts building, as set-up for the 'meeting' which was the first performance of Re:Framing, evidenced the mixing of a number of different institutions, from their own spaces with their own discourses, forging together, a new, hybrid space. The building itself, the audience, the school student participants and some production equipment hailed from the school: an institutional domain within which there is a meeting between the two, often divergent, discourses of secondary public education and a very broad and loosely defined 'youth culture'. Meanwhile, the projection equipment, direction and live performers were from the University of Western Sydney, Nepean with its university and academic discourses (tertiary institution, cultural theory, experimental performance). The focal point of the performing space was a large screen for video projection which, together with the projector, introduces yet another area of discourse - film, media production, video - and offers much of the interest and complexity for the research into mixing at both physical and 'virtual' levels of space in the Re:Framing project.
Although in many respects derived from, and relating to the live space, the screen as a space of performance in its own right has acquired a specific and complex language of its own. Clearly this language has a very special place within contemporary youth culture, its members being the target audience for one of the screen's most debated genres, the music video. On the one hand, the music video must surely constitute the archetypal postmodern 'horror' of pure image without referent, history negated by simulated 'historicity', in the diagnoses of those theorists (criticised for their dystopian "postmodern delusion" - see Andrew Murphie 222), led by the French soixante-huitre school of Baudrillard, Lyotard and Derrida:

The image has taken over and imposed its own immanent, ephemeral logic: an immoral logic without depth, beyond good and evil, beyond truth and falsity: a logic of the extermination of its own referent, a logic of the implosion of meaning in which the message disappears on the horizon of the medium (Jean Baudrillard, The Evil Demon of Images, p. 23).

At the other extreme however, the genre has been over-zealously acclaimed for its liberational postmodernity: a space of signifiers freed from the constraints of traditional, unified meaning, obliterating hierarchies based on bourgeois values and positioning "the subject at the moment of discovery of split subjectivity..." (E.Ann Kaplan, Rocking Around The Clock: Music Television, Postmodernism and Consumer Culture 43).

Regardless of the validity of either of these positions, it is clear that an image, as with any other generator of meaning(s), is context-based, and the screen itself is in turn always located within a context of viewing that effects meaning. Although radically different to the active participation of the spectator at a live performance, the viewer of television, video or film still takes part in the construction of meaning. And, anyway, it is usually not just an image but a 'sound-image': Philip Brophy (in Hayward 91-110) has helped to focus some attention on the often neglected 'other half' of the dominant medium of our time, which if pursued must, at the very least, complicate such purely image-conscious constructions as the referentless 'speculum', or the notion of a controlled, unidirectional 'gaze'. Even the words 'spectator' and 'viewer' require caution for the same reason (how often don't we just listen to the TV?) The point is that much of the theorizing at either extreme of the postmodern debate would suggest that
these popular media consist of nothing but flows of images. Naturally there is a lot more going on in any 'reading' of a media 'text'.

This study centres upon the mixing of screen space and its associated discourse with others, in particular with that of live performance, and even more particularly with that of live performance in a highschool. Underlying much of the work is a suspicion, perhaps most eloquently set out (through practice) by Augusto Boal, that the closer theatrical performance comes to being 'something else', the more challenging its power becomes to the real world structures of power and oppression (consider Boal's Invisible Theatre). Its location in social space, and its use of this space, frames, categorises and, hence, defines a performance and is therefore crucial to any consideration of the politics of hybridity.

The documentation that follows is an attempt to reflect upon what began as the act of mixing these different spaces and trying out strategies for deconstructing the norms of mainstream Realism in a highschool environment. Whereas the practice has been an act of mixing, the documentation is largely one of separating, in fact, a series of separations. This is to facilitate a level of systematic discussion and analysis. However, the point should be made and noted, that the activities, frames, paradigms and spaces that have been examined can never in reality be kept from affecting each other continuously, dynamically and often, unpredictably.

Inspired most by Zygmunt Molik's notion of performance practice as a 'journey' (Contemporary Performance Week, Sydney 1993) - a kind of self-research without any known course to chart except to immerse oneself in action - the project was not set up to 'prove' anything, but remains an accumulation of reactions to, and reflections upon, mixing spaces and realities, playing conventions off against each other and further possibilities discovered through the process (even if not realised in this process). Its starting point would be a statement something like:

"A fight for the frame: An oppositional theatre must seek to challenge a dominant discourse at the level of its framing - its fixing within space and, consequently, within the ongoing practice of language and culture."
Terminology note

This documentation uses a three-layered model of performance space that is derived from semiotic analyses by theorists such as Keir Elam, Richard Schechner, Patrice Pavis and Sarah Miller among others. The three spatial 'layers' used throughout are labelled as follows:

'Physical space' - the physical location that the performance takes place in, materially present and defined.

'Performance space' - the level of a participant's experience of the complete space when 'charged' by the moment of performance.

'Virtual' or 'Imaginary' space - the level of a spectator's mental manipulation of the space (or, really, the space as re-represented in the brain). This could be, for example, the castle of Dunsinane in Scotland in the Middle Ages during a performance of Macbeth (in this example, the 'physical space' might have been a double classroom at Castle Hill High and the 'performance space' defined by the rough and ready set, the screen, the audience and the movements and presence of the performers and their inter-relationship with the audience.)
Module 3: Screen + Text

(Note: please refer to the multimedia section of the documentation for descriptions of the nature and conventions of the different spaces discussed in these modules.)

This is the intersecting space where the predominantly image-based medium of video meets the word-based playscript. Culturally, 'low' meets 'high'; popular meets literary. On one level, much of the adaptation for *Re:Framing* resulted in predictable compromises for each. The playscript was drastically edited: images (due to a contemporary audience's sophistication with interpreting them) can usually say things a great deal more quickly and concisely than words (which can often bog filmic media down). Despite this, in at least the first two productions, the video footage generally remained on the 'wordy' side with longer than average dialogues (one-sided). This is generally the principal behind plays adapted to film and can be seen in a work such as Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V*, where playscript is reduced but words continue to play a greater than average part in the film.

The aim of *Re:Framing*, however, was not simply 'popularising' in this manner where the continuing presence of a high-low dichotomy cannot be denied: surely there lurks behind such a project a lingering sense that words are somehow 'better'. *Re:Framing* set out to juxtapose structures, to increase the possibilities of interpretation, and to transgress the rules of different spaces. In addition, the final *Re:Framing* productions also included live performance elements: An additional space / media overlap that, although separated out in this discussion, obviously was influential on the development of script and video material. For example, the original concept for the first production project had included a great deal of juxtaposition and even quite straightforward dislocation between stage and screen. Ideas included developing video material with Plumpton students that was based on their own responses to the playscript (Williamson's *The Removalists*), as well as parallel material from Miller's *The Crucible* that would be capable of resonating intertextually with parts of *The Removalists* on stage and on screen.

In such an approach, there is not only an alternative presented to the traditional and dominant narrative form of the playscript, but there is also
something of a movement away from words, or at least from the 'normal', lexical use of words towards new paradigms of meaning - words plus images, words taken out of contexts, connected with other contexts. It is interesting that Peter Brook, despite an avowed awe of the words of Shakespeare, gives a very similar description of disconnections and reconnections of images, and words and images, as the only possible modern equivalent for his conception of alienation. "Alienation," he writes in The Empty Space, "is the language open to us today that is as rich in potentiality as verse: it is the possible device of a dynamic theatre in a changing world, and through alienation we could reach some of those areas that Shakespeare touched by his use of dynamic devices in language" (82).

Clearly a believer in the 'words are more stimulating to the imagination' thesis that denigrates film (see also, for example, The Shifting Point 191-92), he nevertheless turns to the strategic use of the image as a modern dramaturgy. Above all, it is the contradictory, clashing, surprising aspects of the combinations in an alienation effect that Brook finds most appealing:

In Shakespeare there is epic theatre, social analysis, ritual cruelty, introspection. There is no synthesis, no complicity. They sit contradictorily, side by side, co-existing, unreconciled (The Shifting Point, p. 55).

While of Peter Weiss (Marat-Sade) he says:

His force is not only in the quantity of instruments he uses; it is above all in the jangle produced by the clash of styles (Shifting Point, p. 47).

It is this 'clash' that the mixing of spaces and media can produce so effectively. Little wonder that Brecht turned so readily to film and slides, and that new technology continues to be of such attraction to many contemporary performers (see, for example, Andrew Murphie on the use of media technology for alienation and deconstruction in contemporary performance. Importantly, he emphasises the need to contextualise and demystify the functioning of the technology because of a mistaken assumption that the mere act of inserting new technology into a performance is of itself alienating (In Haywood 211-221). Two media for presenting a story -indeed presenting more than one story simultaneously-these tactics create multiple 'entry' points for a spectator. If a text had only been seen through the frame of high cultural values, as can result from the
canonisation of playscripts like *The Removalists* as 'literature' for study, then reinterpretation through video and juxtaposition with other dramatic material can reframe the text as 'popular', 'experimental', 'youth cultural', 'community based' and so on.

Certain television genres, such as the music clip, have been celebrated (and denigrated) as postmodern forms because of their disrupted, non-narrative imagery, their tendency to self-reflexivity and parody of previous genres (see E. Ann Kaplan). Although this view is contentious (Simon Frith, for example, describes video makers as "experts in the economy (not the anarchy) of signs" (p. 206)), these genres have indeed given to the language of television a 'vocabulary' that includes narrative disruption, self-reflexivity, borrowing from and parodying other genres and forms. Because this vocabulary is more familiar to young people than that of oppositional theatre performance, it creates room to challenge traditional narrative structures in performances such as those of Re:Framing. The mixing of television language with live performance to create a language of interaction creates opportunity for a play like *The Removalists* to make sense in different, non-narrative ways. This can challenge a spectator to engage more fully with the performance and to make meanings alternative to the dominant or traditional. The disruptions to the narrative of *The Removalists* provided by scenes based on Miller's *The Crucible* developed with Plumpton High School drama students, are examples of this. The expectations of Realism (the original form of *The Removalists*) - that characters will interact in the same space and time, and that the narrative will follow logically connected sequences - are broken. Sense must be made of this aspect of the performance in terms of intertextuality, parallels between individual and socio-political situations and actions, as well as random elements in characterisation, timing, dialogue, staging and so on.

A further example of reframing the text lies in the genre parody in the opening sequence of *Shifting* - that was made possible by the mixed media. The on-screen part of this opening sequence is edited in the fashion of a credit sequence for a television cop show. This, of course, is quite incongruous, perhaps even "sacreligious", for a play that has been given the status of serious dramatic literature by the dominant culture. Nevertheless it has a strange logic for the translation into video and points up the high-low cultural dichotomy that is under challenge. At the same time, the tactic of the opening sequence expands the paradigm for the representation of the
police in the production, making direct comparison between more popular
dominant cultural presentations, such as those of the cop show, and the
police characters who emerge in the play itself. The former, amiable good
guys who right wrongs and fight for justice. The latter, real people caught
up in a harsh system of corruption, 'brotherhood' and violence against
violence. In this way the video reinterpretation reinforces a central strategy
of the playscript: undermining naive images of the police force. It goes
further because, combined with incompatible live action, it widens the
range of interpretations of the piece and blurs the boundaries between
hierarchically categorised genres.
Module 4: Screen + Imaginary

The Re:Framing project used a range of forms for creating on-screen imaginary space (fictional space). These ranged from concrete Realism (the police station and Fiona’s flat in Shifting) to abstract suggestion (sunset in Shifting - and an image of a candle-flame for lighting Lady Macbeth in Multi-Media Macbeth) to a kind of deconstructed and recontextualised historicity in Multi-Media Macbeth (Casula Powerhouse as Dunsinane; inter-spliced news footage from numerous past and recent events). Of course, this was generally combined with action in the live space creating something of an imaginative game of combinations and dislocations to create the fictional location. This section, however, examines separately the aims and strategies for creating on-screen imaginary space.

It must be remembered that imaginary space itself is not so much located up on the screen as in the spectator’s head. It is by definition a perspectival construct: the combination of external visual and aural stimuli with internal translations, connections, censorships, etc. It is the extension of this point that allows Bandler and Grinder to claim that on the level of interpretation and understanding, every perception is equivalently fictitious and that to cling to any rigid division between truth and falsity or reality and fiction is to be “making the ultimate tragic mistake,” whereby, “you believe that your perceptions are a description of what reality actually is.” So, they continue, "once you realise that the world in which you’re living right now is completely made up, you can make up new worlds" (Frogs Into Princes 179).

Despite this, the dominant form of screen drama, Realism, attempts to close out multiplicity and to create the impression that, rather than perspectival, the view of the fictional world is a natural, unmediated one, with only this one possible interpretation that we can all share.

Conventional theatre, with its frontality and single focus, implies that what is to be understood about reality is its uniqueness - one thing at a time, to which everyone is to attend from the same ‘right’ perspective (although some seats are better than others).

The assumption,” says Cage, “is that people will see it if they all look in one direction” (“John Cage, Nature and Theatre” in Schmidt, p. 18).

25
Much of the fictional space for *Shifting* was shot in a Realist mode. The research principle underlying this approach was to explore effects and changes wrought by bringing recognisable, dominant-mode material on the screen into interaction with live performance - in particular how this might offer alternative perspectives on the dominant one. Nevertheless, certain differences can be noted even in a fairly realistic treatment of space. Whereas Realism traditionally assigns spatial elements to the background (as the appropriate and natural setting for action), *Shifting* already shows a greater foregrounding of space as subject itself. Generally this is because it would subsequently become something of a 'background' to the live action. Examples include the long, expectant shot of Fiona’s flat door - even extending to its opening and the appearance of characters behind it who almost serve as background to the movements of the door (ie a spatial element) which serves as a connecting point between stage and screen imaginary spaces.

The foregrounding of spatial functions for the screen is much more pronounced in *Multi-Media Macbeth*. This production made extended use of the powerstation’s post-industrial decay for making contemporary links with *Macbeth’s* themes and atmospheres. There were metaphoric shots such as the candle-flame or various uses of full screen colour (red during the murder) which became light and shadow effects in the live performance. Most notable in respect of using the screen to define spatial location in a non-Realistic way, were its montages of newsfootage and enacted drama of often only abstract and random correlation with the narrative action. All had the aim of widening the possibilities for the imaginary spaces of action - both stage and screen. Dislocation of the kind aimed at by these techniques (and their eventual combination with live performance) favours perspectivalism and creates the potential for Doleuzian 'schizizes flows' to break out in multiple directions, unpredictable and freed from the controlled, predetermined flows of the dominant Realist mode. As Michel Foucault describes in his preface to *Anti-Oedipus*, one of the essential principles underlying schizoanalysis is to "develop action, thought and desires by proliferation, juxtaposition and disjunction, and not by subdivision and pyramidal hierarchization" (xiii).

No doubt the dominant flows are not as all-encompassing, complete and uni-directional - and the subject so passively dominated - as much postmodern thought suggests. Andrew Murphie, for example, writes of the
postmodern theorists' pessimism regarding image technology as "profoundly intellectual anxieties, often more relevant to the acquisition of academic knowledge than to the operation of knowledge in lived social relations" (221). Simon Frith, in another context, makes this point even more strongly, "postmodernism' really describes the condition of the critics not that of the world they watch" (5), while John Tulloch criticises the potentially disempowering "linguistic turn" of much postmodern theory which has "rightly decentered the subject, but to the extent that knowledgable human subjects are left out of history" (11).

Nor, however, are the dominant modes likely to be quite so easily escaped by flight or some kind of 'ghettoisation' of the subject as is suggested by schizoanalysis and its derivatives. As Robert Stam argues, a dynamic process of contestation, appropriation, infiltration, domination, to be found in the Bakhtinian concept of heteroglossia, might be most appropriate to counter postmodernism's excesses of either pessimism or naive optimism. Here is an attempt to give an essentially Marxist approach some of the subtlety and non-empiricism of postmodern theory: "an alternative logic of non-exclusive opposites and permanent contradiction which transgresses the monologic true-or-false thinking that is typical of Western thought" (234).

Certain aspects of Multi-Media Macbeth's creation of imaginary dramatic space sought to work within this model of heteroglossia. The use of a range of newsfootage widens the possible links between action and historical contextualization. Indeed the use of a mainstream genre such as television news - even the use of the dominant medium of film itself within a live performance - can be seen as attempts at reappropriation of these categories at the local level. The frame of 'news' enhances in its images the already heavy sense of 'verité' - that this is the real world that we are seeing. If TV news can give dominant perspectives and mythologies this kind of authenticity and corresponding power to convince, perhaps an appropriation of the genre's framing devices by an alternative perspective can function along the lines of an infiltrational strategy that Ross Chambers speaks of in Room For Manoeuvre. Graeme Turner makes the argument that, "if Realism is able to privilege its view of history, then it may also have the potential to propose an oppositional or alternative view of history which is itself naturalised by the form" (132). The Re:Framing project did not aim simply to reinvent hierarchies in this way, however, but rather to
create multiplicity, ambiguity and, finally, a wider, more contemporarily relevant context for situating its actions imaginatively: shots of dictators, American presidents, war, boxing champions, all immediately recognisable signifiers that can be associated in multiple, sometimes unpredictable ways with the specific actions and locations of Macbeth's story. Imaginary time is expanded in this way, non-linear and capable of unforeseen contextual resonances. This is different to de-historicising - it is more like expanded, opened-out historicity. (For more on this aspect of Multi-Media Macbeth see "Imaginary and Research".)

As much as the Re:Framing project attempted to expand and assist the creation of imaginary space through the use of a screen, at the same time it used the same media and genre combinations to punctuate the fictional realities with alienations and disruptions. Notable instances include references to technical construction - Macbeth’s "Cut!" at the end of his musings on the termination of Banquo - and the appearance on live camera of Kate and Fiona in a police station scene in Shifting. The use of the live camera in this way principally functions as an alienation of Realist conventions, as an exposure of generally unseen and inaccessible technological practices, and as a means of exploring new connections and feedbacks between actor, character, audience, screen, camera, etc.
Module 5: Screen + Research

The Re:Framing project was chiefly concerned with the notion of frames - the framing of performance by physical space, generic classification, medium of presentation and so on. From a starting point of semiotic and discourse theory, the main interest for the project was how such frames, encoded with varying social value, might be shifted, changed, questioned - even broken. The implications of this for the screen elements of the production can, in retrospect, be seen more clearly as concerning two particular areas: firstly, a focus on manipulating elements of genre, and, secondly, a concern with aspects of the frame of the camera itself.

The approach to genre can best be seen in the attempt to play on TV cop show generic conventions at the start of *Shifting*, and in the parody of TV news and current affairs in *Multi-Media Macbeth*. There is a strategic use of genre markers - music, screen-text, edit style - in both cases in order to make pop-cultural associations and wider, more contemporary contextualizations possible for the respective plays. In both cases there is also an attempt to subvert some of the values inherent in the genres, to expose their nature as constructed partial truths and carriers of dominant mythology. Especially in the case of *Multi-Media Macbeth*’s 'WITCHannel' this was not overly subtle! The characterisation of the presenters, shots of 'hands on' manipulation of images such as editing, distorting camera angles, and WITCHannel's use of this power to mislead Macbeth towards his disaster, all embody the production’s cynicism towards the mass media.

A conscious exploration of aspects of the camera frame is exemplified by the final shot of *Shifting* with Constable Ross leaping through the screen - that is, 'into' the camera. There are, however, other less spectacular instances of non-realist relationships to the frame - all with a view towards the ultimate use of the video in live performance. Traditional screen forms have taken what might be called, in theatrical terms, a 'fourth wall' approach to the camera, attempting to naturalise and erase consciousness of its framing. More contemporary genres such as music video and even sport presentation have returned an awareness of the frame, and these have correspondingly had an influence on recent TV and cinema dramas - for example the whip pan, 'handy-cam' style of *NYPD Blues* and Tarantino’s occasional (token?!?) self-reflexivity. Our experiments with, and foregrounding of, the frame in
Shifting were generally a result of relating screen to stage and an attempt to manipulate various levels of space. These included using a wider range of eyelines and an investigation of their effects: from 'naturalistic' match-ups with the eyelines of characters in the live space, to more confronting direct address, and even to alienation and dislocation of space through incongruent or ambiguous eyelines. Other moments in Multi Media Macbeth that required some experiment and a greater than usual awareness and control of the frame were the shots for Banquo 'pissing on the screen' and for Lady Macbeth entering and exiting from the screen to the stage and back. Both of these, as can be seen, were also significant moments of spatial interplay between screen and stage. They reflect a 'postmodern' research interest in discovering a performing body that breaks out of the confines of unity and completeness that it is generally presented in and also blurs the separation between machine and human body. In these two examples the screen-stage nexus becomes a true point of multiplicity and hybridisation when there is a smooth transition between live body and technological body, when we are watching a performing body that is part flesh and blood, part projection.

In terms of the process of creating these productions, screen and research coincide at the level of the 'journey' that is practical research. It is clear that there is a difference in the type of knowledge gained from actually doing something as opposed to learning from a book or other set of theoretical instructions. This point is made in a range of places from popular wisdom to academic theses, and is not within the scope of this project to examine. Nevertheless, some reflections should be made in this section on the kind of practical or 'experiential' knowledge that has been gained in relation to screen production in the Re:Framing project.

The task of learning the basics of video cameras and editing is often a process of learning the limitations of the technology, and then looking for alternatives or ways of overcoming them. Nevertheless, hands-on involvement in the process of creating sound-images, manipulating them and assembling them into constructions for various purposes has an effect of empowerment, demystifying this area of cultural production. This is in terms of both the traditional industrial inaccessibility of the medium, but equally importantly in relation to its vilification, at times, on a quite apocalyptic scale by some postmodern theory. Andrew Murphie has described such theorisation of media as "a delirious surrender to
which must always lie beyond control and understanding." "Present theories about technology," he explains ironically, "have left us with a reflection and no original" (p222). Practically speaking, the technological image is not the referentless, totally subjectifying 'demon' it has been accused of being because, like other cultural productions, it is context-dependant and open to non-dominant intervention. Importantly, this becomes more obvious when one is actively involved in creating the image. Its self-reflexivity can serve both empowering and disempowering ends. Johannes Birringer, for example, describes a project in Houston that used video as a kind of documentation of local knowledge and topography that was able to reinsert into a theatrical production a sense of "history as an ongoing process which influences the way we see" (p131). Here he opposes such local, tangible and recognisable imagery to the "transcultural synthesising" of "postmodern global culture" ("Invisible Cities/Transcultural Images").

The incorporation of video production in the overall process at times offered alternative perspectives on the group's theatre practice too, sometimes leading to rehearsal, staging or performance innovations. For example, the existence of one-sided 'half dialogues' on tape suggested the possibility of actors rehearsing many more elements independently than they normally could. The actors could take their 'scene partners' home with them! The presence of cameras also gave an opportunity for review of performance experiments and developments through the process, and were used in exploring live movements based on video effects (fast-forward, rewind, slow-motion, etc). The following is a list of conclusions drawn about the group's experimentation with 'media style' live movement (in this case, 'rewinding'):

1) Active resisting becomes active pushing. Active pushing becomes active resisting.

2) Intent remains of the same magnitude and direction.

3) What came last, comes first and leads.

4) Theatrically, moments of making contact can be marked by moments of 'letting go'.
5) At pivotal moments, changing direction, when going forward feet and body follow eyes. Therefore, when rewinding, eyes follow feet.

6) Going backwards requires 'eyes' in the elbows, bottom and heels.

7) Inanimate rolling or sliding objects speed up rather than slowing down. This can be set up with follow-throughs and careful positioning of the body, with emphasis placed on speeding up when the object reaches the hands of the original pusher or thrower to create the illusion of self-acceleration.

8) Only strongly directional (and intentional) actions look like they are in reverse when rewound.

(I am indebted to Yana Taylor for her assistance in this.)

In concluding this section it should be noted that a final level of screen-research interaction and framing lies in the multimedia documentation itself. An exploration of this area is not within the scope of the project, but the possibilities are clearly great for more detailed 'research on research' in relation to the use of multimedia in performance documentation and analysis - perhaps a project for the future! Suffice it to say that the use of multimedia for this documentation is a journey in itself, one which demands reappraisal of many aspects of traditional thesis writing and performance documentation, and must influence, as a final frame, both the content and its structuring, and the nature of its reception. Its use here is on the premise that performance documentation (perhaps especially the documentation of mixed-media performance) could benefit from less traditionally literary means. Words can only ever go so far towards describing something and a traditional thesis could only have the effect of returning the project to the book, the literary, the written text.

On the topic of the partiality of any recording and documentation of live performance, Gay McAuley quotes Marco de Marinis, "The document inevitably incorporates the perception of the observer, value judgements and other features attributable to the cultural context, distortions due to the nature of the recording medium, the use the document is intended for, etc" (p3, my emphasis). This must simply serve as a reminder at this point because, as has been stated, it is not within the scope of the project to analyse all of the complexities of this documentation's relationship to its 'original'. The theoretical motivation behind experimenting with the use of this kind
of documentation, however, is demonstrated in Rolando Perez's thesis that, "It is no exaggeration to say that we have gone much too far with our emphasis on the Text... Along with this overdose,..., we have forgotten the body, the theatre, the gesture, the breath... and the flesh" (p33). Also, it might be added, randomness and multiplicity over linearity and authorial control.
Module 6: Physical + Screen

A large screen and portable video projection system for a play performance comes as something of a surprise amidst the sparse functionalism of the Plumpton High performing arts building. The presence of such recently available, and relatively expensive equipment is in itself significant in a school which is in a very under-resourced and marginalised area and funded through an education system that is increasingly tightening its belt and, like most other areas of public funding, has seen the accumulation of resources in Sydney's centre, north and east. Firstly, there is a level of interest generated that may not have been as great in a more resource-rich area and, secondly, access to this technology generates a sense of empowerment amongst students participating both actively in creating the performance and less actively as spectators.

To the extent that bringing together screen and school gave a sense of 'school as cinema', there was also a moment of ascendancy of youth culture over traditional education discourse. This point could be noted in the even greater sense of celebration and empowerment amongst the students at the Friday night performance compared to the Thursday morning one. Clearly, on the Friday, after school hours, education discourse had even less hold over the event. The point is that the screen with its associations of entertainment and various pleasures is not necessarily compatible with the dominant conventions of school education in which students are situated as consumers of serious, approved knowledge. The screen as such serves as a potential point of contact between the production (which itself is of a play set for HSC study and therefore appropriated by the education discourse) and the alternative, at times oppositional, discourse of the space - youth culture(s). The attempt to pursue this point of contact can be seen in the use of techno music in Shifting, industrial music in Multi-Media Macbeth and the use made of the youth-oriented cop-show genre in Shifting and music-video editing style for moments of Multi-Media Macbeth. Indeed one of the original motives behind the experiment with mixed-media style performance for a schools audience was that the various forms, experiments and strategies of music video offer alternatives to dominant dramatic and narrative structures and so could provide live performance with wider, yet still accessible, possibilities.
Youth culture, even as expressed in the more radical music videos, is not without conservative, even quite violently prejudiced, aspects. Consider recent debates about the sexism so inherent in much black American hiphop. For this reason a screen within a performance for a school audience is not oppositionally progressive in itself, but requires a level of critique and deconstruction of its own conventions and dominant modes. In the Re:Framing project it was hoped that this could be achieved not only on screen, but most importantly through the combination with live performance. However, the major on-screen strategy for overcoming the traditional inaccessibility of technologically generated images, and for creating spaces for alternative meanings and disruptive structures, lay in the process of making the means of production - knowledge, equipment and opportunity- available to Plumpton students themselves. Although this aspect of the project could not be taken as far as originally planned (the opportunity was severely limited by school timetable constraints!), the final performances did indeed contain a number of short video sequences developed with and by 'Plumptonians'. These sequences worked intertextually with The Removalists and served as moments of dislocation and as a challenge to simple, dominant mode interpretations. For the performances at Plumpton, however, they also served as moments of heightened community, for class-mates to recognise each other and to see the results of their work.

Most important, though, was the process of creating these sequences. Here students were taught camera and sound-recording skills and given some opportunity to experiment with them, or else were given the experience of acting in front of cameras and lights. Here traditional teacher-led education gave way (especially in the early stages) to an action-learning approach in which students could experiment and gain knowledge of a non goal-oriented type. It was in this process that the project's potential to demystify technology and to empower its participants could best be seen. In this achievement the project reveals a combination of two goals with political implications. Firstly, pursuit of a "dynamic view" of a community - one that is created (not pre-existent) out of the activity of a collaborative process - which Owen Kelly describes in his seminal book on community arts (Community, Art and the State: Storming the Citadels 51). Secondly, commitment to the concern of some progressive, contemporary technology-based performers to "show us how things actually work" as Andrew Murphie puts it (p221).
Module 7: Physical + Live

The physical space of the school venue and its surrounds is overlapped and, to some extent, superseded for an hour by a temporary, ritually and energetically charged space-of-meeting between performers and audience, hosts and wider community. In this process the physical space does not actually disappear but, rather, is partially transformed by physical reconstruction, ritual preparation, a change of perspective and usage, and most importantly by an intensification and energising of space and atmosphere at the meeting of performer and spectator. In The Empty Space, Peter Brook describes this temporary, energised space as, "The arena where a living confrontation takes place," and in it, "the focus of a large group of people creates a unique intensity. Owing to this, forces that operate at all times and rule each person's daily life can be isolated and perceived more clearly" (112). Indeed, Richard Schechner considers the "very essence" of theatre to be "transformation" (see Performance Theory 170). In the case of the improvised location that Schechner defines as "found space" - without precoded architectural subdivisions because it is a space not usually used for theatre - he talks of "events making rather than taking shape" (my emphasis Public Domain 196).

The performance pieces making up the Re:Framing project, in a similar way to performances taking place in 'found space', quite deliberately maintained a greater continuing presence within the ritual live space of the existing physical space (that is, a greater conscious awareness of it) than in the case of so much theatre that attempts a total transcendence of the physical space (forgetting where one is). The Re:Framing set was a makeshift one without any attempt at scenic mimesis, instead simply defined by pieces of raw, exposed technology. In the case of Multi-Media Macbeth it was often assembled, in a kind of theatre-workers ritual, in front of the audience and adapted to its surroundings. For Shifting at Plumpton, the set broke the space's conventions by not using the existing raised stage and simply carving out a performance space amid the audience area. The performance refused the concrete separation of audience from performers created by the raised stage and proscenium, instead having a relatively fluid performance space defined by audience options of chairs or mat seating, and performers moving into areas between groups of audience. (Another factor in defining the performance space and in revising the traditional segregation of
audience and performers, was the screen which provided a focus for not only the audience, but often for performers as well.)

In both productions audience and performer were not architecturally separated, and the performing space shifted throughout much of the physical space, sometimes splitting focus or invading audience areas. This had the effect of using the physical space as is rather than attempting to block it out or reform it into a traditional, formal theatre. Although the physical space was quite possibly given a fresh perspective (partially transformed), it also remained consciously present throughout the ritual. "The actual object [the place of performance]," writes Marvin Carlson, "though standing for another, absent space, nevertheless carries with it inescapably some of the connotations of its embedding in reality and history, and these will necessarily condition the audience response" (Places of Performance 198. For further discussion about this tactic of using the "existing semiotics" also see pages 34-5 of Carlson's book).

Shifting at Plumpton was able to take this point further because of the developmental process at the school. Here there was actual participation by local students in creating the set structure and in operating technology on its periphery - hence a use of space in which the physical space and the community it represents, as well as members of this community, remained present in the transformed world of the live performance space. This meant that, although the production rearranged the space and used its elements in new ways, so reframing them, there were also these crucial links of familiarity for Plumpton students providing a sense of 'localness' and ownership and, if only indirectly for most audience members, a greater sense of participation in the event - helping again to bridge the gap between performer and spectator. A foregrounding and empowering of the local amidst the more universalised concerns of the plays. A hope that the gap between performer and spectator could be narrowed in this way, through a sense of sharing, as it had already been in the physical layout of the space.

Just as there was an aim of mixing these two spatial levels in a way that allowed them to interact, share and gain each from the other at this visual, physical level - the 'proxemics' of the production - so was there an attempt to do the same in terms of creating interactions between their two discourses throughout the process of making the production. This concerns the coming together of education discourse (and youth culture(s)) with the
discourses and practices of experimental theatre/performance. New relationships are created such as: university-based actors–school students; teachers–director; director–school students. The project was framed in an attempt to allow each to bring something of their own to it and to share in the creativity. For example there was some collaboration on designing the project between Rosina Grieves (teacher) and myself as director; there were periods in which the university student participants took charge of certain areas and worked independently with groups of Plumpton students; there were a number of options for Plumpton students to develop their own ideas into video material. Nevertheless, there were some difficulties involved in combining the two spaces of practice: the difficulty of incorporating anything non-syllabus-based into the school teaching time or, perhaps, lack of confidence in - or resistance to - something unconventional; a severe shortage of, and over-demand upon, school resources such as space for rehearsal; pre-established relationships, or expectations of them, such as director as authority and source of all knowledge and initiative in the process (not unlike dominant discourse construction of the teacher) as well as some initial tendency to dominant gender roles like boys on technology and girls doing the acting. Fortunately the process saw a great deal of redefinition and variety in these relationships by the end.

Differences between the discourses can also be seen in the experimental approach to performance that framed the project. Such things as multiplying, splitting, alienating character, stylizing movement and stripping a set bare of mimetic objects are within the conventions of experimental performance. They are, however, alien to the performance conventions and expectations that dominate both traditional drama teaching and youth cultural drama/performance genres (almost all technologically delivered) - with many less mainstream exceptions of course. Approaches to performance and the recording of it, therefore, required some negotiations with more Realist expectations amongst Plumpton students, as well as quite straightforward lack of familiarity and experience in new performance practices.
Module 8: Physical + Research

The team from UWS, Nepean in a sense brought its own space - ideas, reputation, practices, car and equipment, pre-rehearsed material, pre-established relationships - into Plumpton High School's space with its equally established ideas, discourses and relationships. Somehow joining these spaces and creating new space could only come through the activity of creating performance material together. The nature of any such new interacting space would depend on many, often unpredictable things throughout the process but, most importantly, it is only through such action, taking a journey into the unpredictable, that there is any hope of forging new spaces at all.

In terms of the proxemics of the production, the Plumpton performing arts building (for the final performances of Shifting) bore witness to a kind of 'barter' of spatial elements that temporarily transformed the site. The concept of bartering here is derived from Eugenio Barba's strategy for cross-cultural theatre in which cultural products such as performances are exchanged, forging new relationships, instead of simply given in a one-way direction from source culture to target culture: "It is the act of exchanging that gives value to what is exchanged, and not the opposite" (268). For instance, the set for Shifting was built out of 'imported' elements such as the screen and video equipment from UWS, Nepean and 'local' ones such as mats, seating, lighting, rope and the folding flat which was constructed by the Plumpton students. The physical 'look' of the production, therefore, was evidence of a process of collaboration of various kinds between the two institutional spaces. Although the performance acted to transform this physical space to operate on the levels of 1) temporary ritual live space and 2) imaginary virtual space, the barter of elements helps to maintain or heighten a conscious presence of the physical space in tension with the other spaces. This tension is a connection between the immediate, internal workings of the performance and the 'world out there', explicitly linking the performance and its host community, and, so, positioning it within the broader social frame. Also, such tension or playing off of one spatial level against another - a kind of 'double exposure' - creates something of an alienation effect, making the constructive process of theatrical production more visible and accessible to the spectator.
As described under "Theoretical Background", the project was conceptualised within a theoretical framework that included self-reflexive concerns with all forms of contextual, formal and generic framing of performances and, therefore, with the intertextual creation of meanings, and with the exposure of structures of meaning. And the project was undertaken with an active, ‘journey-taking’ definition of research in which knowledge is not seen so much as a final objective to be pursued and discovered, but rather as a continual and dynamic outcome of the active process of taking the journey. Now there are clearly divergences between these underpinnings of an academic discourse and the conceptions of knowledge within a dominant school education discourse.

For example, this divergence led a very broad, intertextual conception and interest in performance to become ‘a method of studying HSC play texts through intertextuality’. This reveals a strategy in which the demands and practices of one institutional space (in this example, the school with its requirements of sticking to a narrow syllabus and showing assessable outcomes) are taken on, but reconstituted, by an ‘infiltrating’ space. Here a challenging way of examining the plays is incorporated into school practice. Of course the use to which it is put is, ultimately, unpredictable and open to variation: on the one hand, it could be possible to use intertextuality to conservatively reinforce recurrent themes as being mythically universal, whereas, on the other hand, it could be used to reveal the structures behind these myths or, even, to offer a radical, dislocating multiplicity of views and voices brought together in disharmony. In practice, further institutional forces such as a shortage of time and material resources (as well as the potential incongruity of the discourses brought into contact by the project) severely limited the intertextual range in the Shifting product. The material developed from The Crucible that was inserted into The Removalists storyline opened up fresh interpretive possibilities in the final production - at least asking of an audience member to consider less traditional ways of constructing meaning. However, there were no self-devised responses created by the Plumpton students, nor was there room for much exploration with them of the intertextual possibilities between the two specific playtexts used. (Intertextuality was developed far more strongly in Multi-Media Macbeth. See "Screen and Imaginary" and "Research and Imaginary".)
Perhaps one explanation for this lies in the different role allocated to the teacher in each discourse and the different approaches to learning that are favoured. The difference is one between the dominant construction of teacher as authority and source of knowledge and arbitration, and the less traditional (within our educational institutions) mode of teacher as 'guide', that is, facilitator of the process of research and active learning. The pressures of the dominant mode and its expectations tended to push the role of director (and that of the other UWS, Nepean participants when working with smaller groups) towards the more traditional role of authority and initiator of all action.

This issue particularly concerned creating the final product, but within the process - especially its earlier stages - there was room for a more guided, self-initiated approach to all the concepts on offer: for example, groups shooting their own short video sequences and other groups creating performance responses to certain issues. Such work not only offers purely technical knowledge, but also new, richer understanding because of a level of empowerment and enhanced ability to analyse and critique. Nor does it necessarily hierarchise certain areas of knowledge over others, closing off or marginalizing variant perspectives in the way that a pre-planned and inflexible syllabus does. Indeed, an active, fully participatory process is, perhaps, essential to bring about any reinterpretation of relationships and preconceptions. "To produce," writes Eugenio Barba, "does not only mean to produce wares, but also relationships between people" (195) and further:

A man cannot meet another man if not through something: from this comes the paradox of the utility of apparently useless things. The theatre as barter is connected with the utility of waste, of potlatch, of the dissipation of energies not used to produce things, but to produce relations. (p. 266-7)

Peter Brook provides an echo in The Shifting Point:

It was by making the act of theatre inseparable from the need to establish new relations with different people that the possibility of finding new cultural links appeared. (p. 239)

In terms of the possible 'new space' created out of the intersection of school and university spaces, it should be noted that the creation of a production informed by challenging ideas about intertextuality, deconstructing myths,
narratives and other 'naturalised' structures and concerned with self-reflexivity about its own forms and functioning, is still fairly exceptional at a high school in Western Sydney - an area generally only 'handed down' dominant culture from the centres. Equally, the active participation of an academic project in community practice expands its own (often too insular) terms of reference and 'experiential knowledge' of its society. It is also satisfying that there is an on-going Nepean-Plumpton relationship since the project.
Module 9: Physical + Imaginary

Mixing imaginary and physical spaces of a performance means keeping the two present simultaneously and allowing whatever interruptions, new resonances and reflexive levels to appear. In one sense this always occurs, but as a conscious strategy of production it is what Brecht sought to do. The alienation effect is the result of seeing the level of construction, the here-and-now ritual, of a theatre performance in conjunction with the imaginary, fictional world depicted and being able to place these within a social context. This necessarily involves a clash, sometimes even a shock: even before Brecht, Sergei Eisenstein suggested a very similar idea in his theory of 'montage of attractions' where,

An attraction (in relation to the theatre) is any aggressive aspect, that is, any element of it which subjects the spectator to a sensual or psychological impact, experimentally regulated and mathematically calculated to produce in him certain emotional shocks, which, when placed in their proper sequence within the totality, are the only means whereby he is enabled to perceive the ideological side of what is being demonstrated (Film Form).

Such a clash serves to rupture any unity of perspective and reinforce the immediacy of the interaction between performer and spectator that constitutes live performance. Just as Brook writes, "Theatre has the potential - unknown in other artforms - of replacing a single viewpoint by a multitude of different visions. Theatre can present a world in several dimensions at once... Theatre recovers its strength and intensity as soon as it devotes itself to creating that wonder - a world in relief" (The Shifting Point 15).

Inherent in the strategy of using 'found space' for a performance is a kind of mental 'double exposure' in which consciousness of the physical space is perpetuated through any levels of transformation of the space. Because of their portability, the Re:Framing productions were always at least partly adapted to found space and so had this built-in level of alienation. For Shifting at Plumpton this effect was intensified by the incorporation of 'local' elements in its set. These gave a very immediate sense of location throughout the performance and consequently a sense of ownership to local audience members.
Alienation through such immediate recognition could also occur at the imaginary level of the productions. The *Re:Framing* performances need to engage their young audiences to participate in constructing the imaginary spaces of the pieces: we used young characters, elements of recognisable popular genres, music, costumes and styles with a certain youth cultural familiarity. Indeed this was the early rationale behind the use of the screen itself. It is possible, however, to push this familiarity to an extreme where there is again an alienation, a return of the present, physical location amidst imaginary space. Two such examples are provided by our use of the St Mary's police station for exterior shots in *Shifting* and then in *Multi-Media Macbeth* our use of the Casula Powerhouse for location filming. In both these cases school audiences from the local area were able to recognise the locations as part of their neighbourhood. This must surely result in a returning 'present' amidst the inherently pre-recorded and, therefore, 'not-of-this-moment' nature of filmic media.

The moments of interruption to the imaginary space of *The Removalists* that were provided by the excerpts from *The Crucible* created by Plumpton students must also have had a more complex alienation effect when performed at their school. Once again there is a reinserion of an immediate and intimately recognisable level amidst the imaginary. But here, because an audience sees not only characters in a fictional world, but also, literally, themselves or their fellow students, there must be not only an exposure of construction, but also a degree of intimate 'behind-the-scenes' knowledge of this construction - and ownership and control over it.

Finally, perhaps the best example from *Shifting* of the tactic of reinserting the here-and-now level of space (what can be called immediate 'presence') into the construction of imaginary space, came in the staging of Sergeant Simmonds' bashing of Kenny. The live part of this consisted of Simmonds unleashing a wild and unrestrained physical attack on a punching-bag hung amidst the audience. Firstly, there is the obvious alienation of using a punching-bag in place of Kenny, a simple metaphoric substitution. The most effective aspect, however, was the proximity to the audience of genuinely unrestrained violence and the punching-bag swinging closely above their heads. At such moments, when the air itself is disturbed, when performance becomes literally tangible, and the sweat, sounds, perhaps even the smell of the action can all be perceived at such proximity, then
imaginary space collides with immediate presence and the experience is intense - not only of the fiction but also of the performance, the immediate moment and its interrelations.

A direct communication will be re-established between the spectator and the spectacle, between the actor and the spectator, from the fact that the spectator, placed in the middle of the action, is engulfed and physically affected by it. (Antonin Artaud, The Theatre of Cruelty, quoted in Perez, p. 39, my emphasis)
Module 10: Live + Screen

This is the point where what might be described as a new 'language' of representation is created out of the intermix of the two existing 'languages' of screen and stage performance respectively, and it is one of the major focal points of the Re:Framing project's explorative journey. This new language of media interaction is a combination of existing structures of representation but it is often quite a lot more than the sum of its parts: a complete reframing, or the result of totally new, unexpected resonances created by multiple levels of interaction. This section cannot hope to cover all the possibilities of this kind generated by the combination of media in the performances, but will attempt to examine some of the specifically tactical interactions, as well as some of the more notable unexpected results.

Today, one has to show as many points as possible at the same time so that people are forced to select... I believe the only way left to do it is by way of inundation... You must always pull one thing into the other if both are to attain their effect. (Heiner Muller, p. 163)

The opening section of Shifting shows interaction across a number of levels of constructed meaning, and a certain amount of unpredictability is opened up. It illustrates a number of the differences between the languages of live and filmic performance. The contrast is enhanced by the absence of any spoken words (usually the most obvious point of overlap between the two languages). The only words throughout the sequence are the title and credits - and in the case of film or video credits the words function to make meaning as much in a visual, indexical way as in their usual lexical way. (They are, therefore, a specifically recognisable part of the visual and aural language of film/television/video.) At this stage it would be overkill to distinguish film or television or video as separate languages, although there are indeed differences (perhaps they can be thought of as 'dialects'?)! The overlap is sufficient to treat them as the same language here. Indeed, Re:Framing blurred the differences between them because it used big screen projection (generally associated with film) yet with the effects and lower image quality of video.

The beginning of the performance of Shifting is marked in the live space by the entrance of an actor in character (Abigail) and, for some performances, a
change in lighting. On the screen, meanwhile, there appears a landscape. It is, therefore, not precisely clear how the one space will relate to the other, but it is already possible to make sense of the relationship through the mind's ceaseless endeavour to make such associations: for example, is the landscape the setting for the live performance? Do we give to it religious connotations such as similar sunset scenes often have (and suggested by the live actor's pose of prayer)?

This is followed by the sudden and simultaneous sound of an alarm and appearance on the screen of a still image of a priest. Once again, the aim was to offer only loose associations or suggestions without hammering down a single or 'preferred' meaning for the collection of signs. The freeze-frame priest is presented in a quite specifically filmic 'meta-discourse': the freeze-frame effect objectifies the person imaged even more than moving film images do. The priest is in this way more of an 'idea' than a specific human character - a representation of a patriarchal, ecclesiastical world. His accusatory expression is emphasised and exaggerated by being frozen. This is the language of film. So too is the metonymic presentation of a disembodied head and shoulders in close-up shot. This is in contrast to the full body presentation of a live character. These divergent representations of the human body serve to add to a sense of dislocation between the two characters represented, once again deferring any singular, direct association between the screen and live spaces.

The alarm is timed in order for it to convey its 'warning' and 'danger' implications, and then carry these through, adding them to the 'wake up' meaning as we see a boxer-shorted Constable Ross racing on to get dressed for work. What appears on the screen is the closest we were able, and prepared, to get to a straight, generic (and therefore recognisable) cop-show title sequence. The signs that tell the viewer this are quite apparent: fast edited action sequences, plenty of distinctively good guys and bad guys, cop cars and flashing blue lights as well as the superimposing of title and credits and the very generic 'action' music. It is at this point that a quite clear relationship between stage (used broadly to refer to the live performance space) and screen emerges. The screen comments upon, adds to and positions the stage performance, in particular generically.

There is a meaningful link between screen and stage - it is about police. Also, they both, in their own way, have the meaning of 'beginning': credits,
title sequence and music on the screen; and actor entering and donning costume on the stage. Yet there is also an incongruity between what the two performances are 'saying', and this is, of course, the most interesting aspect. On the one hand, the on-screen genre of cop show implies Realism, and police as subject for the audience's self-identification: agents of serious action to right wrongs. They are the goodies. On the other hand, the stage action is stylized with no realistic set, only a police uniform hanging from a wooden flat, and the policeman's appearance and actions are comic, sporting overly bright boxer shorts, while frantically and clumsily attempting to get his uniform on.

It was what lies in this gap between, and in the inevitable conjunction of, the two forms of representation that lay the greatest area of unknown for the project, the 'journey'. It is impossible to produce a definitive account of its functioning in terms of making meaning, and it is not useful here to try and make judgements about its 'value' and 'effect'. But it is possible to make observations, and to try and trace connections between occurrence and context. One observation is that the two performances together at this point of the production say something like... 'energy': action, rhythm, pace, something is about to begin. The music, of course, is integral to this as it gives both the performances an energetic rhythm. The music is also an element that ties the two spaces, and the two representations, together, being itself locatable in both.

The next stage of the opening sequence offers more specific and unified meaning for the combination of the live and recorded representations. On the screen is external footage of a police station, slowly zooming in. At the same time the on-stage policeman is now fully uniformed and takes up a central position. The music fades as do the last credits. This is television drama language for locating the action - it will open in a police station. At last this can be fairly confidently taken as relating to the action in general and congruency can be made between the two spaces and the television language can be believed (for the moment at least!)

The deferral of meaning spoken of before was in this case only momentary. With the first dialogue, and the appearance on screen of a police sergeant who interacts with the on-stage officer, the meaning becomes singular and congruous: both are in the same space (the police station) engaged in conversation. Of course there is no guarantee that an audience member will
make this kind of connection. The overall performance is, in fact, using the new language, one of its own making, that is the result of the combination of the two performance languages, but different to both of them. For example, the relative size of human beings does not need to be realistically proportional, eyelines do not need to match, pauses will be 'technological' as well as conversationally significant! There is room for a greater variety of interpretations because imaginary space is constructed across different forms, multiple genres are combined and so on. Yet it is likely that at this point the strongly recognisable conventions of verbal conversation dominate and must all but fully close off other ways of making sense of it all.

In the case of dialogue between a character in one space and a second in another (as with the sergeant and constable) both spaces are working in their own languages. The sergeant is seen in various shots from full length to extreme close-up. A close-up, for example, not only works metonymically in that we easily accept that the rest of the sergeant is still there (we know and understand the language of film), but it also adds an emphasis to what is said and how it is said (whereas a long shot gives greater emphasis to where the character is and how they are interacting with their surrounds). This is basic film language. On the other hand, in live performance the human body is almost always presented in full and remains within the same spatial continuum as the spectator. This is how the constable is seen, centre of a bare stage, talking to the sergeant on the large screen. But in neither language is there precedent for disproportionately sized representations of people, nor for one to be represented exclusively in full, while the other almost entirely in close up (let alone one in 3-D with the other a flat two-dimensional representation!) Other instances with at least some elements of this kind of 'mixed' representation can be found in 'live cross' style interviews (like ABC's Lateline) or perhaps even in the case of big screen use at events such as rock concerts. Nevertheless these do not really offer ways of interpreting live-recorded interactive performance (they make sense through their own quite different rules of representation) and so interactive media performance must create and use a language of its own.

For a close-up of the sergeant on the large screen, interrogating the on-stage constable, the metalingual rules of both film and stage representation apply. Close-up still 'means' increased intensity and significance. Actor on stage still 'means' constable responding to sergeant in imaginary space of police
station. But this occurrence is recognised as sufficiently different to require recategorizing and, consequently, a new way of interpreting the content. The imaginary space is not entirely 'imaginary' because it is concretely presented on the screen. The constable on stage still occupies imaginary space, but it is at the same time somehow discontinuous with the physical space he is in. The physical space is transformed and yet it is somehow somewhere else. And close-up seems to mean more than just a more intimate, metonymic representation of the character. It seems to take on the literal meaning of an increase in size to an enormous, threatening head, dominating Big Brother-like the comparatively minute constable. This conveys new meanings that concern the status of the characters at this point in their story. As the play progresses and their relationship develops they converge in the live space. By the end of the performance, when Ross is pushed to go further than the Sergeant would ever dare, he moves to the screen and takes on the connotations that the Sergeant once had - inaccessibility, and dominance in terms of size and influence on both the story and the performance.

The language of interaction is created in the same kind of process as that described by Freadman and MacDonald, drawing on the work of Derrida, for the formation of a new genre through mixing existing genres (Derrida, "La Loi du Genre" cited in Freadman and McDonald 45). Indeed this would be another way of describing the representational aspects of the performance: in terms of genre and the (re)invention of new genres. According to these theorists, the genre of a 'text' is determined not by the possession of specific elements of content, but rather at the 'metalingual' or 'metatextual' level - the framing operations that place the text in inter-relationship with other texts. Clint Eastwood's *The Unforgiven* has been called an "anti-western". Is this a new genre? The movie contains sufficient of the major emblematic elements of the western genre - a gunfight in a quarry, saloon brawls, and so on. However, they are sufficiently different, or more importantly, they have been perceived as sufficiently different (especially in terms of formal elements of social realism, even black comedy) as to inspire the creation of a new category - anti-western. It is on the level of the commentary about the film that the categorising takes place, not at some inner core of the film. Currently there would not be an anti-western section in video shops, but as *The Unforgiven* influences future films, it will be the use made of the category that will determine whether it becomes a fully recognised genre. Freadman and MacDonald write, "Semiotic practices are not like genetic
codes: they are not deep structures that engender their manifestations. Instead, they arise at the nexus of formal and material resources and constraints, practical precedents, and tactical deliberations" (95). Those framing operations - the practices of categorising - are not wholly outside of the text either. Rather they are the actual point of interaction of the text and 'reader' (and wider context in which it is read) so that they are at once inside and outside the text. The text itself is not passive, but engages with the categories, and works to situate itself - hence the "tactical deliberations" Freadman and MacDonald speak of.

In a similar way, the language of interactive media performance carries its own meta-language. As in the case of a new genre, the meta-language conveys rules for its interpretation in relation to the other two languages of filmic and live performance. It is like them but it is not them. It contains both their rules but it also transcends and/or breaks them. During much of the performance of Shifting the conventions of the Social Realist genre of The Removalists are recognisable on the screen, but this is only so that they can be broken at significant moments, pointing up the crucial difference between this genre and the new genre Shifting is creating. Importantly, this recategorizing also applies to the cultural valuing associated with the two performance languages that are mixed in Shifting. The dominant encoding of 'theatre' places 'high cultural' value on it (in particular theatre based on a text of the cultural stature of The Removalists), while film and especially television drama are categorised as popular culture ('low'). The language of interactive performance, therefore, is an unpredictable melting pot of these cultural values and associations. (It is, of course, not only the integration of film language that repositions the high cultural status of Shifting as a live theatre performance, but also the place of performance, the audience make-up and the 'rough theatre' style in which audience and performers share space and elaborate costumes and sets are not needed. Further than this, the use of 'youth cultural' music in the performances adds another twist to the recategorizing of the play and the performance.)

The new language is able to play with the rules of the languages it is formed out of. Indeed, playing, parodying and reframing are prominent among the ways the new language is constituted. For example, the language of video includes the many possible ways that on-screen images can be manipulated electronically. This is not a part of the language of live performance. However, one of the ways that interactive performance can create its own
language is by taking an element of one of these languages and placing it into the domain of the other. So when Constable Ross, on stage, burst into highly sped up action this could make sense because he was not only working in the language of live performance, but also in the language of interactive performance. It is clear that somehow the fast-forward button has been pressed on the overall performance, particularly when the screen action does the same (Sergeant Simmonds went into fast-forward simultaneously). Indeed, in video language, fast-forward frames seen on the screen generally signify a break in the performance - as the tape is being moved to another part - whereas in interactive language the fast-forward frames are incorporated as a continuous part of the performance. This has the additional effect of exposing the otherwise naturalised construction of dramatic time. Another element relating to the reframing of time and movement was the incorporation of the Sergeant’s wheelie-chair as his principle means of moving. This gave to the character’s motion a fluidity and potential for acceleration that suggested the kind of movement of bodies possible on the screen. Most importantly, there is an unpredictability generated in which elements of an established language can be re-invented, old ways of meaning can take new, surprising turns.

When two different languages are used in this way it greatly enhances the opportunity to defer tying down the overall meaning to a single or preferred one. This is not unlike the exploitation of deferred meaning celebrated by theorists such as Jean Francois Lyotard or Deleuze and Guattari: the ability to disrupt, distort and challenge the dominant, apparently unified flow of meaning in mainstream, official culture. Resistance, indeed even the only possibility of freedom, is argued to reside in maintaining multiplicity - diversity - difference/dereference in the face of mass, unifying and uni-directional info-cultural flow. For example, Michel Foucault introduces *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze and Guattari) with,

The individual is the product of power. What is needed is to ‘de-individualise’ by means of multiplication and displacement, diverse combinations. (xiv)

These theorists may be somewhat pessimistic in the overall picture that they paint of the social economy, but in terms of their tactics for opposition to dominant culture, they do offer more complexity and subtlety than the notion of opposing one false totality with another, alternative, ‘truth’. They also warn of the dangers of appropriation by the dominant flows if one takes
up a position within their matrix. In The Postmodern Condition, Lyotard advises "unexpected moves" that "increase displacement", and "disorient" (16), while Deleuze and Guattari speak of resistance in terms of "schizzes flows" that "escape coding, scramble the codes, and flee in all directions" (Anti-Oedipus xxi). In so doing, dominant meaning (and its illusory completeness of perspective and scientific objectivity) is hopefully challenged and ultimately the flow is a little changed, or at least not able to be predictably anticipated.

In the opening sequence of Shifting the dominant cultural mode is surely televisual language and, in particular, the genre of 'cop show': good guys versus bad guys, action, conflict, police win in the end and restore order and justice, often of an eye-for-an-eye kind. However, this usually dominant mode has been transplanted and positioned in interaction with the language of live theatre. The otherwise unified information flow is disrupted by an incongruous, if not contradictory, sequence in the live space. The presence of an alternative language allows and causes signifiers once tied firmly to a singular meaning by their genre to be cut free - perhaps not 'free-floating' as in the postmodern ideal, but significantly destabilized and ambiguous. Are the police in what is to follow really to be taken seriously and identified with? Is it going to be an action drama at all? Indeed, in this case, and unlike the Deleuze/Lyotard/Baudrillard macro models, the live performance may, in this particular context, dominate.

The history of [audiovisual] consumption itself... is built upon the social experience of division, dislocation and disintegration. The theatre, in this respect, is more revealing in its limitations since it does not operate in a virtual space. It has always been closely connected to a historical space. (Birringer, p. 131)

Because of the nature of the space, expectations created and the immediate presence of the live performer, it is possible that the more sub-cultural form may equally, if not to a greater extent, provide the anchor for meaning in this case and, so, interrogate the constructed mythology on the screen. Prior knowledge of The Removalists is not necessary (although it would strengthen this response) to place a question mark over the conventional meaning of the cop show sequence. With subsequent events in the play the parody of this dominant encoding of police becomes clear.
A further example is provided later. The action (Fiona ironing in her kitchen) is presented in television drama format on the screen. The use of image rather than spoken word powerfully creates imaginary space in filmic mode. At the same time, in the live performance space, there is a more abstract representation of the same action: Fiona chained to that great symbol of domestic oppression, the ironing-board, but externalising suppressed emotions and reactions to her environment and to Kenny in stylised gesture and frozen images. In this way the live performance space becomes a subtextual space to the screen, its imaginary space a window into the mind of the character on screen. Here there is a very different meeting of spaces at the imaginary level compared to the more 'naturalistic' dialogue scenes in which space becomes fairly smoothly continuous across the two media. For some of those scenes, including the Ross-Simmonds sequences in the police station, when only one live performer was present, there was a danger of re-creating distance and separation, and at times diminishing the energy of live presence and interaction. Whereas much of the mixing of live and screen spaces gave to the pre-recorded space a new and heightened sense of immediacy, at these moments of dialogue across the media, it often worked in reverse and the screen reduced the immediacy of the live space. It is interesting to note that similar dialogue scenes tended to maintain energy and engagement better when the live space somehow 'dominated' the screen. A good example lies in the Macbeth-Messenger dialogues of Multi-Media Macbeth. Not only was the Messenger reduced in size by being placed in a smaller frame, but part of the live action included Macbeth's complete remote control of the Messenger. Playing on pre-established conventions of video-phones or science-fiction intercoms these sequences never lost immediacy. Of course the immediate presence invested in the screen at these moments by the new 'interactive language' is ultimately based on an illusion - the video was still pre-recorded. This may indeed be the other reason for the loss of theatrical energy and engagement during the lengthier dialogues in Shifting - the inability to sustain the 'illusion', and therefore a reassertion of the frames around the two spaces, separating them once more.

It was often at moments of transition, actually crossing frames and joining the spaces that the new space came to life and revealed its possibilities. Part way through the stylised live and naturalistic screen action of Act Two, the two spaces seem to collide and integrate as an outraged Kenny kicks into a pile of boxes in close up on the screen and simultaneously bursts through
the wall of boxes previously serving as a wing to the side of the screen. Suddenly, the reality of the suburban flat (the fictional space represented on the screen) invades the inner world of Fiona’s mind that was previously represented in the live space. Kenny’s entrance into the live space is similar to an earlier moment when an on-screen Sergeant Simmonds goes into fast-forward (matched by Ross in the live space) and then hurtles off screen and straight onto the stage still in ‘fast-forward’!

In Multi-Media Macbeth the two most notable transitions were provided by Lady Macbeth ‘exiting’ and ‘re-entering’ from the live to the screen perspective of the banquet, and by Banquo’s ‘multi-media piss’ (the character in the live space urinating against the screen, with the ‘stream’ and a brick wall it was hitting projected on the screen). In all these cases, although reliant on a level of timing and illusion, there was very real surprise, movement and direction and, therefore, transfer of energy from one space to another, and a blending and consequent expanding of the languages of the two spaces into a new, interactive language. Most extreme of all of these moments, however, was the ‘finale’ of Shifting - when an enraged Ross is seen on screen charging towards the camera, leaping and literally bursting, live, through the screen in a symbolic destruction of Fiona’s and Kenny’s world.

At moments of transition such as these, when one space bursts into another, breaking previously held conventions, there may be a heightening of both the senses of reality and also theatricality. The sense of violence is amplified and becomes quite immediate, threatening the stability of the performance itself and the spectators’ relationship to it - their means of making sense of it, their positioning of it and themselves in relation to it... their framing of the spaces. At the same time, the spectators' awareness of the theatricality of the event, the constructed illusions, the play of the imagination in creating ephemeral intangible spaces, is heightened.

Part of the process of making meaning in the dominant mode is the framing, and consequent segregation, of spaces into apparently discreet, self-contained meaningful domains. Then the space and its contents within one frame is clearly not the same as that within another frame, and so it becomes meaningful. At the same time distinct functions and values are associated with the contents of one space as opposed to another, and these appear to be natural and immutable. As Freadman and MacDonald assert,
"the most obviously salient feature of the genres of commentary is their claim to represent an object, the subservience of the features of their practice to this end, their claim that that object exists independently of those practices, and correlatively with all of these, the claimed transparency of the medium" (140).

Re:Framing, however, set out to break down these divisions, allowing spaces to interpenetrate and combine. The distinctions between them, and their associated values, consequently appear less natural and given (Andrew Murphie speaks of a process of "mutual deconstruction" (219)). Heightened theatrical effect can be achieved with the unexpected breaking of a conventional frame. The stability of the screen as frame was most clearly upset when characters actually 'leaked' from it, breaking out of their televisual imprisonment to invade the live space (not unlike the Twisties commercial - a fantasy realised quite concretely in Shifting!)

The frame provided by the screen around the video performance conventionally suggests a level of stability: the performance is expected to be contained within this frame. This lends a distance and inaccessibility to the actors playing characters on the screen (a part of the star quality of movie and television actors and a factor in the frequent conflation of actor and character manifest amongst spectators of these genres—for example "It's 007!" not 'Sean Connery'.) Joseph Campbell describes this effect perfectly: "There is something magical about films. The person you are looking at is also somewhere else at the same time. That is a condition of the god." (The Power of Myth 15) In Re:Framing the presence of the same actors in the live space breaks down this traditional inaccessibility. The greater immediacy and tangibility of live actors, visibly flesh and blood human beings like everyone else, dissipates the illusory, almost ghostly technological transcendence of on-screen actors. This can create a sense amongst the spectators of being let in, given a special insight (in fact, one student made exactly this point in a feedback interview) that brings performers and audience closer in very much the same way as community theatre practitioners believe in empowering a community by breaking down the mystification of cultural production. Combined with the actual participation of community members (Plumpton students) Shifting was particularly motivated by this philosophy.
Re:Framing explored giving the screen immediacy in a quite literal way in Shifting when a live camera was directed at the actor playing the two sisters in the police station. The live images were projected onto the screen, creating some uncanny eyeline matches between live and on-screen characters. The camera is a powerful creator of performance space. Its presence instantly defines anyone in front of it as a performer, and anyone behind it or out of its focal range as spectators. (This is why some street performers have used the ploy of carrying a video camera and pretending to film their performance. Its powerful conventions tell anyone nearby that a performance is taking place and that they should look to the area in front of the camera. This is a lot easier than carrying a theatre around with you!) At this point in Shifting Ross takes on the mediatory position of cameraman. He remains within the live performance space but has created a new performance space in front of him, occupied by the actor playing both sisters. This new space is a live performance space in the same way as the space in front of the cameras on a film set is a live performance space for all those watching the action. If, however, it is a location set with members of the public observing, or a set with a studio audience, then the space behind the cameras also becomes a performance space. This is the same for the actor playing Ross, except he is playing the dual roles of cameraman and Constable Ross. In Shifting, however, the actual filmic space, created by the camera, is visible on the large screen for all spectators, and deconstructs what has previously been seen on the screen: seamless edits between shots of the two characters played by the same actor - the finished product only. The nature of the screen as performance space is changed and it becomes a live space - another way of seeing the physically present space. A space conventionally occupied by controlled, pre-recorded and edited images becomes one of immediacy and unpredictability. In The Empty Space Peter Brook writes:

The camera flashes onto the screen images of the past. As this is what the mind does to itself all through life, the cinema seems intimately real. Of course, it is nothing of the sort - it is a satisfying and enjoyable extension of the unreality of everyday perception. The theatre, on the other hand, always asserts itself in the present. This is what can make it more real than the normal stream of consciousness. This also is what can make it so disturbing. (p. 111)

When a camera is used in Re:Framing to deliver live images to the large screen, Brook’s observation that cinematic images are always in the past is
overturned and the screen takes on a role in deconstructing its own conventional practice, as well as taking on the kind of liveness more common at football games. However, as Brook might argue, it is the combination with the immediacy, unpredictability and unfamiliarity of the frame of live theatrical performance that has enabled this.

A major focus for the *Shifting* production was on the representation of violence. Both plays centre on violent acts which have traditionally been represented in Realism (or perhaps, in some contemporary live performances, by abstract stylisation). Because the interaction of media spaces gave the production the potential to juxtapose and interrogate different genres and their framing operations, one of the aims of *Shifting* was to try and use the different "languages" to translate violence into various representations and to let them play off against each other. This strategy also created moments that were amongst the most engaging points of the production, something that Patrice Pavis foreshadows: "Very often it is the out of sync, the absence of harmony between parallel scenic systems, that brings about the greatest aesthetic pleasure and produces meaning" ("Notes" 104).

The three key moments of violence in *Shifting* occur in an order of increasing breakage of the conventions of realism, yet arguably in a rising sense of violence — that is, an increasing reality. This apparent contradiction can be explained by examining several aspects of the process of representation of each moment and in terms of the ability to break out of illusion, to shift frames and to heighten the immediacy and performative ‘presence’ spoken of so far.

First was a sequence of shots (!) of bashings and shootings in the sanitized, glamorised reality of the American TV cop show. The sequence is reminiscent of the sort of image flows that have been subject to Baudrillardian condemnation. It is true that cop shows have borrowed from or share with genres, such as that of sports coverage, the ritualization of the human body in action, particularly violent action. Through camera angles, editing and effects such as slow motion, and enhanced by rhythmic music, the body in action becomes fetishised as an object of contemplation and admiration. In this way it is more the roller-coaster ride of fast edited shots, the rhythm and pace, and the capturing of the energised body in motion, rather than concern for the individual and social effects of violence
that is at stake. The representation has distilled the actions, denying them any context - effects, causes, social implications - other than the rapid flow of action images into a supposedly objective, truthful representation of pure action. There is a claim to reality and yet no reflexivity about the form of presentation and the choices as to what aspects of reality are presented. In this representation the violence is almost as ritualised, as stylised as in live performance discussed earlier, in that it represents something that it is not necessarily 'the same as' at all, yet there tends to be, or there is called for, an unquestioning acceptance that it is the same as, it is the real thing, it is reality. This, however, is not the full picture of the process involved because it assumes a passive viewer. A spectator brings an awareness of the greater context and, in particular, of the 'metalingual' to their interpretation, while the performance or 'text' itself is self-reflexive at the metalingual level. These framing operations categorise the performance as fiction and entertainment and ultimately not 'real'. This can serve to close off the representation from the world of the spectator and protect him or her from an engagement with the 'visceral' and also the broader social implications of the violence depicted. It is in this area that debate rages over concerns about the 'desensitizing' of viewers, or, on the other hand, the risk of defective 'reading' in which framing is not made between real life and fictional experience. The question of the balance and the precise degree to which viewers are active and aware of contextuality in constructing meaning remains undetermined.

The second key moment of violence is more complex because it is represented in both languages simultaneously. Consequently, it is in fact in the third language, the language of interactive media. This is the assault on Kenny in which Sergeant Simmonds loses control and explodes in violence. On the screen is perhaps only a variation on the first representation. Great effort and intricacy is put into counterfeiting the effects of violent damage to the body. Yet, once again, the Realism relies on a highly constructed representation and a great deal of conventionalised encoding. For example, sounds, reactions, use of slow motion or strobed effects are not in the least the same thing as what they represent, but they may be combined to create a representation that is accepted as 'realistic'. This was indeed the case with Shifting where the bashing sequence on the screen was constructed from shots selected at random from many separate takes, edited and strobed, and combined with such sounds as the dropping of a sack or hitting of a wall.
The performance in the live space, however, was not in realistic mode but rather in a dislocated, alienated stylization. In Western culture, the language of live theatre is more flexible in terms of 'metaphoric' representation (allowing one thing to stand for another) than that of most film. In this case a punching-bag suspended from the ceiling, stood for the body of Kenny, the husband. In this sense, then, such a representation of Simmonds bashing the shit out of Kenny is the furthest removed from 'reality'. But that is only within the framework of conventional Realism in which 'reality' is measured against the illusionistic creation of a seamless conjunction between performed representation and daily experience outside the theatre. There is, on the other hand, another measure or conception of reality in live performance. This is the reality of theatre as illusion, as constructed representation of something else, that Brecht developed into a theory. In this formulation reality is the presentation of the workings of performance and embraces the audience as a part of the representational event. When there is such an alienation between the object and that which represents it, the mechanisms of symbolic meaning-making are made apparent.

By contrast, theatrical Realism has become increasingly inadequate in comparison with that of film. Especially in the case of violence it has become impossible to match the illusory capabilities of cinema and television. This is for the obvious reason that without post production intervention it is impossible to sustain the illusion of severe physical damage to the body. The result is that if Realism is pursued in live performance it will very often fail - in the worst case turning Realism to unwanted comedy, and at best resulting in a kind of half alienation effect without, however, challenging the dominance of illusion-based Realism as a mode of ordering reality (since it remains clear that the intention was to be 'realistic'). How uninspiring these days are those pulled punches, fake thuds and blades obviously slid down the side of a body! What has no doubt happened is not that modern actors are any less adept at faking it, but that the language of performed violence has come to be dominated by graphic, cinematic Realism. On the other hand, a more positive reason for abandoning Realism has been an increasing search for alternative ways of expressing an element or level of reality (reflecting a shift in the perception of what 'reality' is), and in some cases to reveal the constructed, partial nature of any portrayal of 'reality'. Finally, there is the argument that stylized violence leaves the task of representation to the spectator's
imagination, whereas cinema Realism closes off all representation to the one possibility.

For all these reasons it can be argued that it is indeed more 'realistic' to punch with unrestrained violence into a symbolised victim, exploiting the intensity of the live presence of the actor, rather than weakly to pull punches. This is particularly so if the action takes place at close proximity, literally amidst the audience. Audience feedback from informal post-performance interviews did indeed support this argument. Of course it remains only in relation to a partial reality that this representation is more 'realistic'. It was a conscious decision to pursue Realism of the actual brutal actions of violence. This provides a contrast to the majority of theatre representation where the character is represented in Realism, while the actions are symbolised. Here the actions were in Realism while the character was symbolised.

The overall functioning of this moment is in fact a great deal more complex because the 'alienated' live representation was combined with the bashing sequence which was in conventionalised film Realism. The final representation is, then, neither in film nor in theatrical language, but in the language of interaction whose rules an audience quickly (perhaps inherently) begins to apply. In terms of reality, the interactive representation extends the alienation effect. It breaks the previously established 'Realism' of the interaction between one character on stage and the other on the screen, by representing (if only partially, or symbolically) both characters in both spaces simultaneously. In particular, however, it presents in Realism on the screen the character of Kenny who is symbolised on stage. The dislocation of meaning implicit in the alienation effect is quite specific: splitting Realist representation of character and reaction from Realist representation of other character (Simmonds) and violent action, and placing them in the two separate performance spaces. The result offers a number of choices, and provides a number of realities simultaneously. A spectator may choose to work in just one of the two performance languages watching only screen or stage action, or may make various combinations of Realism and alienated symbolism. Audience feedback indicated that there was indeed a distribution of these different ways of watching the performance that were adopted.
The final level of violent reality came in the closing moment of the performance. Violence was not only committed by characters on each other, but also by the performer on the medium itself. As Ross bursts through the screen, the conventionally unassailable means of transmission, the frame of performance, the intersection of performance space with 'real time' and 'real space' was smashed. This surely provides a moment of heightened reality when the rules of representation are irrevocably broken, when violence is done to that which conventionally escapes all harm. At this point the frames and conventions that separate and protect a spectator from the dramatic world come down. The work of the mind, the framing operations - it is here that reality is ultimately constructed, and so it is here that the 'tactical deliberations' of the performance should focus. By shattering conventional patterns, by surprising and demanding re-evaluation, real contact can be made, spaces converge and realities (if only in fact illusions of realities) can be shared. The adrenalin charged sensation of drama and heightened reality is created, and, simultaneously, an awareness of frames, contexts and wider connections is achieved. Above all, in all these hybrid moments there is the realisation of Schenker's description of the power of the alienation effect: "The performance structure is broken open by its anti-structure and in that liminal space a direct communication, a potentially deep contact, connects author to audience" (Performance Theory 142). Though, perhaps Eugenio Barba's slogan-like words are most appropriate here. "One can't teach anything... one must only provoke a shock" (255).
Module 11: Text + Research

The bringing together of the research interests of the project with the playtexts used (The Removalists, The Crucible, Macbeth and in the final production, Hamlet) saw a clash between aspects of the theoretical and political discourse of the academic space on the one hand and the traditional encodings of the text, in particular the written or printed word on the other. An extreme (indeed patently overzealous) example of this preoccupation with opposing the written word and text in much recent cultural theory is given by Rolando Perez,

The gesture is always spontaneous, non-coded and non-inscribed; and it disappears like a musical note the moment it is performed... But most importantly, unlike the despotic and imperialistic Signifier, it does not refer back to anything; it is not circular but linear. (p. 39)

The ‘anti-textual’ position of the academic space and its cultural theory can be seen as an influence on the documentation as well as on the three productions. Visual imagery, sounds, random intertextual connections, integrated/shifted frames, and a concern with performative ‘presence’ - immediacy and temporariness as opposed to recording and longevity - these were all called upon to challenge the textual space. Despite this, there was no attempt to eliminate words entirely because it was a matter of mixing and interacting spaces, not simply replacing one with another.

One of the results of such mixing is the displacement of the canonical position of the plays. Williamson, Miller and Shakespeare are frames that set these texts apart as ‘high cultural’, even as ‘Literature’. By adopting an approach to recreating these plays that is somewhat irreverent towards the word, and that reinterprets them visually, across media frames and amongst unforeseen, multiple intertexts, the project ‘infects’ them within so-called ‘low cultural’ - popular and youth cultural - frames. In addition to this, by combining two of them within the one production, the mythical completeness of the canonical text is smashed. Instead of treating the playtext as though it contained the unity of a complete world within it in some kind of authoritative recording, the Re:Framing project approached the scripts as a collection of cultural ‘raw material’, connected to a continuum of other raw material across a diversity of cultural domains both
high and low. From such a perspective, any of the material - playtext or intertext - is equally malleable.

The combination of text with research space, and then with screen or multimedia space, opens up strategies of interrupting narrative and developing the productions, and indeed this documentation, in intertextual, parallel, non-linear ways. These offer alternative perspectives, representations and realities to those of the dominant textual mode of modern culture. The approach also retrieves a level of randomness that is otherwise eliminated by the sequential logic of the written text, and, finally, it creates a demand for greater interaction by the 'reader'.
Module 12: Imaginary + Research

The resulting imaginary space of much of the three Re:Framing productions was no doubt deeply affected by the presence of the research frame and its discursive interests. Whereas the imaginary space of Realism is in many ways smoothly continuous with external reality (because it is patterned upon it - in fact its success is judged upon how similar it is, whether it is a true 'mirror to life'), the Re:Framing imaginary space should be described more in terms of a collage, with all the overlaps and gaps and amusing anomalies of such a pieced-together composition. Whereas the ideal of Realism (in terms of its aims for both the actor's and the audience's experience) is the disappearance of all other spaces than the imaginary one, Re:Framing actively sought to hold multiple levels of space in view simultaneously. And one might argue that that is in fact real. There are multiples, as many as there are people to do or to watch.

Interesting examples of this alternative approach to making imaginary space are provided by the intertextual moments between The Crucible and The Removalists. Here the continuity of one imaginary world is obviously interrupted by another. But what exactly happens in the mind of the spectator? This is, of course, totally dependant on the individual spectator, their perspectives and the contexts they bring to the performance. However, comments can be made as to possibilities created by the various frames and spaces in interaction.

An inevitable frame upon a performance is its genre. Classifying or recognising the genre of something is always intertextual. For convenience, the term 'text' is used broadly here to mean not only written work, but also a film or performance, understood as a stream of signs to be 'read' by a viewer. The elements which mark a text as a particular genre occur both inside and outside the text. They are set up by the text but also determined by the social context in which they occur and by the particular 'reader's' own perspectives. Anne Freadman and Amanda MacDonald explain how these 'metadiscursive' generic elements of a text are analogous to the televised commentary on a sports game - telling us specifically what is happening in the game, but at the same time indicating its position within the continuity of sports games, television and social life itself. "It is in the commentary of a
social practice that that practice is taught, that its regularities are given the status of rules, that they are rehearsed and enforced" (10).

The genre of a text then tells the 'reader' how to respond to the text. This conditioning of response is not arbitrary, but is a part of maintaining a cultural hierarchy and value-system. Within this system different genres can be categorised into what is 'worthwhile', what is 'just entertainment value', what is trivial, boring or 'heavy' and also what is for male viewers or female viewers, what is mainstream or subcultural and so on. This hierarchy, nevertheless, is in constant flux and always under challenge, just as genres themselves are continually redefined and new ones created. (For more on genre in relation to Re:Framing, see the module on "Live and Screen").

In a project that uses both live and recorded performance media and seeks to integrate them, and brings theatre and school spaces together, there is a great deal of opportunity to play with genre markers. The first production, Shifting made a direct comparison between The Removalists and Arthur Miller's The Crucible. The two plays have already been placed in the same genre by their appearance together on the HSC list (for 'Two Unit General English'). The Crucible is another set text, and also a play that deals with broad social themes by means of Realism. In this quite literal way they can be seen to have been placed within the same generic frame, setting up one among many partnerships of similarity and difference. There is in this way a precedent, a framework within which to understand the direct inclusion of material from The Crucible amidst The Removalists, even if further meaning is dependant on the specifics of the production.

The video screen played an important role in the construction of meaning resulting from the juxtiaposition of the two plays and the movement between their two imaginary spaces. Travelling from one space to another by means of a simple edit cut is a well established video convention. The change of light, costume, sound (atmosphere) is available instantly for the viewer to interpret and imaginatively travel the necessary distance. Yet in Shifting there was also a break of narrative, in fact there were no explicit links provided across the cut as one might expect in standard video drama editing.
Synchronised with the screen interruption on each occasion was the live entrance of Abigail, amidst the, now frozen, action of The Removalists. Whereas the screen change was a direct cut, an immediate shift to a new space, on the stage the world of The Crucible in fact invaded that of the Australian drama. The merging of the two imaginary spaces on stage was enhanced by visible contact made between Ross and Abigail (the only exception to the freezing of The Removalists' action). So despite the obvious interruption and disjunction of the two worlds, there were a number of strategies in place to suggest and open up various associations at the imaginary level, even perhaps to make a complete, reframed conjunction of the two. Apart from the Ross-Abigail link there was also the doubling across the plays of the same actor in the roles of Abigail and Fiona, creating further connections. Indeed the limiting of certain characters to specific media spaces (in particular, Ross and Abigail represented exclusively in live space) was also a strategy in forging intertextual parallels. Similarly, the image of a condemned girl on the screen, pointed at by Abigail, immediately followed by the blood-spattered image of Kenny, suggested a link between the consequences of the actions of the two young protagonists (Ross and Abigail). Indeed, this was one of the points of intertextuality consciously selected as a focus for combining the plays. The original concept had aimed at a far greater interweaving of the two stories around the 'socially induced' violence committed by their young protagonists.

Multi-Media Macbeth, in its combination of video montage and live performance, showed much greater ambition in its attempt to create a multiple, intertextual imaginary space. For example, the descriptions of the battles fought between the opposing clans and nations were set to fast-cut video sequences of war imagery from throughout history. This has a parallel in the kind of sampling that dominates modern pop music, and could be accused of the 'dehistoricising' of postmodern 'simulacra'. That is, if it were not for the interaction with live performance. As Andrew Murphie puts it, "Performance seems increasingly moved to educate its audiences back to a point where the new technologies become visible and accessible. In this way education about technology is eventually going to destroy postmodern illusions about the lack of technology's limits, much as the sudden experience of World War One shattered a number of Futurist illusions" (216). The simple 'presence' of the live performance and the demystifying, even 'subversive', attitude to the technology used, made each of these sequences more a moment of 'rehistoricizing' than

67
'dehistoricising'. Comments gathered in informal surveys following the production suggested that it had successfully created powerful new associations (both insightful and emotional, and very specifically contextual) for many spectators. Perhaps Heiner Muller would have approved:

I believe it's indeed a problem that the theatre has accepted or applied far too few of the new technologies, from the fine arts, let's say. That, for instance, the collage has never really been applied as a method by the theatre. (p. 164)

The potential for this kind of approach to cross-media performance is very wide-ranging. (Of course it is specifically mainstream, Western performance that has ignored or restricted the 'collage'. Many non-Western performance traditions, as well as instances within Western experimental, alternative and popular traditions have always held parallels to the collage technique.) In the example provided by Multi-Media Macbeth it is not only the playscript that is opened out, filled out and reconstituted by the video montages. The process also works 'the other way around'. Not only does the open-ended historiography of the video fill out and create new connotations and interpretive dimensions for the Macbeth story as it unfolds on the stage, but the Macbeth story in turn affects the 'reading' of these images (and may continue to do so for spectators long after the performance event itself is over). The Macbeth story serves as a matrix, knitting the images together so that within the context of a performance they may become some kind of narrative themselves: for example, a retelling of the history of Western culture or, at least, the aggressively military aspects of it (the cyclical nature of its so-called 'development' resonating with the strongly cyclical implications of Macbeth). In this way, many stories or versions of stories begin to appear simultaneously and in interaction with one another. A central story such as Macbeth in this example can provide a through-line and a level of familiarity to guide a spectator who is accustomed to linear narratives and be a point of focus for the emergence of multiple other narratives through interaction with strategically selected, or even randomly projected, audio-visual elements. The play's story then also provides a 'normative' - a structure which at first appears predictable but which can be disrupted, surprised, critiqued and overturned - as was the case at certain heightened moments in all three productions.
Module 13: Conclusion and Future Development

The insights of the analysis that are spread over the different modules of this documentation fall into two broad areas, both concerned with the ultimate framing of the productions.

Firstly, the Re:Framing productions sought multiplicity in favour of unity. That is, levels of openness of interpretation over closed, structured meaning. Both pieces broke with many traditional framing structures, including: i) linear narrative flow, ii) the binary opposition between imaginary time and performance time, and iii) the conventional singular focussing of a spectator's attention.

Where dominant forms of Western drama structure the performance around only a uni-directional, linear narrative, Re:Framing disrupted any such expectations with intertextual, trans-narrative combinations such as combining the two plays, The Removalists and The Crucible, or placing the narrative of Macbeth in 'collage' with the sampled or suggested narratives of news stories, documentaries, soap operas and sports stories. In addition, traditional notions of time were broken down and wider possibilities explored. Conventionally, Western theatre works around a binary opposition between live performance time (the moment of watching) and imaginary or virtual time (the setting of the narrative). In mainstream Realism these two times are treated as rigidly separate spheres and there are many conventions for maintaining their distinction. Even in the case of the classical alienation effect (well and truly appropriated by the middle-class theatre), this binary opposition remains - it is simply highlighted. In Re:Framing's performances, however, the structuring of time was one of a more fluid continuum where different times could co-exist, alter, or completely rupture one another. The use of a live camera brought immediacy to the screen's otherwise pre-recorded time. So too, in a different way, did Constable Ross' theatrical leap through the screen. The use of local topography, such as the St Mary's police station (in Shifting performed at Plumpton) or the Casula Powerhouse (particularly in the case of performances of Multi-Media Macbeth in the Casula/Liverpool area) introduced for locals recognising these places, a level of current historical context into, on the one hand, fictional imaginary time, and, on the other hand, montages of otherwise quite decontextualized images. In this
example there is a true opening up of the available time-scale along which to engage with the moment of performance. The final choice is left with the spectator, according to their own particular context and relationship to these places. Finally, such other examples as the application of fast-forward mode to the live space, or the imaginary character, Macbeth's, total real-time control over the flow of the video images, these techniques were all a part of a far more fluid and multiple structuring of time through the performance.

Multiplicity in relation to space - the 'de-focussing' of a spectator's attention - is best exemplified by the bashing sequence in *Shifting* in which focus was split between the screen area and Simmond's attack on a punching-bag amidst the audience. Once again, there is a rejection of any unity in the framing of the performance which would otherwise, traditionally, result in what Elam describes as the "performance text" being "presented as an already produced and bounded object which the spectator observes, rather than constructs, from his permanent lookout point" (63). Other moments such as the apparent transition between frames when Lady Macbeth enters the on-screen banquet (realised more completely in *My Secret Life With Hamlet* during Morgan's 'virtual reality' fight) are able (when the timing is right) to toy with our expectations and constructions of separate spaces.

The second area into which this summary divides the analysis is that of shifting across the boundaries and hierarchies of dominant culture: reframing between aspects of dominant, elite culture and oppositional or marginalised subcultures. Much of the focus of this is linked to the practical aims of opening up middle-class theatre texts to youth cultural access and, in the first production, involving local students in creating performance and video work. The conventional interpretive structures (frames) that *Re:Framing* set out to break included: i) the high culture-low culture binary opposition, ii) the traditional separation between institutional spaces (university and state highschool), and iii) the dominant construction of a 'knowledge-object' as the focal concern of education in our society.

The blurring of the high-low opposition is most obvious in the integration of video and theatre. This point of departure then created possibilities of juxtaposition between 'literary' genres and popular culture genres such as news, soaps, music clips and so on. The aim, however, was not simply to place them in opposition, but to allow these genres and their framing conventions to interact and change one another, refusing easy categorisation.
and closure. Once again, a spectator is called upon to actively participate in constructing new meanings.

Participation at another level - in the actual developmental process - was the means of blurring the conventional boundaries and inaccessibilities between university and school activities. One very tangible result of the Re:Framing process is an ongoing relationship between Plumpton High School and the Theatre Department at UWS Nepean. The coming together of these two institutional spaces was not, however, without challenges, one of which was the differing notions of 'knowledge', 'learning' and 'research'. The process itself challenged the dominant 'knowledge-as-object' mythology with a model of self-directed, participatory and experiential learning. Within this process more active, relationship-oriented and unpredetermined levels of understanding (such as intertextual and intercontextual knowledge) were valued and encouraged.

What can be seen in common through these is a preoccupation with denying easy delineation and categorisation, refusing conventional framing wherever possible. Rolando Perez, drawing upon Deleuze and Guattari, makes the potential of such an approach clear: 'But what if we don't have 'one' particular position... what if we do not allow ourselves to be positioned on one side or the other of the hier(archical) dividing line? What then? The established order begins to tremble" (118). As suggested in the "Rationale", Augusto Boal's 'Invisible Theatre' is perhaps the ultimate extension of a refusal of framing. Indeed, all his theatre practice is deeply concerned with playing upon, subverting, and (in the case of Invisible Theatre) avoiding what Keir Elam describes as the "general connotative marker 'theatricality' [which] attaches to the entire performance... permitting the audience to 'bracket off' what is presented to them from normal social praxis" (12). Boal deliberately targets this frame within strategies aimed at developing his now famous "rehearsal for revolution". And this is the final point - the aspects of Re:Framing summarised here are tactics in a strategy, they are necessarily context-based, adapted to specific moments and places, and on each occasion they will have different results and are open to revision.
What next?

The experiential research process includes a developing empowerment on various levels for all the participants, perhaps most of all myself. If the experimentation and research were to continue, it must include broadening this aspect. This could mean even more integral involvement of school students in the process, more self-direction, exploration and influence over the final outcomes of the created material. Finally, it seems clear that any continuation of this process must simply push the frames even further. Perhaps greater levels of randomness? For a touring production, efforts to adapt fully to each new space and include it, its people and its discourses in the performance. Here the technology can offer many as yet undreamed of possibilities... to sample and offer immediate reframing of any environment; to turn this otherwise awe-inspiring power over to local hands, to inject their viewpoints; to interrogate a changing world in which communication is dominated by the media image. In short, all the time blurring the boundaries, Re:Framing the frames that separate art and life, performer and spectator, media images and local knowledge, cultural spaces and everyday human meeting places.
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UWS PROJECT

In April - May 1994 Yr. 11 Drama Students at Plumpton H.S. collaborated with students and staff from the UWS Drama Dept. on a production of the Removelist which incorporated segments of the Crucible for an innovative performance.

The process in developing the performance involved visits from the UWS group, working with students over a 3 week period during two double periods and after school rehearsals. Visits involved workshops on acting, approaches to text, video technique and finally rehearsals of the show.

The project was of enormous value to students for several reasons, some of which can be listed as follows:

1. It assisted student understanding of two plays which may be studied as HSC text - broadening their range of experiences and understanding of material.

2. Assisted acting skills, students were required to play specific characters in The Crucible - thus had to complete research on the character, make decisions on blocking and staging, adopt appropriate costume / mannerisms etc. General acting technique was guided by the director and students from the UWS.

3. Enabled valuable interaction between role models provided by university students. Students at Plumpton do not have access to professional Theatre due to costs, nor often role models in Theatre - except what is viewed on TV or in film. Thus working on a one to one basis with UWS students assisted forming an understanding that they can take an interest in acting further - ie. at university level if motivated and prepared to make the commitment the students from the UWS had obviously displayed. The actors used were young and thus students related well to them.

4. Assisted an understanding of the roles of people in theatre. Students were able to witness a Director in action - solving problems in the process of realising a concept to performance through an 'original' approach to two scripts. Dean Tuttle's skill was clear to students, following initial contact when he outlined the idea and then in weeks preceding where he indicated how the project was to proceed. He led workshops for the students introducing acting skills followed by interpretations of the script. Ongoing problem solving and alterations to the initial idea and script were valuable for students as a way of perceiving the action and the process of developing a performance.

5. Introduction to invaluable media skills, because Dean utilised a multi-media approach in his interpretation of the scripts for "Shifting" students were divided into groups, some learned how to operate cameras and to film the segments utilised in the production. These students went on to choose video for their individual projects for the H.S.C. they were motivated to take this option as a result of their involvement in this project.

All of the students involved were greatly enriched by these experiences. Their choice of material for their H.S.C. group performances reflected far more interesting ideas, and students took far greater risks in attempting new ideas than they were willing to previously. The whole process from the initial idea to the final product of performance was a delight to be involved in.

ROSINA GRIEVE
HEAD TEACHER PERFORMING ARTS PLUMPTON HIGH
RE:FRAMING

An investigation of performance at the intersection of spaces

Dean Tuttle

MA Honours (Performance) Thesis

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY, NEPEAN
Faculty of Performance, Fine Art and Design

1997
The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis, and the best possible result has been obtained.
Multimedia item accompanies print copy
SYNOPSIS

*Re:Framing* is the documentation and analysis of a process of theoretical and practical performance research. The terms of reference for this research were to experiment with the practical workshopping and development of three productions which each restructured and reconceived a ‘canonical’ written playscript (David Williamson’s *The Removalists* and Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* respectively) in a format which combined audio-visual media with live performance. The performances were specifically developed for highschools in New South Wales and developed models and ideas for using portable technology so that they could easily travel from location to location. The research methodology also included the practical investigation of a process of collaborative production of a multimedia theatre piece with a group of highschool students (from Plumpton High School in Western Sydney).

The documentation consists of an interactive multimedia component and a number of text ‘modules’ that correspond to sections of the interactive. The analysis formulates the process of construction, execution and reception of the performances in terms of a number of intersecting and interacting spaces. The focus is on the practice and effects of creating combinations and interactions between these otherwise discreet spaces. The nature of these spaces helps to define and situate the performance but the space can, conversely, be redefined by the performance. In the specific context of multimedia theatre performances for highschools, the spaces that may come into interplay and be modified include: those of the audio-visual media, the meeting space of live performer and audience, the school environment and the wider institution of public education that it is a part of, the written text of a playscript as a space for constructing a fictional reality and the ‘virtual space’ where this fiction is reconstructed within the mind of the spectator in response to the symbolism of the performance. If such spaces are bounded by frames which are at least partly socially and discursively defined, the thesis proposes, then the performance can act as a catalyst to create new spaces, with languages and ways of structuring reality that differ to those of the old spaces. The implications of this hybridisation may reach beyond the immediate time, space and subject of the performance to reframe ideas, images, narratives and mythologies in domains that extend into many areas of social life and destabilize the systems upon which they are based.
Reframing a space can reform the perception and structuring of realities within it.
Certificate of originality

This is to certify that this thesis is my original work, and that it has not previously been presented for examination for any other degree at this or any other institution.

I agree also to abide by the Copyright Rules of the University.

........................................ Date 10/10/97

Dean Tuttle
Acknowledgments:

I would like to thank my supervisor, Anne Marshall, without who's open-mindedness, encouragement and expertise this research work would not have been possible. Thanx you also to Gordon Beattie, my co-supervisor, for his many 'cybercollaborations'. Being a practical performance research project means that the experimentation was impossible to do alone and, again, I am deeply indebted to all the members of the casts and crews and the talents of the musicians for each production. They are listed in full in the multimedia, but the core, live performing casts of each were David Attrill, Kate Little, David Williams, Joshua Young, Eliza Logan and Morgan Lewis. Hours and hours of technical production assistance were provided by Paul Savage, Stafford Wales, Chenoeh Miller and Jane Little. All the above contributed considerably to ideas and achievements through the process. On the practical side, the support at Nepean of David Hull and the Faculty of Performance, Fine Art and Design and Hart Cohen and the Media Arts section of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences has been legendary. Russell Pennell provided invaluable assistance with the multimedia documentation. Finally, Rosina Grieves and her class at Plumpton High were open-minded (or perhaps naive!) enough to collaborate enthusiastically on the first production and make that aspect of the research possible.
**Table of contents:**

The following table of contents is set out in fifteen modules. Modules 3 to 12 are to be associated either with clicking a spatial icon or with dragging one spatial icon on top of another (mixing spaces). These modules should be approached in any order and there is some inherent overlap between certain modules.

### MODULES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Methodology and project description</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Screen + Text</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Screen + Imaginary</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Screen + Research</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Physical + Screen</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Physical + Live</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Physical + Research</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Physical + Imaginary</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Live + Screen</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Text + Research</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Imaginary + Research</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Conclusion and Further Development</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>List of Works Consulted</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>