

**(RE-)CONSTRUCTING THE ACTOR–AUDIENCE  
RELATIONSHIP IN IMMERSIVE THEATRE  
PRACTICE**

**J. L. RAMOS**

**PhD**

**2015**

**(RE-)CONSTRUCTING THE ACTOR–AUDIENCE  
RELATIONSHIP IN IMMERSIVE THEATRE  
PRACTICE**

**JORGE LOPES RAMOS**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
of the University of East London,  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**August 2015**

I certify that this thesis, and the research to which it refers, is the product of my own work, and that any ideas or quotations from the work of other people, published or otherwise, are fully acknowledged in accordance with the standard referencing practices of the discipline.

—Jorge Lopes Ramos

*To the three people who instilled in me the desire to think (and act) critically: Persis Jade Maravala, my life partner; Jason Arcari, my first lecturer in the United Kingdom; and Jorgeh José Lopes Machado Ramos, my late father.*



## **Abstract (775 words)**

This research examines the modes of audience behaviour in immersive theatre events in the United Kingdom (UK). This includes audience expectations shaped by theatre conventions, the ways in which actors perform as well as the strategies employed by event producers to encourage audience participation. This research aims to contribute to the field of immersive practice by proposing a new approach to immersive dramaturgy that enhances the experience of individual audiences in immersive, interactive and participatory theatre.

This study maps the development of a new approach to actor training, audience interviews and the making of an immersive theatre production trilogy (*Hotel Medea*). The development process and production of the *Hotel Medea* trilogy comprise a key practice-based outcome of this research, and it was performed in full in London (2009, 2010 and 2012), Edinburgh (2011) Rio de Janeiro (2010), and in part in the city of Brasilia (2012). A second key outcome of the research is a new methodology of immersive practice—‘dramaturgy of participation’—that includes approaches to theatrical dramaturgy in which each audience member is offered opportunities to proactively participate as an individual, and which will be a useful resource for emerging theatre makers in the field of immersive practice. The overnight theatre production *Hotel Medea* is a major and central part of this submission. The written material provides context, detailed exegesis and expands upon relevant topics. Readers can access video recordings of *Hotel Medea* (LIFT, 2010) in full on the following address: <http://www.vimeo.com/hotelmedea>.

I will use the *Hotel Medea* trilogy as the case study for this research utilizing its durational overnight structure to lead my argument for immersive theatre events to meaningfully consider the experience of each (and every) audience member individually throughout the duration of performance. An experience not based on competitive participation or chance journeys but instead on a carefully designed dramaturgy that allows individuals to build a temporary community with fellow audiences. My argument suggests that there is a need for immersive theatre practitioners to devise adequate tools for its audiences prior to participation being offered, in order to aid a fuller participation in the event. *Hotel Medea* is a durational interactive theatrical event that takes place in real time from 00.00 a.m. to 06.00 a.m., in three parts. It retells the Greek myth of Medea through three types of participation design: participatory rituals, immersive environments and interactive game-play. *Hotel Medea* is concerned

with the experience of the individual audience members as ticket-paying public, as participants and as players. At every step of the event, expectations are re-negotiated to allow individuals to engage with the event—at times proactively, at others passively.

I have focused on the perspective of the author as opposed to solely drawing upon audience questionnaires, feedback and testimonies of collaborators. My choice of critical approach is based on the accumulated experience gathered, especially as a performer in *Hotel Medea*, allowing me to explore the complex and nuanced responses from individual audience members over the course of six years. During the early stages of my research, audience and collaborator interviews played an important part in evaluating the basic structure of the performance event. However, it soon became clear that the production would need to devise its own tools for capturing relevant data. Therefore the role of the Captain – the first host the audiences meet as they arrive in *Hotel Medea* - became itself one of the most valuable tools for articulating this research. The Captain, as well as other approaches used, are described in detail through the course of the first chapters.

The key focus of this research project is the proposition of a dramaturgy of participation through the notion of the ‘micro-event’. Micro-events are determined by three interrelated design elements, each of which nuances a larger area of practice, namely participatory rituals, immersive environments, and interactive game-play. The significance of this enquiry is the unique new practice in relation to audience behaviour in immersive experiences in a time when the term ‘immersive’ is widely explored both within and beyond the arts. The production output of this research—*Hotel Medea*—has itself been widely recognized by specialized press and cultural programmers as a leader in the field, creating a direct impact on the wider understanding of processes and methods of audience immersion across the UK and internationally. This recognition can be observed through awards and nominations, public statements of influential figures in the cultural sector, references in academic publications (Boenisch, 2012; White, 2013), in newspaper articles placing *Hotel Medea* as part of ‘the original cadre of British participatory ensembles’ (Armstrong, 2011) and in other UK publications such as *The Herald*, *Scotsman*, *Metro* (2011), *Time Out*, and *Telegraph* (2012).

## Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Illustrations</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<b>1 Chapter 1: Towards a Dramaturgy of Participation</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 You Are the Guest at <i>Hotel Medea</i>	1
1.2 An Invitation to Stay Awake	5
1.3 Audience Behaviour	7
1.4 Immersive Theatre in the UK	14
1.5 Training the Hosts	18
1.6 Framing Immersion and Play in <i>Hotel Medea</i>	23
1.7 Elements of the Guest–Host Relationship	26
1.8 The Stage	30
1.9 Politicizing the Audience Member	37
1.10 The Joker as a Model for the Host	40
1.11 Re-imagining the Spect-actor	42
1.12 Embodied Perceptions of Shifting Spaces	46
1.13 Expectations of an Overnight Event: The Arrival at <i>Hotel Medea</i>	48
1.14 Micro-events	51
<b>2 Chapter 2: Participatory Rituals in <i>Zero Hour Market</i></b>	<b>54</b>
2.1 Part I: <i>Zero Hour Market</i>	56
2.2 Micro-event 1 at 23.50 h: Audience Training Camp	57
2.3 Micro-event 2 at 00.00 h: The Market	61
2.4 Micro-event 3 at 00.40 h: The Wedding Preparation	66
2.5 Micro-event 4 at 01.00 h: The Jongo	68
<b>3 Chapter 3: Immersive Environments in <i>Drylands</i></b>	<b>72</b>
3.1 Part II: <i>Drylands</i>	74
3.2 Micro-event 5 at 02.00 h: Children’s Bedroom	74
3.3 Micro-event 6 at 02.00 h: Medea’s Guests	78
3.4 Micro-event 7 at 02.00 h: Jason’s Campaign Room	79

3.5	The Question of Agency	82
<b>4</b>	<b>Chapter 4: Interactive Game-Play in <i>Feast Of Dawn</i></b>	<b>85</b>
4.1	Part III: <i>Feast of Dawn</i>	86
4.2	Micro-event 8 at 04.30 h: Club Exile	87
4.3	Micro-event 9 at 05.00 h: The King's Soldiers	89
4.4	Micro-event 10 at 05.00 h: The Cupboards	91
4.5	Micro-event 11 at 05.30 h: The Shrine	93
<b>5</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>96</b>
5.1	A Dramaturgy of Participation beyond <i>Hotel Medea</i>	98
5.1.1	Audience Training/Actor Training	100
5.1.2	Spatial Disorientation	100
5.1.3	Temporary Community-Building	100
5.1.4	Fictional Context/Meta-event	101
5.1.5	Intimacy/Logistics	101
5.1.6	Role-Play and Personal Memory	101
5.1.7	Technology as Container and Communicator	101
5.1.8	Game-Play and Suspended Narrative	102
5.1.9	A Collective (Real-Life) Challenge	102
5.2	Memory	102
5.3	Re-enactment	106
5.4	Failure	109
5.5	A Post-immersive Manifesto	112
	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>117</b>
	<b>Appendix</b>	<b>125</b>
A1.1	Actor Training Programme (Notes)	125
A1.2	<i>Hotel Medea</i> Script	129
A1.2.1	Part I: <i>Zero Hour Market</i>	129
A1.2.2	Part II: <i>Drylands</i>	158
A1.2.3	Part III: <i>Feast of Dawn</i>	177

## Illustrations

### Chapter 1

<b>Figure 1.</b>	Guests and hosts celebrate Jason and Medea's wedding.	1
<b>Figure 2.</b>	Guests are greeted by <i>o Capitão</i> . . .	13
<b>Figure 3.</b>	Guests wear Medea masks . . . and are inspected by . . . Argonauts	20
<b>Figure 4.</b>	Jason tries to find Medea . . .	26
<b>Figure 5.</b>	Stage design for production of <i>Kordian</i> by Jerzy Gurawski	35
<b>Figure 6.</b>	Guests improvise provocative rhyme, dance and song . . .	44

### Chapter 2

<b>Figure 7.</b>	Guests wear Medea masks to help her hide from Jason . . .	54
<b>Figure 8.</b>	Hosts coach guests in rhyme, dance and song . . .	58
<b>Figure 9.</b>	Copy of 'The National Day of the Golden Fleece' leaflet.	60
<b>Figure 10.</b>	Guests inside market tents . . .	63
<b>Figure 11.</b>	Guests inside market tents . . .	65
<b>Figure 12.</b>	Female guests prepare Medea for her wedding.	67

### Chapter 3

<b>Figure 13.</b>	Guests in pyjamas in their beds.	75
<b>Figure 14.</b>	Guests in Jason's campaign room.	77
<b>Figure 15.</b>	Guests in Jason's campaign room . . .	80

### Chapter 4

<b>Figure 16.</b>	Male guests disguised pretend to dance . . .	85
<b>Figure 17.</b>	Male guests disguised in Club Exile.	88
<b>Figure 18.</b>	Guests collectively build a shrine for Medea's children.	93
<b>Figure 19.</b>	Guests and hosts share breakfast at dawn.	94

### Conclusion

<b>Figure 20.</b>	Guests in pyjamas are told a bedtime story . . .	104
<b>Figure 21.</b>	Guests take part in Jason's campaign photo-shoot . . .	106

### Appendix

<b>Figure A1</b>	Ground plans for <i>Hotel Medea</i> .	129
------------------	---------------------------------------	-----

## **Preface (1,537 words)**

### **‘Your’ Participation through *Hotel Medea***

You arrive at a location given at the time you purchased your ticket. This location is a pier in North Greenwich. It is now 23.00 h. You do not know what to expect when you get there, but you know you will spend the night at an unknown location. Once you meet *o Capitão*, and answer his series of questions about yourself and your expectations of the event, you get to know more about your own expectations than the event itself. However, you also get a flavour from the direct interaction with the host, and then you know that you are likely to be at the centre of the action. After crossing the Thames on a small boat, you arrive at a training camp where other hosts are waiting for you as you step out of the boat. There is no time to think. Before you have been able to assimilate the new location, you are involved in creative training exercises where you and other guests are encouraged to practise your ability to move to a rhythm, improvise rhyme and sing in tune. You are told you are being prepared for an event. By deciding to come, you have become an essential part of a group of people, made up of hosts and guests, who are all here for the same reason. You have decided to spend the night awake, and these are the people you will be spending it with.

The hosts are all focused on teaching you the skills you need in order to be able to fully participate when the moment arrives. This first stage in the dramaturgy of participation introduces you to many principles that will become the bedrock for how guests and hosts interact throughout the night. More importantly, however, hosts have been clear with you about the purpose of the training, thus including you in the making of the event. And by including you in the thoughts behind the event before the drama officially starts, and by enabling you to gain skills to participate confidently, hosts have developed a new contract with you. In addition to this, the myth of Medea has been present as a fictional event (‘the Day of the Golden Fleece’), and therefore hosts have been able to set up this meta-narrative with the same aims of the non-fictional overnight event (*Hotel Medea*). The dramaturgy of participation cannot be applied successfully if these initial steps are not in place. A group of latecomers, for instance, will not be allowed into *Hotel Medea*, as they can jeopardize this contract developed since your arrival at 23.00 h.

Once you have undergone the training, you wait with all the other guests for the opening of *Zero Hour Market* precisely at midnight. It is at this moment that you see various unknown structures entering the large empty space. They look like giant multi-

coloured floating jellyfish, dancing weightless in front of you. Their movements follow a percussive soundtrack. You are invited to enter these structures—the tents of the market—and interact with the hosts. For the next hour, you haggle with market sellers, you witness Jason's invasion of Medea's land, you help hide Medea from Jason, you wash Jason's or Medea's naked body in preparation for their wedding, you improvise rhyme and play instruments for the wedding celebration, you dance in time with all other guests and prevent Medea from leaving her land with the Golden Fleece. Each time you participate, you are able to use new skills acquired since your arrival. You also observe hosts in order to learn new actions and understand what the purpose of each moment is within the narrative. As well as having permission to play, observing hosts allows you to feel part of a larger event—and to feel confident enough to contribute actively. By 01.30 h you are slightly out of breath, but you feel surprisingly awake and ready for more. Your experience of *Zero Hour Market* leaves you physically euphoric and yet deeply connected to the massacre you have just witnessed. Medea has killed each and every family member in order to escape with Jason. You tried to prevent her from leaving. You also danced while she was carrying out the killings. You are implicated in the narrative.

When you are met by a gentle and reassuring maid after a few minutes, you have a strong feeling that what you are about to experience is very different from the last few hours. The maid's quiet approach and direct eye contact presents you with a new kind of invitation. She takes you by the hand, together with three other guests picked individually. She gives you pyjamas and a teddy bear. She takes you to your own bed. She brings you a cup of hot chocolate and reads you a bedtime story. You learn that 10 years have passed since Medea fled her land. Sooner or later you understand you are all the children of Medea and Jason. You hear your parents from next door as you fall asleep. This intimate and domestic environment bears no similarities with the event of the Golden Fleece, where you danced and celebrated. You are role-playing a child's routine—a 10-year routine you have been a part of. Being immersed in a child's bedroom allows you to access your own memories of childhood and to bring a part of yourself into this experience. Being cared for by a reassuring and gentle adult at 02.00 h, when you are starting to feel the exhaustion from staying awake, feels right. This is exactly what you need, both as a guest of *Hotel Medea* as well as a child of Medea and Jason. The dramaturgy of participation functions by overlapping simple physiological needs of every guest with the role they play in the narrative. The narrative, in turn, unfolds in tandem with these personal realizations and experiences.

You accept the invitation to role-play not because someone has asked you to, but because it makes sense. You want to lie down and be looked after at this time of night.

Next, you leave the children's bedroom to participate in shaping video footage of Jason for his campaign. You are part of this footage. In the role of a child, you were filmed in his house as you fell asleep. Now you are simultaneously a subject of the event, a witness and an active participant invited to edit footage and interpret popularity polls to launch the final push for Jason's campaign. Later, you are a guest in Medea's room. You know Medea as a friend, someone she can share her most vulnerable thoughts with. And you share yours. You talk about marriage, separation, children, women and men. Layer upon layer, your experience of Jason and Medea deepens in every room you enter and after every role you play. At the same time, you are helping construct the event—*Hotel Medea*—by contributing to its needs, such as content required for Jason's polls and footage of children in beds. The dramaturgy of participation builds on its initial foundation by adding layers of experience around the same moment of the narrative. *Drylands* tells the story of Medea and Jason as a couple, minutes before Medea finds out about Jason's betrayal. By the time Jason's betrayal is revealed, everything you have just experienced and helped shape is about to collapse. You cannot help but feel the betrayal. Jason has betrayed you, as a father, as a candidate, as a husband.

Finally, after the second interval, you are invited to join one of two camps. If you are a woman, Medea allows you to re-enter her room, which now has been transformed into a club. You are invited as a friend and a soldier. You are asked to help Medea deal with the heartbreak, and you are witness to Medea's unfolding plans of revenge. If you are a man, you are refused entry into Medea's room. At that moment you are invited by Jason's campaign team to devise a plan to gain entrance to Medea's club. You wear a disguise and use your mother's name as your new female identity. Your wig and lipstick are inspected and then you are granted entry in the club. What follows is a series of games, where men play against women and vice versa. At every new task, men try to secretly sabotage Medea's revenge. In every new moment, Medea invites the women to sabotage Jason's campaign. The game grows darker until Medea goes too far. She decides to kill her children. It is at this moment you revert to being a child and trying to escape from Medea. Death is inevitable, but you are guided into a dark room and put in charge of other guests—also wearing pyjamas. Minutes later you receive a phone call guiding you to a safe place. It is a trap. You are facing Medea as she gives you the final poisoned kiss. At this moment, guests and hosts 'de-role' and



together build a shrine for the dead children. Together, you mourn the death of the children and move outdoors to the breakfast table, where everyone eats as the sun rises.

## **Acknowledgements (86 words)**

While I have dedicated this work to three people who instilled in me the desire to think critically, it would be unfair not to thank my supervisors Dominic Hingorani and Ananda Breed for their generosity and flexibility, Anna Sanchez-Colberg and Mark O’Thomas for helping me shape my early proposals, my colleagues and students at the University of East London, my artistic collaborators in *Hotel Medea*, my mother for her unconditional love, my wife for her relentless support, and my daughter, Kayja, for always asking difficult questions.

## CHAPTER 1 (44,563 words)

### Towards a Dramaturgy of Participation



**Figure 1.** Guests and hosts celebrate Jason and Medea’s wedding. Part I, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2010). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

#### 1.1 You Are the Guest at *Hotel Medea*

The Preface, written in the second person, is based on an audience member’s journey through *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2010)—a durational interactive theatrical event that takes place in real time from midnight to dawn. It starts on a boat and takes place in a variety of locations throughout the night. During the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT) in 2010, audiences boarded a small boat at the O2 Arena Pier and crossed the river to Trinity Buoy Wharf, where the event took place in a variety of indoor and outdoor locations (see also LIFT, 1981– ). The event re-tells the Greek myth of Medea through three types of participation design: participatory rituals, immersive environments and interactive game-play. These are key to building the concept of a dramaturgy of participation to address a variety of ways in which actors (hosts) and audience members (guests) interact with each other and with the space around them. By seeking to establish meaningful relationships with each audience member individually, and to create memorable experiences through the myth of Medea, *Hotel Medea* embeds

guests in the story by casting them as characters in the re-telling of the Medea myth (Figure 1).

My personal contribution to the production *Hotel Medea* involved the roles of conceiver, co-director, deviser, performer and producer over a six-year period. The initial context for the creation of this production was a collaboration between Zecora Ura and Para Active, companies dedicated to exploring the role of audience members as part of live theatrical events. Since then, the two companies have merged under the name ZU-UK, and is led jointly by artistic directors Persis Jade Maravala and Jorge Lopes Ramos (see ZU-UK, 2006–12). The choice of Medea as a central myth for *Hotel Medea* came from both directors' interest in the roles of female martyrdom and violence in contemporary performance, as well as questions around Medea's foreignness in the context of her revenge against Jason. The choice of Medea as a starting point for the production also related to Medea's revenge as a time-based element that happens over the course of one night. The *Hotel Medea* trilogy also takes place overnight in real time.

This research aims to contribute, through my own creative practice, to the understanding of the elements that shape the behaviour of each (and every) audience member in an interactive theatre event. I start by introducing the term 'guest' as opposed to 'audience' and the term 'host' as opposed to 'actor', which helps move away from the conventional understanding of the actor–audience relationship in theatre productions towards a more suitable model. Then, I seek to define elements of audience engagement in the context of the fast-growing trend of immersive theatre in the United Kingdom (UK). I use my own practice, with the making of the *Hotel Medea* trilogy (2006–12), as the central case study to illustrate alternative relationships between actors (hosts) and individual audience members (guests). I explore the terminology derived from play, game and audience theories to discuss the role and agency of the guest as a pro-active participant and co-creator. I draw parallels with relevant theatre theorists, playwrights and practitioners who have dedicated most of their careers to politicizing the audience member using different methods of participation. Practitioners such as Bertolt Brecht (1964) developed theatre practices with the direct intention of bringing audience awareness to the construct and conventions of theatre, and Augusto Boal (1979) used theatre to equip audiences to initiate their own revolution. Although *Hotel Medea* does not share those intentions, such practitioners engaging with audience participation serve as a starting point to articulate *Hotel Medea*'s intention to equip its guests to role-play within the fictional narrative, as a way of deepening their experience of agency and engagement with the subject matters in the myth of Medea.

In this thesis, I use the term ‘micro-event’ to describe isolated moments where *Hotel Medea* guests and hosts interact, and use the relationships between guest and host in *Hotel Medea* to construct a new approach to immersive practice: a ‘dramaturgy of participation’. Each micro-event is described in relation to its use of physical space and the roles guests and hosts play in the narrative of the Medea myth. To analyse the way in which guest participation is managed in *Hotel Medea*, I define the term micro-event as one of a series of key invitations that guests are offered in a dramaturgical line throughout the night. I also analyse how well guests are equipped to interact and how their participation is sustained throughout the night by set changes of the rules of engagement. In other words, guests are offered invitations to participate that start very mildly and grow in complexity, as if dipping their toes into water before jumping in. The chapters in this thesis are framed in relation to key points in the *Hotel Medea* trilogy, thus establishing a different approach to guest participation for each part of the trilogy.

The dramaturgy of participation in *Hotel Medea* is concerned with the experience of each individual guest not only as ticket-paying public but also as co-creator and player. At every step of the event, expectations are constantly re-negotiated in order for guests to remain engaged with the event throughout the night—at times proactively, at others passively. The intention behind creating an event based on carefully designed environments and interactions was to magnify opportunities that guests have to experience, as opposed to watching a dramatic story. Interviews carried out with guests of *Hotel Medea* demonstrate that their most memorable experiences in *Hotel Medea* were directly related to their perception of participation and immersion (ZU-UK, 2011). The choice of focusing guest testimonies on their memory of the event was made because of the aim of *Hotel Medea* to achieve a theatrical experience where guests feel encouraged to accept invitations to participate and to create their own experience. Therefore, in order to measure their ‘ownership’ as a co-creator of their own experiences, their account of the event after it was experienced became a valuable testimony to identify where the dramaturgy of participation was most successfully applied to guests.

Immersive events in the UK tend to either cater to individual audiences at a very small scale such as in one-on-one performances or work with audiences in large-scale immersive environments, such as the work of Punchdrunk (2000– ) and dreamthinkspeak (1999– ) in large buildings and indoor warehouses or the outdoor work of WildWorks (2005– ). This research expands the field by providing a practice

that combines individual interaction within large-scale immersion. Dramaturgy of participation is also the framework through which I analyse individual guest engagement in *Hotel Medea*. The aim here is to make the concepts of participatory rituals, immersive environments and interactive game-play rigorous approaches that provide tools for creating, managing and measuring individual audience engagement in the field of immersive theatre.

This praxis can offer a range of devices designed to shift the conventional contract of expectations between each audience member and the theatrical event. Ultimately, the aim of this research project is to enhance the artistic experiences offered to audiences by developing a methodology that focuses on the experience of each audience member as an individual. I place the event *Hotel Medea* in the context of wider immersive theatre events, in order to further understand the field in the UK today and the issues attached to such a rapid growth over the last 10–15 years. I consider in particular the works of UK-based theatre companies and artists Punchdrunk (2000– ), dreamthinkspeak (1999– ) and Shunt (1998– ), who work with large-scale site-based theatrical events, as well as of Coney (2006– ), Ant Hampton (1975– ) and the late Adrian Howells (1962–2014; see Gardner, 2014), who have produced events of a smaller scale and have often placed their works outside theatre practice but whose works are designed for each audience member individually. *Hotel Medea* incorporates elements found in both large-scale immersive productions as well as small-scale intimate interactions, a middle-scale approach that perhaps has helped *Hotel Medea* to engage audiences individually and as part of a larger temporary community.

*Hotel Medea* makes use of spatial transformation and design in order to invite large audiences into a fictional world; however, it also employs tactics that allow individual guests to express agency in relation to the narrative. The use of small- and large-scale structures allows *Hotel Medea* to offer at times the sensation of immersion to its audience members as a whole, as well as the experience of intimate exchanges at various times in the night, such as when a guest receives Medea's poisoned kiss on the lips, or when a guest is invited to lead his/her own dance in Medea's wedding celebrations, or when a guest is given hot chocolate while being put to bed.

The dramaturgy of participation, as described in the Preface, is in many ways inseparable from the overnight event *Hotel Medea*—the case study for this thesis. However, it is possible to apply the concept to other contexts so long as individual guest experience is observed in the chosen context. An overnight event requires special attention to guest exhaustion and associations with the night as a fictional time. In the

case of *Hotel Medea*, it also allowed the first invitation to be made: to spend the night awake. A different event must clearly address its specificities by identifying precisely what the guest is being invited to do. Apart from these overall choices, there are also numerous smaller elements that can jeopardize the successful application of a dramaturgy of participation, which we have been able to observe in performances over the past years and which is discussed in detail in later chapters.

## **1.2 An Invitation to Stay Awake**

*Hotel Medea* was initially conceived in 2006. Since then, the landscape of international contemporary theatre has continued to develop to include participation, immersion and interaction, with special focus on the role of the audience member as part of the event. A decade later, interactive, participatory and immersive events heavily populate the programmes of the most prestigious festivals and venues across the UK and the world. Initially, as *Hotel Medea* directors, we did not set out to make an interactive—nor indeed immersive—event. Although ZU-UK directors had rigorously investigated and interrogated the role of the audience as part of their practice since 1998, the artistic vision for *Hotel Medea* was to create an event between midnight and dawn where audiences could face a tangible challenge with the cast; thus, this would create a temporary community with the same objective: resisting the night by staying awake. *Hotel Medea* was designed to be a comment on the models of theatre production and presentation in London that dictate the way audience participation is presented in the industry at large. By committing to staying awake between midnight and dawn together as a group, which was made up of both guests and hosts, we intended to create a personal experience that would separate this group from the rest of the world, by highlighting the ‘eventness’ of this occasion (Sauter, 2000: 13). Responding to the concept behind *Hotel Medea* when it first premiered at the Arcola Theatre in 2009, in his article ‘Up All Night: The Intimacy of *Hotel Medea*’, *Guardian* theatre columnist Andy Field (2009) acknowledged this aspect of the eventness of *Hotel Medea*:

There is something incredibly powerful about sharing that strange time of night with someone. It feels like sharing a secret and [...] a victory. That feeling is, for me, a brilliant basis on which to build a theatre show; the sense that everyone in the room is together against the rest of the sleeping world, rather than divided into audience and actors by the edge of the stage.

Theatrical events that propose unconventional exchanges with their audience are often less aligned to a literary culture, where play texts are adapted for the stage, and more aligned with a playing culture that ‘positions the theatrical event in opposition to written culture’ (Sauter, 2000: 4), and operate similarly to non-literary events such as sports or other cultural performances such as processions, carnivals and role-play games. The eventness of such cultural performances also strengthens the creation of a shared site. Victor Turner (2011: 96) uses the term ‘*communitas*’ as an area of common living, where groups of people can engage in collective ritual and encourage behaviours that might be prohibited or disapproved of at other times. He defines *communitas* as ‘a relationship between complete, historical and idiosyncratic individuals’ where the lack of segmentation into roles and statuses allows for a ‘direct, immediate and total confrontation of human identities’ (Turner, 2011: 131, 132). Turner then distinguishes between three types of *communitas*: (1) *existential or spontaneous*, ‘what the hippies today would call “happening” ’; (2) *normative*, where due to ‘the necessity for social control among members [. . .] the existential *communitas* is organized into a perduring social system’; and (3) *ideological*, ‘a label one can apply to a variety of utopian models of societies’ (2011: 132). The existence of a shared goal in *Hotel Medea*—to collectively stay awake—provided hosts and guests with a tangible objective, uniting them as a temporary community which fluctuated between Turner’s first two categories—*spontaneous communitas* and *normative communitas*.

However, an ordinary theatre building would not support this temporary community in achieving its goal. The architecture of an auditorium and a stage encourages behaviour that is contradictory to the shared aim in question. Therefore, in order to inspire audiences to move away from conventions attached to theatre venues, we chose the analogy between the theatrical event and a hotel. We trusted that this invitation to stay awake all night would attract people who were interested in taking up the challenge. This meant that the contract of expectations between the audience member and the event had already been altered from the moment the audience member decided to accept the challenge. It was at that moment that their participation started.

A hotel and its personnel need to perform a number of responsibilities in order for guests to feel safe within a building that attempts to resemble the safety and privacy of their home. The word ‘hotel’ became crucial to the definition of the experience. The expectations guests had of a hotel were the closest familiar public environment to represent the sensation of being a guest, where one might pay a set fee and expect to be looked after by that space and its hosts. The guest metaphorically ‘checks in’, and from



that point on hotel staff are responsible for the guest until breakfast. A hotel also suggests connotations of a second home: an environment that is ‘other’ but at the same time provides shelter. Hotels are responsible for providing a level of safety and privacy for its guests, often in foreign places. The theme of responsibility present in the Medea myth is embedded in the conditions of the experience. Medea executes her revenge over the course of one night, escaping death in the morning with the arrival of a chariot sent by Helios, the Sun god. In this way, audiences go through Medea’s tragic journey in almost real time. The fact that a hotel offers an overnight service, and the myth of Medea takes place overnight, strengthened the meaning behind *Hotel Medea*’s invitation to its guests to have an overnight experience.

### **1.3 Audience Behaviour**

When going to the theatre, audience members carry with them a set of expectations built over time as theatregoers. Traditionally, such events in Western mainstream theatre involve actors representing fictional characters on a stage and take place in a purpose-built venue where silence, passive engagement and applause are conventions expected of a ticket-paying audience member. These expectations are also determined by familiar architectural elements that have helped frame these events over time, ranging from the layout of the foyer to the numbered seats in an auditorium (Bennett, 1997: 130).

Such is the widespread understanding of these conventions in relation to theatre reception that most Western theatre practices have a major role in shaping audiences’ expectations, and therefore their behaviour. This inherited set of conventions can become a challenge for the ever-growing number of theatre events that take place outside purpose-built theatre venues that have been specifically designed to invite the audience member to take on a more proactive role in the live event. The aim of the case study for this research project, *Hotel Medea*, was to challenge this norm—not by ignoring these said conventions, but instead by using alternative familiar norms in order to re-negotiate guests’ behaviour. Far from being a flawless model, initially *Hotel Medea* reinforced the very conventions it was trying to contest (such as taking place in a known theatre venue) and faced numerous challenges in its world premiere in 2009. However, its later public iterations in 2010, 2011 and 2012 managed to address many of its initial failures by setting up a new contract of expectations with each guest individually. A more in-depth look at the landscape of immersive practice is given later in this introductory chapter.

In her essay in *Immersive Gameplay*, Sarah Lynne Bowman (2012) explores the Jungian theory in order to explain the process of role-playing and provides a useful frame by looking at the theories of social interactionism, liminality and the magic circle. She states that a 'role-playing game is both enacted and experienced at once' (Lynne Bowman, 2012: 36), which helps highlight the complex nature of the experience of a game player, or audience member, who is invited to play a dramaturgical role as part of a game *and*, at the same time, engage with the theatrical narrative s/he is a part of.

Audiences seeking these events are often looking for the same type of experiences that a game player seeks where, through participation and role-play, players can often create their own characters and make decisions which impact on the overall narrative. It is not surprising then that, in *The Experience Economy*, B. Joseph Pine and James H. Gilmore identify co-authoring as a crucial element in customizing a customer's experience and highlight businesses' need to seriously consider mass-customization in order to offer value for their customers (2011: 111).

As a result of my early attempts to design theatrical environments in which audiences could engage with participation, it soon became apparent that various elements were at play in shaping guests' behaviour. So I defined key questions that would shape the practical research on audience participation. The concepts contained in the following chapters have emerged from the interrogation of questions that arose during the early stages of research: What are the common expectations audience members have of an immersive theatrical event? Can theatre events engage meaningfully with each audience member individually through invitations to participate? Which game-design elements can help theatre events establish new paradigms for participation?

The key question, however, which remained at the core of the research process and framed its purpose, was: *How can immersive theatre events use participation to engage meaningfully with each—and every—audience member individually throughout its duration?* This question also became the lens through which I was able to analyse audience engagement within other immersive events, such as the work of other leading companies in the field, Punchdrunk (2000– ), dreamthinkspeak (1999– ), Shunt (1998– ) and Blast Theory (1991– ). In Punchdrunk's *Faust* (2006–07), for example, audiences are invited to roam around several rooms and levels of cinematically designed landscapes. Individual audience members can, at any point in the event, choose where they want to go and how long they wish to stay in a room. This is a very common feature in Punchdrunk productions. However, what is problematic is that the audience

member does not know where the live events—performed mainly by actors and dancers—will take place. It is possible for an audience member to roam around several rooms for more than an hour and not be able to witness a single live performance. Arguably, this freedom to roam becomes an experience based purely on chance, where individual audiences do not have access to basic tools or the information to make informed choices. Punchdrunk audiences are encouraged to compete with fellow audience members to *find* the actors, and to return to their productions to increase the chance of being acknowledged by an actor and of being invited for a more intimate experience.

Dramaturgy of participation, however, is a design approach that aims to equip individual guests with tools, information and skills required to participate fully, and critically, in the action, even if a guest decides not to use his/her newly acquired skills. At times, it also encourages individuals to work in teams, creating temporary communities in order to deepen engagement with the unfolding narrative. In order to move away from encouraging guests to behave competitively, and risk endorsing a first come, first served imperative present in the work of companies such as Punchdrunk, the element of *chance* is avoided so that *competition* with other guests is neither encouraged nor rewarded. The exception includes moments in the narrative where competition is the subject matter being explored.

Such theatrical events—which propose unconventional exchanges with the audience—are often less aligned to a literary culture, where plays are adapted for the stage, and more aligned with a playing culture, which ‘positions the theatrical event in opposition to written culture’ (Sauter, 2000: 4), and operate similar to non-literary events such as sports contests or other cultural performances such as processions, parades and role-play games.

As Lyn Gardner (2010) wrote in the *Guardian Theatre Blog*, ‘audience behaviour—in particular, the traditional theatre behaviour of sitting politely in rows and not speaking—is a learned behaviour and one that can be quickly unlearned’. In Gardner’s interpretation of audience behaviour in recent participatory theatre events (also loosely referred to as interactive or immersive) in the UK, the *Guardian* theatre critic reflects on her personal observation of a perceived excitement in audience members who—when allowed to participate—become active players, akin to participants in a treasure hunt or a role-play game. This notion of encouraging a different behaviour from audiences is key in order to fully develop a dramaturgy of participation. This behaviour that Gardner describes as not audience-like also requires a

suitably different definition, such as participants in a re-enactment, players in a game or guests in a party or hotel. Similarly, actors in a dramaturgy of participation require a term that more accurately describes their function and purpose, which I would suggest is to ‘host’ participating audiences.

Live events that offer theatregoing audiences a different experience to conventional theatre plays have many similarities to live-action role-playing (LARP) and digital games (Montola and Stenros, 2008). Audiences seeking these events are often looking for the same type of experiences that a game player seeks where, through participation and role-play, players can often create their own characters and make decisions which impact on the overall narrative. Theatre events preoccupied with the narrative of a story, however, face a difficult task of designing participation that enhances the narrative instead of distracting from it.

However, theatre events that take advantage of an audience’s thirst for game playing—as observed by Gardner in her 2010 article—or for thrilling experiences—as described by Adam Alston in ‘Audience Participation and Neoliberal Value: Risk, Agency and Responsibility in Immersive Theatre’ (2013)—often shift the audience’s expectations of the event entirely, by presenting the event as a game and replacing the expectations an audience member might have of a conventional theatre event. This behaviour noted by Gardner is symptomatic of a larger trend in theatre practice in the UK in the past decade. British theatre companies mentioned earlier have led the way by presenting work in unconventional venues across London. They have since become immediate references in the field as a result of their success being incorporated by the mainstream and being presented in association with the (Royal) National Theatre (1963– ) in its off-site programme. This has meant their work is particularly relevant when looking at what kind of audience behaviour is encouraged by current leading mainstream immersive theatre practice in the UK.

Few events, however, have attempted and succeeded in enabling audience members to meaningfully experience the live event as both passive observers and proactive participants instead of as one or the other. Even fewer events have encouraged every single audience member to participate simultaneously as an individual and as part of a collective, as opposed to encouraging them to actively seek individual pleasure, often offered to a very limited number of audiences (Alston, 2013). The reason behind this shortcoming is often related to the invitation that such events pose to audiences, re-framing them as *games* and therefore reducing the possibilities for theatrical experiences. Later in the discussion, I argue that, without familiar references to help

audiences define their behaviour, immersive and participatory theatre events risk weakening audience experiences by simply re-framing them as games. When participation becomes goal-focused too soon, it jeopardizes the audience's sensibility towards a more contemplative participation as well as the ability to develop relationships with fellow audience members. In a somewhat paradoxical way, I observe that for meaningful relationships to arise between audience members, each audience member needs to fully understand his/her individual role in the narrative. This is often not possible with goal-orientated tasks alone, as they encourage a highly individualized and competitive behaviour from audience members. Dramaturgy of participation focuses specifically on how participation is designed in interactive theatre practice to allow for complex participation where theatre dramaturgy can co-exist with game rules rather than being mutually exclusive.

British companies have produced promenade theatre outside theatre buildings for over a decade. More recently, a large number of other artists and companies, such as Coney, *You Me Bum Bum Train* (YMBBT, 2004– ) and *Rotozaza* (1998– ) have begun to produce work in unorthodox locations, where audiences are invited to participate and interact. In some instances audiences simply take part by following the actors through a number of different performance spaces, and in others by being placed in the centre of the action. However, most companies still seem to follow other conventional paradigms in relation to the role of the audience. These conventions are tied to industry norms, such as how an event is promoted, the time of day a theatre production is presented and the acceptable length or price of a theatre event. The very presence of a conventional box office or cloakroom at the entrance of such events, or the fact that it takes place in a theatre venue, suggests to audiences that they are expected to behave much in the same way they would when attending a conventional play, performed on a stage for a sitting audience.

Other artists, such as Howells for instance, have tended to explore other extremes by placing their work in unusual and sometimes domestic locations, by exploring intense intimacy and doing away with theatrical conventions and dramaturgy almost entirely. In these cases, in contrast to *Hotel Medea*, highly intimate and customized audience participation takes the place of theatrical dramaturgy, as opposed to working in tandem with it (Machon, 2013). *Hotel Medea*'s ambition is to sustain an intimate and customized experience for every guest, at the same time as sustaining an unfolding theatrical narrative.

In *Hotel Medea*, guests are made hyper-aware of their condition as ticket-holders and then they have an induction in how to participate. They are taken through various dance forms, rehearse improvised rhyme and get a crash course in a few of the songs and chants so that they feel they have the necessary skills to take part—especially in such an unfamiliar environment. Guests are consistently given permission to participate; however, this approach—which intentionally focuses on each individual guest—also highlights moments when guests refuse to take up an offer to participate or intentionally choose to disrupt the action. Although very rare, on some occasions guests did challenge hosts by refusing to role-play or work as part of a temporary community. Hosts who had recently joined the company and therefore had less experience hosting found it harder to encourage guests to become proactive players in the narrative. Although it was a very delicate tone to achieve successfully, hosts who were more experienced were also more assertive and less apologetic about their invitations to participate. For instance, less experienced hosts could lose control over their performance tone by either focusing solely on acting their fictional role or abandoning the narrative fiction to be overtly responsive to guest input. An example of a situation handled by an experienced host might be when a host acting the role of a nursemaid talks to a child (the guest) about adult subjects that they (the guest) introduce and the conversation resembles an adult–child exchange as expected. A contrary example would be an overenthusiastic host becoming forceful by not respecting a guest’s decision to stay distant when invited to actively participate.

I found that the more directive the hosts’ role, the happier the guests were to join in and practise their participation in Brazilian rituals at the opening of Part I, *Zero Hour Market* (ZU-UK, 2010). This apparent contradiction helps inspire guests to behave playfully in relation to the event, by being aware of its challenges as opposed to sustaining a fictional reality from beginning to end. This more *playful* behaviour with the guests later allows them to participate in very complex actions, songs and games, whereas a more *serious* participation might have brought about inhibition and embarrassment among the guests. An example of this behaviour can be illustrated by the first encounter guests have with *o Capitão* just before midnight, described in detail below.

In the opening scene, guests are approached individually by *o Capitão* (the captain), a host who loudly refers to them as ‘theatre audience members’ (Figure 2). *O Capitão* plays on the guests’ anxieties and excitement by making them hyper-aware of their personal expectations of what an interactive overnight event might entail. This is

first established by open interviews carried out by *o Capitão* with each guest as they arrive. He dresses in a white suit, Havaianas flip-flops and a white hat. From the perspective of a Brazilian audience member, he would be recognized as an archetypal Brazilian *malandro* from 1960s Rio, a kind of trickster, similar to the First Zanni in *Commedia dell'Arte* (Rudlin, 2002).

For a British audience member, the character may resemble a clever swindler, one who exudes charm but is not to be trusted. He presents himself as the person in charge of the whole event, an overconfident host who has been employed as a *professional* Brazilian and who is there to ensure minimum Brazilian standards are observed and maintained. As he speaks in English with the guests, his exaggerated Brazilian accent and fast dance moves are used as a tool to raise guest expectations of later displays of exotic content in what they are about to experience, framing the event as Brazilian and slowly casting the guests as tourists in this unfamiliar land. They are then posed questions such as ‘What made you decide to come to an overnight event?’ and ‘What do you expect will happen to you tonight?’ (ZU-UK, 2010).



**Figure 2.** Guests are greeted by *o Capitão* in *Zero Hour Market*. Part I, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

These questions are intended to make guests self-reflective of their condition as ticket-holders in an unfamiliar environment and uncertain of their role in the event. Although in most cases guest reactions did not change the course of the event, in terms of the overall narrative it directly affected the *tone* used by the hosts, in order to ensure guests never felt alienated or too uncomfortable with being addressed as individuals. In this respect, the hosts are also required to be very sensitive and responsive. For instance, when *o Capitão* identifies a guest who is reluctant to respond to his approach, he may mirror this person's behaviour as a humorous tactic to get their sympathy; in the case of a very keen audience member, he may quickly give them a creative task by enlisting them as his assistant or asking them to keep an eye on another guest who the captain approached earlier for not keeping to his Brazilian standards. Giving guests different tasks and roles based on their individual willingness (or not) to interact establishes a tacit agreement by which individual guests are given *permission* to participate and role-play within the narrative of the Medea myth.

#### **1.4 Immersive Theatre in the UK**

Recent immersive events that invite audience members to play active roles in their dramaturgy, such as *Etiquette* (Rotozaza, 2010) and *A Small Town Anywhere* (Coney, 2011), use a set of instructions to define the roles that audience members are expected to play. These events are more akin to a re-enactment (*Etiquette*) or a role-play game (*Small Town*) than a theatrical play, as they often make use of narration and game rules to guide the guest through each step of participation. These events share a few other similarities between them, such as limiting audience capacity to retain guest agency in relation to the unfolding dramaturgy of the event and the need to give enough information to the guests at the beginning of the event so that they can understand how it functions, and therefore be better prepared to interact when the opportunity arises.

Rotozaza's *Etiquette* (2010) co-directed and written by Hampton, was created for two audience members at a time, and most of Howells' work was developed for one person at a time. Artists working with a drastically smaller scale than the companies discussed here are able to offer an experience that is highly personalized and, in the case of Hampton and Howells, extremely participatory. In *Etiquette*, two audience members sit opposite each other at a restaurant table and follow audio instructions in order to play their fictional role in this relationship between a man and a woman. There are no actors present; however, the audio tracks that each audience member hears instruct at every step regarding their respective fictional character's behaviour,



thoughts, words and actions. The audience has no agency as the audio script is completely pre-determined; however, audience members have the sensation of experiencing role-play in the first person being both audience and actor at once. Howells' work is similar in scale, though different in the way in which it invites audiences to engage with the artist outside a space of fiction. The experience is intimate and confessional and borrows from the relationship normally experienced in therapy sessions. Coney's *A Small Town Anywhere* (2011) invites audiences to take on a role as part of a small town, in a game that functions through tasks given to audience members as well as relationships and conversations initiated by audience members themselves. The event is focused on timed tasks and game rules, and it caters to small audiences of 20–30 people. Coney, Hampton and Howells immerse their audiences through the way in which they are invited to role-play, play a game or have an intimate conversation.

*Hotel Medea* shares many similarities with the work of these companies and artists; however, it makes use of all strategies at different times of the event in order to offer individual guests a range of participation, from an anonymous voyeur to a lead actor. For instance, *Hotel Medea* constructs fictional realities where individual guests are able to initiate contact with other guests in role, such as in Jason's campaign team, the tourists in Medea's land or the children of Medea who need to escape death by playing hide-and-seek. However, in Coney's *A Small Town Anywhere*, actors remain in role as a reminder of the fictional space audiences inhabit, as well as the source of instructions and tasks. *Hotel Medea*'s hosts however undergo a specific training programme that allows them to facilitate guest participation at all times, which requires the hosts to take on various roles throughout the event as opposed to retaining one specific role. (The reason for this will become clearer later in the thesis, as it has to do with the complex roles guests are invited to play throughout the night—as opposed to being simply 'audience members' in an immersive event or 'players' in a theatre game.)

ZU-UK (formerly Zecora Ura and Para Active) was founded in Brazil and UK in 2001 and had two distinctive phases of production between the years 2001 and 2012. During the first phase, between 2001 and 2006, the company produced 11 site-specific projects with the aim to re-define the role of the audience in relation to the site in which these projects were performed, such as a gent's toilet, a kitchen, a town square, a building site, a moving train and a small garage. The second phase, between 2006 and 2012, was dedicated almost solely to the making and touring of the *Hotel Medea* trilogy. The audience capacity for Part I, *Zero Hour Market*, was set at 150 people, since most participation tools allow for large numbers of people to join the action at the

same time. However, for Part II, Drylands, and Part III, Feast of Dawn, the audience capacity was reduced to a maximum of 72 people, made up of three groups of 24. This number was a reflection of a host-to-guest ratio that would allow for guests to be well monitored and have genuine opportunities to engage with the invitations to participate. In *Hotel Medea*, the optimum ratio we arrived at was a minimum of one host for every six guests. At certain times, such as in the case of the bunk-beds scene in Medea's children's room, this was reduced to a minimum of one host for every four guests. Most companies, however, do not seem to follow the same approach to actor-to-audience (host-to-guest) ratio. Numerous financial pressures make it virtually impossible for companies to sustain a business model that allows for such intimate relationships over long periods of time. This means either that tickets are unaffordable, the production relies predominantly on volunteer work, or that the detail and quality of the artistic work suffer over time.

Punchdrunk productions and those such as Kate Bond and Morgan Lloyd's (2004– ) *You Me Bum Bum Train* and Sound&Fury's *Kursk* (2009– ) create highly detailed environments through realistic design representation (see also Sound&Fury, 2000). These companies/artists are concerned with the amount of detail required in order to leave no doubt in audience members' visual environment that they are immersed by the fictional space in the narrative of their event. *You Me Bum Bum Train*'s co-creator Kate Bond goes as far as making visible taps and showers work, and testing the smell of each room prior to the audience's arrival to make sure the smells are realistic (see Bond, 2013). These companies have developed replica rooms in order to immerse their audiences in a fictional environment, more akin to a realistic cinematic installation than to a suggestive theatre set. Other companies, such as Shunt and dreamthinkspeak, seem equally interested in building environments within unconventional locations; however, they are less interested in creating a realistic representation of a specific time as space, and instead construct elaborate sets with less recognizable—or intentionally abstract—details, responding to the existing architecture in which it is set.

In the last decade, Artichoke (2005– ) and WildWorks (2005– ) have helped produce works by interactive theatre and performance artists in the UK. Two relevant examples are Royal de Luxe's *The Sultan's Elephant* (2006) and National Theatre Wales' *The Passion* (2011). Audiences in both these events experienced a high level of engagement, and arguably immersion, in public spaces. The streets of Central London, UK, and Port Talbot, Wales, served as the stage for these two events that were able to

meaningfully engage a large number of audiences over a number of days. The former did so through the use of extremely large automated puppets, and the latter through the use of hundreds of actors and community members across the city staging a wide range of smaller events as part of the overall event. The audience attendance for both these events in just a few days was considerably larger than any of the other interactive events mentioned in this research during weeks, sometimes months, of public performances. However, in all these examples of large-scale immersion, audiences are predominantly left to roam a delimited area, which has been designed in order to immerse audiences in an aesthetic environment. In *Hotel Medea*, the spatial journeys of every guest are pre-defined in order for guests not to simply roam but, instead, to engage fully with every new situation, giving them the opportunity to engage fully with the narrative if they chose.

Describing the similarities between most immersive theatre in the UK, Alston highlights the fact that it appeals to the audiences' 'hedonistic and narcissistic desire: hedonistic, because the experiences are often pleasurable, with pleasure often sought as an end in itself, as a site of self-indulgence or even eroticism; narcissistic, because the experience is all about you, the participant. Attention seems to be turned inwards, towards the experiencing self, accompanied by a persistent reaching towards the maximisation of experience' (2013: 130). Although in his article Alston uses Punchdrunk predominantly as a case study for his observations, he draws parallels with companies mentioned earlier in this chapter. In contrast to Punchdrunk's offer of participation to its audiences, the roles hosts play throughout the night in *Hotel Medea* are based on a participatory structure that seeks to encourage audiences to engage, not compete. Using Punchdrunk's *The Masque of the Red Death* (2007–08) as a case and by drawing parallels with neoliberal values, Alston provides a strong analysis of immersive theatres. He observes that such events reward highly individualized behaviour by offering to a few, highly exclusive experiences that most of their paying audiences would not have access to. By rewarding an extremely individualized behaviour driven by hedonism and narcissism, audiences are encouraged to behave in line with a questionable set of values (Alston, 2013).

*Hotel Medea*'s dramaturgy of participation focuses on a minimum host-to-guest ratio precisely in order to be able to offer the same quality of care across its community of guests. Additionally, invitations to participate are often part of a larger collective structure, where temporary communities are formed through play, even when specific audience groups play game tasks *against* one another. When interviewed at breakfast,

guests express a shared sense of achievement: both hosts and guests achieve a joint venture, to stay awake through the night, and both guests and hosts are rewarded with a breakfast at day break.

### **1.5 Training the Hosts**

In order to be able to host playful audiences a methodology was designed for training actors to develop their ability to encourage and accommodate the proactive audience's input through fluid improvisation as well as to being attuned to other performers to sustain the unfolding narrative of the myth as an ensemble. The training programme developed for *Hotel Medea* hosts drew on Jerzy Grotowski's (1968) psychophysical training, allied to elements from the classical Indian dance form of Bharatanatyam, Brazilian game and martial art Capoeira and vibratory voice and song traditions. The psychophysical element of the training was grounded in Grotowski's *via negativa*, where a series of exercises and tasks are individually created for each actor based on his/her personal blocks (biases) and weaknesses. This process was followed by exploration of precise physical movements and voice sequences through exercises based on breath, rotations and undulations. The aim was to increase the flexibility in the actor's spine as a foundation to the work on impulse and actions. We approached the work of the actor as a doer: '*Performer*, with a capital letter, is a man of action. He is not somebody who plays another. He is a doer, a priest, a warrior: he is outside aesthetic genres' (Grotowski, 1997: 376; emphasis in the original). ZU-UK's research on Brazilian rituals Cavalo Marinho and Bumba meu Boi supported this earlier work by allowing actors to perform in real time as opposed to a staged dramatic time. Hosts and guests perform side by side in the Afro-Brazilian participatory ritual Bumba meu Boi, from the northern state of Maranhão, and in Cavalo Marinho, from the north-eastern state of Pernambuco. The eventness in the making and presenting of these rituals highlights the presence of the participants. By performing repetitive rhythms and actions over time, guests have time to observe and learn before they decide to join in. There are no audiences, since any person who visits the rituals is invited to participate in some way, in activities ranging from clearing the stage to call and response songs and collective dances. These folkloric events, which often last all night, rely strongly on repetitive percussive rhythms and songs that define moments of change within the dramatic structure of the event (Ferretti, 1995: 52).

The host as a 'doer' is concerned less with issues such as the boredom of the audience and more with the integrity of the inner feeling of the doer through the

ritualistic forms being used. The research of such scenes started as a ritual, since rituals can be executed by a group of people as a way to transition to another state of consciousness, whether there is an audience or not. In her book *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, Catherine M. Bell describes *ritualization* as ‘a way of acting that differentiates some acts from others’ (2009: xv). She goes on to quote anthropologist Roy A. Rappaport’s (1999) research on the Tsembaga people of New Guinea to further define the role of repetitive actions in rituals as regulator of ‘social, political and ecosystemic relations’ that ‘symbolise, validate and intensify relationships’ (quoted in Bell, 2009: 109). Bell’s research of ritual-like activities as ‘a disciplined set of actions marked by precise repetition and physical control’ is a useful approach for the aims of my research, especially within repetitive actions guests learn by watching hosts (Bell, quoted in Nunes, 2011: 13). When the hosts achieve the status of doer, the guest is encouraged to participate as a doer through observation and repetition. So our task was to invite guests to join the ritual as doers, as the vehicle for their experience, as opposed to inviting them as observers frustrated by watching others *do*. For this to happen, guests had to be instructed and allowed the time to feel part of the ritual before it could develop as a collective scene. The hosts in *Hotel Medea* had to sustain the role of doers and, at the same time, help guests achieve the same commitment to rituals and role-play. Guests who were guided to an individual connection with their actions and playful interactions reached another level of experience and immersion by creating a sensation of ‘*communitas*’ (Turner, 2011: 96). The invitation to stay awake, mentioned earlier as a shared objective of both guests and hosts, formed the basis for the initial engagement between guests and hosts. The host as doer encourages guests to build a temporary community of doers.



**Figure 3.** Guests wear Medea masks to help her hide from Jason, and are inspected by Jason's Argonauts in *Zero Hour Market. Part I, Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

In *Hotel Medea*, each guest is invited to participate in a variety of roles throughout the night (e.g. see Figure 3), and hosts need to be equipped to propose, support and manage these invitations. The actor training programme (see Appendix A1.1) addresses direct interaction between guests and hosts and equips hosts to be able to aid guest participation. In Afro-Brazilian practices, such as Capoeira, Cavalo Marinho, Tambor de Crioula and Bumba meu Boi, the roles of player and observer are blurred, and the organizers of these events are often performers who act, sing, dance and play instruments at the same time as facilitating interaction with audience members as active participants (Ferretti, 2010).

Existing training methodologies in interactive practice did not prove entirely suitable to the specific and complex demands an event such as *Hotel Medea* required. They have been developed for the purpose of achieving a specific aesthetic result on a stage, or for application in outdoor or public contexts, or for application outside theatrical events altogether. Boal's 'forum theatre', for instance, was developed for the purpose of role-play as a tool to debate public issues in relation to human rights, policy and government oppression (Babbage, 2004). The training methodology required for

*Hotel Medea* hosts shares similarities with forum theatre, where the actor—whom Boal defines as ‘the joker’—needs to encourage one audience member to step on stage to re-play a theatrical scene to propose a different outcome, or a solution, via role-play. However, the host in *Hotel Medea* is also required to gain role-specific skills, such as caring for a child if one is a nursemaid, or sound and video editing if one is an election campaign staff.

Other practices, such as Japanese Butoh dance or Tadashi Suzuki’s methodology for actors, develop in the actor a strong sense of their physical presence, a capacity to engage with their creative potential and also explore their ability to improvise (Allain, 2003). However, a praxis that includes essential skills for the *Hotel Medea* host needs to include rhythmical, physical and vocal awareness, improvisation with individual guests based on fictional characters, and spatial management, as well as act as master of game structures and mediator of interactions between guests.

The initial field research for *Hotel Medea* took place in the north-east of Brazil, where participation is embedded in the forms mentioned above. As we moved towards the writing and making of the *Hotel Medea* production, we focused both on the relationship between the narrative and the structures of participation with guests and on the training programme required for preparing actors to be hosts. My contribution to the training programme was specifically related to improvisation and flow, which was not role-specific and was applied to the training of all hosts. Having trained with practitioners of Japanese Butoh dance and Afro-Brazilian Capoeira, I was able to apply relevant elements of these forms to the training programme for the hosts. Afro-Brazilian Capoeira, especially the form known as Angola, is described as a martial art, a game and a dance. Capoeira is played to live music, which sets the rhythm and pace of the game. In Angola, players need to be able to respond to any movement proposed by their opponent, and therefore develop the ability to improvise in constant flow. Japanese Butoh dance has many strands of training, some of which propose contradictory practices. However, a common core element of Butoh is the dancer’s utter physical engagement with his/her personal imagined landscape and/or a pre-existing choreography. The purpose of using Butoh elements to train hosts was to prepare them to perform pre-defined roles and, at the same time, improvise in response to audience participation. This ability to perform and improvise is also often described as *inner life* and *outer life* (Kasai and Parsons, 2003).

For the initial three years of development of the *Hotel Medea* overnight trilogy, it became apparent that the training the ensemble of hosts required went beyond

physical stamina, presence and an ability to play a variety of roles. *Hotel Medea* hosts had to be untrained as conventional actors so as not to engage with guests using recognizable acting skills, with the exception of moments in the dramaturgy that required a host to play an identifiable fictional role such as Medea or Jason. Conventional actor training, which still forms most of the training available to actors in formal education in the UK and Brazil, does not provide actors with an awareness of a live audience that might be invited to participate. Drawing from intercultural theatre practice, the training structures devised for each host in *Hotel Medea* could be framed in relation to the concept of inner life and outer life in Japanese Butoh dance and the participatory rhythms found in the Afro-Brazilian forms mentioned earlier. As the discussion here progresses, as well as in later chapters, I will borrow from theories of role-playing to analyse the training methodology that develops an actor's ability to host the guest in a live event at the same time as negotiating responsibilities as a fictional character within the narrative (Lynne Bowman, 2012).

As *Hotel Medea* developed, it became clear that one of the main criteria for measuring success with the public event was the ability to turn conventional audience members into well-informed guests who could participate in a variety of ways and would be able to choose individually to what extent to take part when invited to play. Therefore, an ensemble of conventionally trained actors posed an obstacle to achieving this aim, and often made audience participation scripted, prescribed and contrived. The key task became to devise a specific training programme for the ensemble of hosts that would form the foundation of a dialogic relationship with the guest, akin to that of a facilitator or mediator without losing the elements of the fictional characters required in order to sustain the fictional narrative. This also meant that specific training exercises had to be written for each particular character, since the emphasis on a host's skill had to shift from a scripted portrayal of a believable character to the transferable skills a fictional character might have—in addition to the ability to adapt and improvise to different audience member responses. For instance, to perform the role of a nursemaid to Medea's children (discussed later in this introductory chapter), the training would need to prepare the host to have the actual skills that a babysitter might have; thus, being able to respond to the behaviour of a particular guest playing the role of a difficult child, while also being able to sustain an additional layer of fiction where the guest is the child and the host is the adult in control.



## 1.6 Framing Immersion and Play in *Hotel Medea*

Writing in relation to play, Brian Sutton-Smith proposed a system to approach the event as a ‘play quadrilogue’:

If language is always a *dialogue*, a situated act, and not merely a text, then all expressive forms, of which play is only one, are a *quadrilogue*. They always involve at least four prototypical parties: the group or individual that stages (or creates) the event, as actors and co-actors; the group that receives this communication (the audience); and the group that directs the race or conducts the symphony (directors). (1979: 297)

Writing about Sutton-Smith’s quadrilogue in his book *The Future of Ritual*, Richard Schechner observes, ‘I count only three groups in Sutton-Smith’s list, but to these I add a fourth, the commentators – critics and scholars – who may not even be present at the event but whose discourse affects (...) the ways in which past performances are received’ (1993:43). One might also suggest Sutton-Smith’s original quadrilogue was intended as the combination of two existing elements in language – the dialogue between ‘actors and co-actors’-, and the addition of two further elements - the audience and the directors.

Although Sutton-Smith’s play quadrilogue offers a layer of complexity to the contract between the host and the guest, I challenge it by offering a different proposition based on the roles that guests and hosts inhabit as part of the *Hotel Medea* trilogy. Sutton-Smith mentions a fourth role apart from the host, the co-host, and the guest: the group ‘conducting the symphony’ (directors); however, his play quadrilogue does not consider the role that physical space plays in this relationship. So, for the purposes of this thesis, I have approached the quadrilogue by establishing the initial dialogue between host and guest, as opposed to host and co-host, and by adding two additional elements: the unfolding narrative and the spatial design.

Despite *Hotel Medea* authors having a defining influence in the overall design and planning of the event, I look specifically at a live moment of the interactive event, at an event defined by the contract between host and guest where the host has the responsibility to guide the guest, where the host is—by Sutton-Smith’s definition—the director in the *quadrilogue*. By being the live embodiment of the responsibilities of managing this event as it happens, the host thus represents the event in its original intent: the intended design being applied in reality. The guests also have a level of responsibility in performing the fictional roles as their roles are integrated within the dramatic action. Therefore, the original role of the actor is shared between hosts and

guests, who are also assigned fictional roles in the dramaturgy. Guests also spectate: they experience each other's performances as well as step in and out of the action. The guest-player therefore, when playing critically, embodies at once the role of actor and that of audience member, as proposed by Sutton-Smith.

In the first pages of her book *Critical Play: Radical Game Design*, Mary Flanagan highlights the fact that 'play is a notoriously difficult concept to define', going on to describe the term as a 'culturally and socially specific idea' (2009: 4). She identifies two 'camps' in the history of the term: there are 'those who look more to ritual, to communication and who study play in natural settings, such as [Gregory] Bateson, [Victor] Turner and [Brian] Sutton-Smith', and 'those who see play as voluntary, intrinsic, and important to class structure (leisure) and socialization [. . .], such as [Johan] Huizinga and [Roger] Caillois' (Flanagan, 2009: 4–5).

Flanagan's description of 'playing' (and later 'playing critically') in relation to contemporary practice is particularly useful in relation to *Hotel Medea*. She focuses on the role of the player within gaming cultures, and game design models in relation to gaming events—parallels I hope to make with the guest in the theatrical event. This helps move the focus away from the auditorium–stage dynamic towards other propositions regarding the role of guest as well as his/her perceived agency as part of the event. She also considers potential intersections between these models, from board and computer games to performative and locative game models, taking us closer to Willmar Sauter's (2000) theatrical event. For Flanagan, 'critical play' is built on the notion that 'games carry beliefs within their representation systems and mechanics', which in turn allows artists to 'manipulate elements common to games—representation systems and styles, rules of progress, codes of conduct, context of reception, winning and losing paradigms, ways of interacting in a game', which in turn 'bring with them their own possibilities, limitations and conventions' (2009: 4).

Critical play refers as much to the design of the game-event from the artist or creator's perspective as it does to the guest who is invited to be a player in the event. The idea of a guest playing critically relates to two types of situation: the first, where s/he is highly aware of his/her condition as an invited participant; and the second, where s/he can make use of the possibilities of participation to play within the game structures in addition to an understanding of the beliefs carried within the event's representation systems and mechanics.

The point of departure for the theatrical event as a concept was a theoretical model in Jacqueline Martin and Willmar Sauter's book *Understanding Theatre:*

*Performance Analysis in Theory and Practice* (1995). Since then, a number of publications co-written by the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) Theatrical Event Working Group have further developed the concept which was originally intended to ‘visualise the communicative levels between the performer and audience member’ (Martin and Sauter, 1995: 90), which incidentally takes us closer to Grotowski’s definition of theatre as ‘what happens between actor and audience member’ (1968: 32). Although this conceptual model was initially developed to address the relationship between stage and auditorium, further developments of the concept by members of the IFTR Theatrical Event Working Group later considered other spatial relationships between guest and host, including the study of festivals as macro-events. In its later incarnations, the theatrical event is as concerned with the communicative exchange between host and guest as it is with the contexts in which this exchange happens. There are four key elements to the study of the theatrical event and its contexts: *playing culture*, *cultural context*, *contextual theatricality* and *theatrical playing*.

*Playing culture* is a useful element of the theatrical event concept (Sauter, 2000) from which I will later draw parallels between the way in which *Hotel Medea* operates as an event and non-literary events such as sports, games or other cultural performances such as processions and parades. Through playing culture the theatrical event can be further defined in relation to the cultural context, contextual theatricality and theatrical playing.

The *cultural context* encompasses a variety of elements relating to the societal frames of the theatrical event, from the demographics of the area to the influence of the media in framing an event, and in this instance observes the guest’s own cultural heritage as playing a role in shaping his/her expectations. For instance, the set of expectations a guest has prior to attending an event is directly influenced by the event’s cultural context, which together with the playing culture helps define the contract between the guest and the event.

The *contextual theatricality* refers to all the conditions related to theatrical production ‘except their presentation on stage’, and most importantly includes the ‘conventions, expectations, habits and economy of the potential audience [which] also belong to the sphere of contextual theatricality’ (Sauter, 2000: 8). Further in this chapter, I investigate the role of the stage–auditorium architecture, its influence on the expectations of the guest and how *Hotel Medea* aims to re-define expectations by rearranging space and actively disorientating its guests.

Finally, *theatrical playing* refers to the meeting between host and guest where the ‘here-and-now experience is paramount for both performer and audience member’ (Sauter, 2000: 13). Hosts in *Hotel Medea* are required to be good improvisers, as the event is built on the premise that contributions by individual guests must not be ignored. Their input needs to be integrated into the fabric of the fictional scene, and the hosts are responsible for guiding each guest through the structures of the overnight event. As the event progresses, the hosts’ ultimate aim is to empower guests to lead their own micro-events as part of the event, without the presence of hosts. Once a guest feels s/he has the tools, the information and skills to participate fully the guest becomes a co-creator of the event.

### 1.7 Elements of the Guest–Host Relationship



**Figure 4.** Jason tries to find Medea, playing the children’s game of blind-man’s bluff with guests before their marriage in *Zero Hour Market*. Part I, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

Through this research, I also refer to the play theory in relation to game-design to frame the guest’s experience in an interactive live event (Figure 4). The role of the guest in *Hotel Medea* can be seen as a combination of a player in a role-play game, a participant in a communal celebration and an actor in a historical re-enactment. In her book

*Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, Claire Bishop (2012) looks at the work of British artist Jeremy Deller, who uses re-enactment to work with communities to re-visit, re-build and re-enact historical events. Speaking about his work *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001), a large-scale performance re-enacting the violent clash between striking miners and mounted police in 1984, Bishop observes that Deller's work 'invites us to make a comparison between two tendencies conventionally considered to be at opposite ends of the cultural spectrum: the eccentric leisure activity of re-enactment (in which bloody battles are enthusiastically replicated as group entertainment) and performance art' (2012: 34). In order to look at the role between guests and hosts, it is useful to observe the many variations of engagement in such cultural events. As mentioned before, this practice is more aligned to playing culture than literary culture, and therefore events that serve as vehicle for re-enactment, ritual, games and play provide different elements that define how guests and hosts negotiate their relationship.

Using *Hotel Medea* I explore the extent to which invitations are successful at establishing relationships with its guests, where the public is neither a theatre audience member nor a game player, but both. This guest is embedded in the theatrical dramaturgy that they both help create and experience simultaneously. So, in order for the guest to accept such invitations to participate in the action, I explore the role of the hosts—actors who are required to set a different frame of reference for the guest by 'not acting'. Instead, actors need to act as hosts of the live event who instruct guests as to what they might expect, as opposed to defining their relationship as 'those who act' and 'those who watch'. Paradoxically, they must also negotiate their responsibilities as storytellers by, at times, representing fictional characters that drive the essential elements of the narrative forward.

Although the chosen terminology of guests and hosts has emerged from various findings in the process of making and performing *Hotel Medea*, I strongly believe both the terms have the potential to be widely applicable within and beyond immersive theatre practice. For instance, as arts exhibitions become more experiential and interactive, the role of ushers—or gallery assistants—suddenly becomes an integral part of how the public experiences the artwork. In a recent exhibition held at the Barbican Centre, London, artist Chris Milk's interactive artwork *The Treachery of Sanctuary* invited the public to interact with a projection screen in front of them (Barbican, 2014). One by one, visitors watched a life-size reconstructed image based on their own body disintegrate into several flying birds. The event, which allows visitors to watch their

body disintegrate in real time, had the potential to be a very intimate experience. Unfortunately, the careless instructions given by gallery assistants to the visitors waiting in line, as well as the constant rushing of their experience in order for more people to be able to come into the gallery, did not allow for this intimate experience to take place.

Equally, *Hotel Medea* requires hosts to carefully negotiate guest participation and role-play in order to be able to make the most of their experience, similarly to gallery assistants who can enhance or spoil the relationship between the public and an interactive artwork, such is the influence of their presence in the experience of the gallery visitor. Thus, the development of dramaturgy of participation as a model is based on a combination of logistical reasons (guest capacity) as well as on the dramaturgy of participation's overarching ambition to move between large-scale communal celebration and small-scale intimate interactive experiences retaining guests' engagement with the narrative. Guest capacity and guest-to-host ratio became integral to the outcomes of *Hotel Medea*. Seeking to preserve a minimum contact between guests and hosts throughout the event, the first public rehearsal of *Hotel Medea* in 2008 was only presented overnight to 20 guests. This was because we believed then that hosts playing the role of maids could only look after two guests at a time. Since there were only 10 maids in the cast and 20 beds in total, we organized the space so that each maid had to look after only two guests playing the role of children. As discussed later in this chapter, we subsequently developed a rotation that allowed for 24 audience members to experience this same narrative moment, but it was repeated thrice. We also reduced the number of hosts playing maids and increased guest capacity by using bunk-beds. In the end, in order to achieve a successful relationship between hosts playing maids and guests playing children we set a maximum of four guests per host. We reached a new total of 72 guests, divided in groups of 24 using 12 bunk-beds.

The trilogy has provided useful outcomes for this study as its participation designs were conceived specifically to establish meaningful relationships with each audience member individually. It is concerned with the experience of the guests as ticket-paying public, as participants and as players. At every step of the event, expectations are re-negotiated to allow guests to engage with the event—at times proactively, at others passively. And, as discussed above, the guest-to-host ratio is an essential definition in order to achieve the desired results of a given experience.

This research analyses the guest–host relationship, as well as the guest–guest relationship managed by a host, during the unfolding of the live durational theatrical

event *Hotel Medea*. The aim of the following chapters is to use specific instances from the three parts of the production—*Zero Hour Market*, *Drylands* and *Feast of Dawn*—as tools to examine individual and collective guest participation as the event unfolds from midnight until dawn (ZU-UK, 2010). The guest–guest relationship emerged very late in the research, when *Hotel Medea* had its first public performances. Hosts had not anticipated that, as a result of careful management of guest participation as individuals, guests would become very aware of their fellow guests in role-play. After being given the skills and information to participate, guests took the initiative to extend role-play to their fellow guests, a relationship I explore in relation to LARP events (Montola and Stenros, 2008). Besides the relationship between guest and host in the *Hotel Medea* case study, the conventional perception guests have in relation to time and space are re-defined through their extended duration and their relationship to the performance location. A proposed dramaturgy of participation in each of the three parts of *Hotel Medea* was designed to give every guest permission to play, individually and collectively, by changing conventional frames to reconstruct guest expectations of the event and allow guests to increase their level of active engagement with the event incrementally.

To analyse the way in which guest participation is managed in *Hotel Medea*, I look at a series of key invitations that guests are offered in a dramaturgical line, which takes into consideration how well guests are equipped to interact and how their participation is sustained throughout the night by set changes in the rules of engagement. The dramaturgy of participation in *Hotel Medea* is defined by the moments in which this change happens and when new rules of engagement are established for each guest. As an example, these dynamic changes might at times be defined by guests being invited to join in with a new dance step while they cannot allow Medea to leave her land with Jason, thus implicating guests in the task of not allowing Medea to betray her family. Another dynamic change might include guests moving to a different room where they witness other guests wearing pyjamas and being put to bed, thus playing different roles in the same narrative. Changes might also be identified when each male guest dresses up as a woman to gain access to Medea’s women-only club, after Medea finds out about Jason’s betrayal and only allows women in her room (ZU-UK, 2010).

## 1.8 The Stage

The theatrical stage is arguably the most influential spatial reference for audiences and one that strongly defines their behaviour. Therefore, in order to further define the contract of expectations between *Hotel Medea*'s guests and hosts, I returned to existing definitions of the place in which theatre happens, specifically with regard to the architectural relationship of stage–auditorium. This helped me identify expectations imposed by architectural design, and how the relationship between host–guest (actor–audience member) can still be influenced by the architectural stage–auditorium relationship, even in events that do not take place in traditional theatre buildings.

If I take Boal's (1979) early technique for the roles of the 'spect-actor'—a spectator that would be empowered to the point of leading the action—and the 'joker'—as a mediator and facilitator of the spect-actor's emancipation—as a starting point, I can identify assumptions about mutual expectations that performers and audience members have of each other in a participatory theatrical event. Therefore, it is important to isolate the effect these devices have outside the socio-political context within which they were originally created.

*Hotel Medea*'s attempt to re-define theatre's engagement with its audience members helps us consider how far definitions of theatre events can be pushed in practice. Some of the most influential practitioners in European theatre over the past decades, such as Eugenio Barba, Peter Brook and Jerzy Grotowski, have attempted to re-define theatre in their own terms, pushing definitions and boundaries but retaining recurring aspects. One of these aspects, which seems to feature even in the most unorthodox of practices, is the very moment actors and audience members meet, and especially *where* they meet. The stage–auditorium relationship features in most theatre theory and is often a reference from which theatre is defined.

'What takes place between audience member and actor' is how Grotowski defined the act of theatre in 1968 in his seminal book *Towards a Poor Theatre*. He complemented this with the following statement: 'All other things are supplementary—perhaps necessary, but nevertheless supplementary' (Grotowski, 1968: 32). In the first paragraph of *Theatre & Audience*, Helen Freshwater reminds us that in that same year Brook 'insisted that he could "take any empty space and call it a bare stage", observing 'a man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged"' (Brook, quoted in Freshwater, 2009: 1; see also Brook, 1968).



Contemporaries Grotowski and Brook are two of the most influential theatre practitioners in Europe in the last century, widely known for their experimental practices which caused a lasting impact on theatre from the 1960s to today. Their proposed definitions of theatre are telling of their work priorities. For instance, if we take Brook's description of 'a man walk[ing]' to mean the actor, and 'someone else watching' to mean the audience member, then for theatre to happen, from Brook's perspective, the only required action from the audience member is to watch the bare stage—as long as there is someone walking across it. Perhaps, we could further explore his definition by imagining the hypothetical spatial condition of the audience member from his/her point of view. It might have looked like this: A person is watching a bare stage. There is no man walking, at least not yet. Therefore this is not considered an act of theatre, and therefore this person watching is not yet an audience member. As soon as a man walks across the bare stage, theatre suddenly happens. The man walking can now be defined as an actor and the person watching is granted audience member status. However, what if there was no stage?

This brief hypothetical exploration of Brook's imaginary scenario helps highlight how heavily reliant his definition of theatre is on an existence of a stage. Can we also assume from Brook's description that the person watching is not on this stage? If not, would we require the existence of an auditorium in order to characterize, by spatial opposition, a stage area? Grotowski, on the other hand, chooses to focus on *what happens* between actor and audience member rather than *the space* in which it happens, allowing for a number of possible relationships to emerge between the two. If, just for a moment, we were to leave aside the historical weight that the terms 'actor' and 'audience member' carry with them, as well as Grotowski's (1968) further developments on each of these key roles later in his book, we are left with a definition which—in principle—allows for theatre to happen between actor and audience member whichever the place (i.e. not necessarily on a stage). Whereas Brook's focus is on an empty space turned bare stage, Grotowski's focus seems to be on the meeting itself between these two people, regardless of the space in which it happens.

Brook's practice over the decades has been dedicated to what happens in his empty space. It is therefore a fair and calculated assumption that his audience members would have experienced his company's productions at the same venues and from the same seating arrangements as most of the other theatre events of the time, as it is still today. However, Brook's notion of an *empty* space is highly problematic as it assumes a neutral starting point the actors and the audience members share: as if the audience

members' and the actors' expectations, belief systems, ideologies and physiologies could be left behind simply because they are watching (or using) a stage without a theatrical set. The intention behind my research of a dramaturgy of participation has been to engage guests individually, and for this to happen certain personal elements must be taken into account such as their cultural background and assumptions regarding previous theatrical experiences. Brook's notion of an *empty* space only takes into account what can be 'read' on stage from a distance. It however discards the existing expectations his audiences would have as they arrived to watch his productions.

*Hotel Medea* was an international theatre project developed between Brazil and the UK from 2006 to 2012, based on a commitment to develop a creative process between the two countries that came from a desire to work against the commodification and exoticization of foreign cultural forms that are very often appropriated by intercultural theatre directors for the British stage. This concern was observed in relation to the ethics of representation with regard to the use of hyper-local art forms for the consumption of a Western audience (Bharucha, 1993). Making *Hotel Medea* was an opportunity to critique mainstream intercultural practice by politically and creatively addressing issues of cultural exchange as subject matter in the myth of Medea, as well as by creating a model for collaboration between artists in the UK and Brazil.

In order to research folk forms, we travelled through the north and north-east regions of Brazil organizing meetings with local cultural leaders and masters who are responsible for the preservation of traditional and folkloric forms of theatre, music, dance and rituals, many of which also take place overnight (Ferretti, 2010). The aim of these meetings had a dual purpose: to create dialogic collaborations with the masters and participants of these art forms in north-east Brazil who might be interested in becoming artistic collaborators of the project, as well as to research these forms first hand in order to identify recurring elements that aid collective participation in the making and presenting of such events.

We soon realized that in order to engage with guests successfully through the night the overnight event *Hotel Medea* had to be built on the foundation of audience participation. As a result, participation, interactivity and immersion became the means with which to create the event structure. The event was not created in order to be participatory, as it was originally intended as a process of research based on a range of intercultural actor training practices. However, a minimum active level of engagement was required from its guests, owing to the nature of the event being both durational and overnight. From elements present in the Brazilian art forms Cavalo Marinho, Jongo and

Bumba meu Boi, we developed a training programme for the actors based on repetitive rhythms, shared ritual actions and participatory play.

One of the core exercises applied to actor preparation, as well as scene development, was a *roda* ('circle' in Brazilian Portuguese) formed of participants who could go in and out of it, in time with the rhythm. The elements used to construct the exercise were borrowed from the Brazilian art forms mentioned and always included two players inside this *roda*, with other players also moving to the rhythm as they observe the relationship of the two players in the centre. The two players in the centre of the *roda* needed to keep eye contact and move in time with the rhythm. They also had to maintain a minimum space between them so that another player could walk into their game, effectively removing one of the players from the game. Any participant from the *roda* was allowed to 'buy the game' from one of the existing players in the centre. S/he could do that by entering the *roda* in time with the rhythm, cutting across the pair currently playing and 'taking' the player with whom s/he chose to make eye contact and continuing to move with him/her, thereby eliminating the other player. Several variations of this structure were used also to construct scenes, as well as prepare the hosts before the public performances of *Hotel Medea*. A shorter version of this actor training programme later became the basis for an audience training programme in the opening scene of *Hotel Medea*, where audiences are trained in the percussive rhythms in order to be able to participate in later scenes, and provide them with stamina to help them stay awake.

In contrast to Western approaches to actor training which often focus on the development of a fictional character and the stage presence of an actor, the training exercises developed for *Hotel Medea* focused primarily on the collective creation of a shared rhythm and on structures that allowed a game to develop over time. (The approach to actor training is discussed in each chapter separately, since each part of the trilogy required a different approach to participation and, therefore, actor—and audience—training.)

Although *Hotel Medea* started out of a desire to investigate cultural representation in Brazil and the UK through the re-telling of the myth of Medea, the focus of the research shifted over the years to an investigation of audience participation overnight, and has been presented to Brazil and UK audiences in Rio de Janeiro (2010), Brasilia (2012), Edinburgh (2011) and London (2009, 2010, 2012). The instances of participation experienced by guests in *Hotel Medea* vary in length, format and purpose in order to accommodate the variable circumstances in relation to the narrative, the

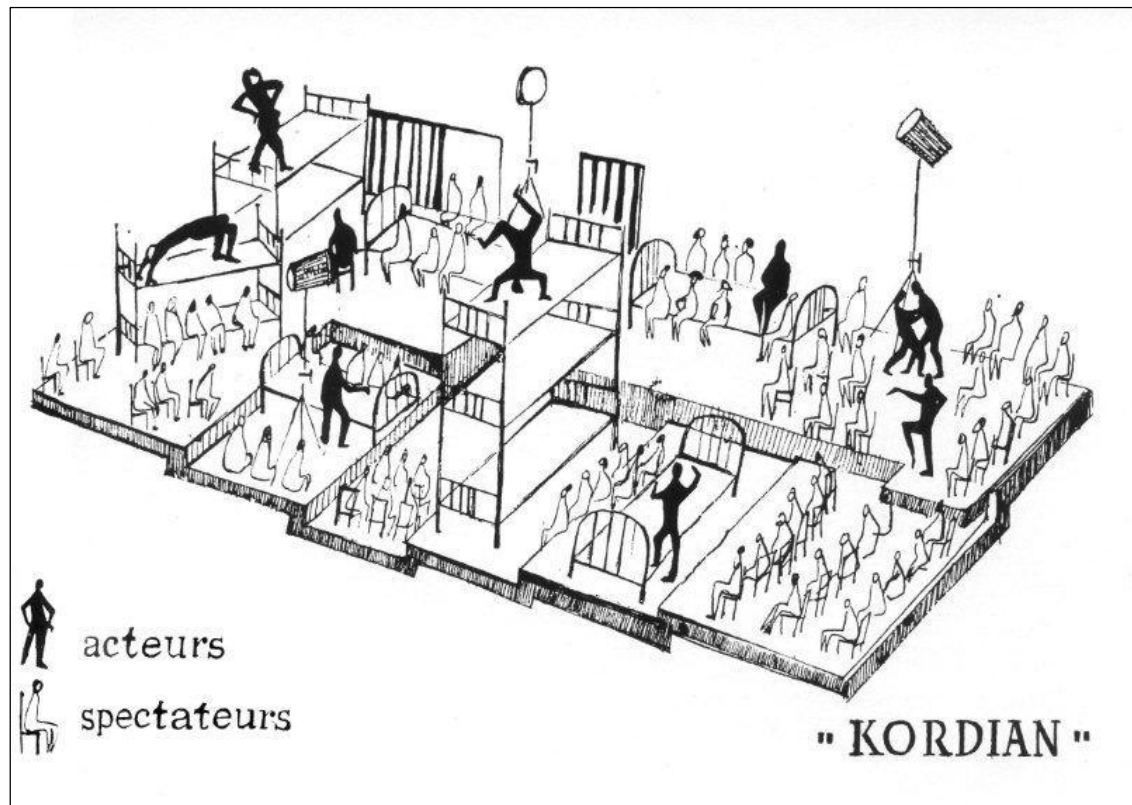
architecture of each space as well as the level of exhaustion of guests depending on the time of night.

The journey of development in each major public iteration of *Hotel Medea* between 2009 and 2012 involved different approaches to the use of space, as well as different versions of how guests were welcomed at their arrival. In 2010 for instance, it was helpful to bring guests over to Trinity Buoy Wharf from London's North Greenwich Pier on a boat. The specificity of the site and the mode of transport resonated with the narrative of arriving in a foreign land, as well as Jason's invasion from sea. In Edinburgh, the performance venue building was 4 stories high and had previously been used as a Veterinary School (2011). The large amount of corridors and rooms with displays referring to dissected animal parts offered a nightmarish and disorientating environment for guests dressed in pyjamas being chased by Medea at 5am. Each new space required specific adaptations in order to make the best use of the existing architecture, and these were not always successful. The former Arcola Theatre building in Arcola Street in East London was considerably smaller, and affected the guests' ability to participate, especially during the three rotations in *Drylands* (2009). Most of the walls at Southbank Centre's Hayward Gallery are painted white, and the smaller galleries have few distinctive architectural features. Therefore, it was challenging to evoke an environment of foreignness and danger when the site itself felt tidy and secure (2012).

There were other developments in the structures of participation in *Hotel Medea* that were not related to the location itself, but the way in which guests were invited to participate. One notable development from 2009 public performances to 2010 was the addition of an audience training camp, where hosts helped audiences learn rhyme, song and dance steps in order to feel more comfortable to participate when asked to. After this specific addition to *Hotel Medea* the structure of the event remained the same, and the focus of the development became predominantly the 'tone' with which hosts performed their roles, and the nuanced facilitation of guest participation. Hosts became more experienced at negotiating individual responses, which allowed for a better management of guest-host relationships throughout the night.

In contrast to Brook's practice, Grotowski's work developed through many phases over the decades, including turning away from theatre altogether to develop a practice without audience members called 'paratheatre'. At the time of his earlier definition, his work focused on the meeting between actor and audience member aside from any other theatrical artifices that are 'perhaps necessary, but nevertheless

supplementary' (Grotowski, 1968: 32). In a less literal way than proposed by Brook's empty space, Grotowski's practice towards a poorer, more essential, theatre may illuminate the attempt to reach an essential manifestation of theatre between actor and audience member. Although it may seem paradoxical, Grotowski worked in close partnership with architect and set designer Jerzy Gurawski, with whom he developed numerous highly elaborate sketches for theatre productions.



**Figure 5.** Stage design for production of *Kordian* by Jerzy Gurawski (1962). Reproduced from 'No Rooms' architecture and infrastructure blog (<https://niepokoje.wordpress.com/tag/lata-60/page/4/>).

Figure 5 shows an example of a set design that proposed a number of different spatial arrangements for the audience members, fragmenting the conventional auditorium–stage arrangement. In Gurawski's drawings, the seating areas were designed as part of the set, which could be seen as an attempt to shorten the distance between audience members (drawn in white) and actors (drawn in black), or at the very least to reconfigure their relationship spatially in order to affect 'what happens between' (Grotowski, 1968: 32).

It is necessary to highlight that even though these set designs were intended to reconfigure the spatial relationship between audience member and actor, they were

nonetheless designed for productions inside a building where other theatre productions had been performed. Therefore, despite the alternative spatial rearrangement of the audience members, the building itself would carry the history of previous performances; or rather, the audience's understanding of that building as a place to watch theatre would in turn suggest conventions and expectations, thus influencing the experience of the audience members. In *Hotel Medea*, we apply similar spatial/architectural strategies, such as shifting the spatial relationship between guests and hosts. However, it is not enough to simply change the roles in space, especially for events that take place in buildings designed for conventional theatre events. Hosts must work harder to encourage a different behaviour to the historical conventions present in such sites.

According to Michael Hays, '[u]ntil recently, the social value and function of the buildings, the architectural forms which enclose the theatre event, have remained largely unexplored territory' (1981: 3). Theatre in the West for many years has been largely understood as the live event between a stage and an auditorium, where theatre audiences take their places in rows of seats in a silent and dark hall and look at a lit stage. In order to be able to research the role of the audience member in contemporary events which are presented outside the stage-auditorium relationship, it is crucial to identify to what extent these assumptions have infiltrated the foundations on which key theorists have developed their studies of theatre and audience members—as we have seen with Brook's telling words. Other spatial assumptions may include the existence of a foyer, a box office where tickets are purchased and a cloakroom in which to leave personal belongings.

According to Susan Bennett, 'the very existence of the foyer emphatically points to the social construction of theatre. The small groups of people who come to the theatrical event are deliberately assembled as a collective in a space which has, in its historical development, increasingly been designed to permit social display' (1997: 130). So, perhaps, the first spatial assumption to be challenged before one can start to talk about theatre audience members is the assumption that theatre takes place on a stage, or indeed between stage and auditorium. Even when speaking about site-specific or promenade theatre performances, which might take place in a multiplicity of sites and where the auditorium-stage relationship might not be explicit, the very dynamic of observing actors perform their craft risks defining the locative relationship as 'you perform there (=stage), I watch here (=auditorium)', taking us back to Brook's stage-bound definition.

## 1.9 Politicizing the Audience Member

As well as alternative theatre practitioners, theatre practices that are applied to political or educational situations have been a fertile ground for interactive practices to be developed and disseminated. Whether for the purpose of conflict resolution in theatre for development or educational aims in theatre in education, the practices of Boal and Brecht originally aimed to politicize theatre audiences and are still being widely used today. Although *Hotel Medea* does not aim to *politicize* its guests beyond the event as such, it aims to provoke the guest to play critically within the overall dramaturgical event. Guests who are allowed to take responsibility for their own participation throughout the trilogy seem to gain a deeper understanding of how their role fits in a larger theatrical game, and by extension to the world. Although not explicitly, this is perhaps the closest *Hotel Medea* guests will get to Boal's vision of theatre as a rehearsal for revolution.

Although you need to purchase a ticket to attend *Hotel Medea*, it sets itself in direct opposition to the commodification of theatre events by demanding of its guests an investment beyond the price of the ticket. Guests who wish to experience *Hotel Medea* also need to give up their sleep and actively engage as players in a variety of propositions over six hours. *Hotel Medea* developed a creative methodology that is guest-centred insofar as its aim is to perform a carefully designed experience for each guest, as opposed to conforming to general market criteria that aim to make every experience comfortable and convenient for its customers.

Described as 'undoubtedly the best-known figure to have addressed the perceived passivity of theatre audiences' (Freshwater, 2009: 46), Brecht worked hard to politicize the audience member, making him/her conscious of the mechanics of theatre and representation. As Meg Mumford rightly points out, 'Brecht's attitude towards theory at this point was shaped not only by the immediate political situation in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), but also by his long-held enthusiasm for [Karl] Marx's early promotion of interventionist thinking' (2009: 50). Although working within the conventions of theatre being played on stage to an audience in the auditorium, Brecht used a number of tactics to provoke audience members to engage critically by revealing the mechanics behind how theatre was presented and by highlighting their condition in the event. It is important to note that these techniques have now been popularized to such a degree that they are generally seen as merely another aesthetic style of representation—even within mainstream theatre. Brecht intended to criticize the conventional system through which theatre was presented at the

time; however, he did not move away from the conventional architectural framing of theatre events. *Hotel Medea* attempted to re-frame the experience of the audience by offering an alternative relationship with time, space and role-play. It was presented outside a theatre venue between midnight and dawn as a way to critically address usual norms of the actor–audience relationship, whether in conventional or alternative theatre, and sought to constantly re-negotiate the responsibility between guests and hosts in the re-enacting of the event.

Boal was a Brazilian-born theatre director, theorist and activist who also developed participatory techniques to challenge the idea of passive audience membership in theatre. Writing about the international impact of Boal's 'theatre of the oppressed', Frances Babbage states: 'There is scarcely a country it has not touched . . . Theatre of the Oppressed has been translated into at least twenty-five languages' (2004: 30). Boal's work has had an overwhelming international appeal for theatre in education and applied theatre contexts, especially where theatre of the oppressed tools are used for real-life situations such as conflict resolution. Boal is considered to have been inspired by a number of principles present in Brecht's work, taking them a step further by applying them to situations such as conflict resolution and policy-making: 'Boal criticised Brecht's theatre because, although the audience member "does not delegate power to the characters to think in his place, [. . .] he continues to delegate power to them to act in his place"' (Babbage, 2004: 28).

While in exile from Brazilian dictatorship in the early 1970s, Boal continued to develop his theatre of the oppressed arsenal, a series of models and tools to engage audience members in what Boal believed was not revolution itself but rehearsals for revolution. Following his beliefs that theatre was used as a tool for social control, he went on to create what he would later call 'invisible theatre', where actors would perform different roles in public spaces as if they were actually happening. An example of what a common scene would have involved can be described in the following way: a male actor approaches a female actress in an underground train, behaving in an overtly sexist manner towards her. She protests loudly about his behaviour and leaves the carriage. He follows her out of the train. Other actors, pretending to be passengers in the train, then initiate discussion with the people who witnessed the event, encouraging them to reflect and voice their opinions (Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz, 1994).

Although these pre-rehearsed scenes would take place in theatrically unconventional spaces, the action was performed by actors to a set of audience members who were unaware that the scene was a pre-rehearsed enactment of an issue



(subject), with the purpose of initiating discussion between people to express their genuine views on the event. The auditorium–stage relationship here is by no means explicit to the public since they never acknowledge this as a theatre scene. However, the system of representation used by the actors is clearly developed towards making the issues clear to those who need to watch and understand what is happening. Referring to Brecht’s work, Boal emphatically claimed that ‘a further stage is necessary in this theatrical revolution. No longer physically passive, the audience members must *act*; only when this is achieved can theatre fulfil its radical potential’ (quoted in Babbage, 2004: 28). According to Babbage, this is ‘what Boal terms the “poetics of the oppressed”, whereby “the audience member no longer delegates power to the characters either to think or to act in his place. The audience member frees himself; he thinks and acts for himself! Theatre is action!” ’ (2004: 28). Boal’s clear vision for what the role of the audience member should be, similar to Brecht’s case, was a direct response to mainstream theatre as a reflection of the current power systems at that time. While in Europe, Boal developed his notion of oppression to mean not only a State-imposed oppression but one that is imposed by each individual on themselves, curbing their capacity for agency. ‘Cop in the head’ was the phrase used by Boal to describe ‘the introversion of the European mechanisms of oppression’ (quoted in Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz, 1994: 87).

Boal’s earlier belief of State-imposed oppression drove him to develop forum theatre, a system that offers a technique where the aim is to ensure a participating audience that gets involved critically with the issues presented by the actors, to the point that audience members are then invited to come to the stage and role-play. They take a character previously played by an actor in order to offer new solutions for a problem presented through their scene. Although highly participatory, the forum theatre system requires a clearly defined separation between stage and auditorium. One at a time, audience members can represent a character on stage as the rest of the audience watches from the auditorium.

This practice is often followed by a session of ‘legislative theatre’, where audience members and actors sit down and discuss how to turn audience member-initiated solutions—performed earlier in the forum sessions—into law proposals for the local government. ‘Legislative Theatre aims to “theatricalise politics” by establishing a direct line of communication between Theatre of the Oppressed Explorations at grass roots level and an actual law-making process’ (Babbage, 2004: 143).

Although highly influential in theatre practice over the past century, both Boal's and Brecht's works, motivated by the intention of *liberating* the audience member, have arguably not been successful in the way and scale they originally intended. Their practices are especially 'dated' in light of contemporary audience membership being dramatically influenced by mobile phone communications and high-speed Internet access (which *Hotel Medea* addresses through its use of mixed media); however, their practice-based attempts to politicize audience members still form the basis of our understanding of *participation* in theatre practice today. In varied global contexts, the fact that the techniques are used for active problem solving makes it a popular technique, especially in the case of theatre for development in areas of conflict.

Although *Hotel Medea* makes no direct attempt to inherit the political agenda found in Brecht and Boal's original works, the ethics and authenticity present in the practice as a result of its initial aim to criticize the politics of representation of mainstream intercultural theatre makes it more than just entertainment. In many ways, their aim to politicize the guest has in effect been washed out in a production played in globalized London and with an impeccably bourgeois audience. However, there is still something vitally important going on in the reconstitution of the concept of theatre which *Hotel Medea* affords and which draws on Boal and Brecht's practices.

### **1.10 The Joker as a Model for the Host**

It has been established that for a theatre event to take place both actor and audience member—guest and host—are needed. We have explored through the work of key practitioners a number of possibilities for the role of the guest to be approached, as player, agent, participant as well as watcher. However, are the expectations and assumptions attached to the role of the host perhaps even more rigid than that of the guest? Does the way in which the theatre industry operates in the UK affect the host's ability to facilitate interaction in a participatory theatrical event? Then, in which ways can we explore the potential for the role of the host to be studied in relation to a more proactive guest?

As Bruce McConachie suggests, 'all theatres come to audience members freighted with a history and culture that will partly control how audience members look at performers' (2008: 134). Theatre actors often undergo classical training to be considered for employment. A large number of professional actors that perform in mainstream theatre in London, as well as at more alternative events and the fringe theatre circuit, were once at a drama school or have experienced some sort of

institutional training in order to develop their craft and be able to act. At the end of an actor's training course in the UK, whether in a conservatoire or in an undergraduate programme, it is standard practice for final performance works of students to be showcased to industry agents who might invite them into their portfolios. Once in an agent's portfolio, actors are sent to a number of auditions often organized for stage plays, television advertisements or short films.

As is the case in most institutions for actor training in the UK, acting courses focus on techniques of character representation and different theatre genres. Recently, however, small segments of acting programmes are being dedicated to more contemporary practitioners, who offer different approaches to focusing on the actor's body and voice, such as Étienne Decroux's 'corporeal mime' (see Leabhart, 2007) and Jaques Lecoq's exercises inspired by *Commedia dell'Arte* and the clown (First Zanni) (see Lecoq, 2002). However, these tend to focus on alternative theatre genres and styles for the stage rather than on interactive models of audience participation. The choice of a growing number of contemporary theatre-makers to engage with audience members individually—whether via mobile phones or one-on-one interactions—has forced a shift in audience expectations of theatre events and, consequently, in their behaviour during the event. This shift has created an entirely new role for the actor, who is often expected to take newly inherited responsibilities closer to crowd control or waitressing than to traditional acting. What is required of the actor in such events often involves direct interaction with individual audience members, and there is currently no provision for training that is geared towards direct engagement with a more proactive audience member. Such techniques do not feature in the curricula on which most actors' training is based. More than being just a different genre of performance, it is a different paradigm altogether.

There are exceptions, of course. Boal's forum theatre is widely disseminated and provides a very clear structure in which the role of the joker is not concerned with representing a character. Instead, actors who are confronted with this role soon realize that a different set of responsibilities is required of them for Boal's system to be successful. In an interview with Mette Bøe Lyngstad and Stig A. Eriksson (2003), held at Høgskolen i Bergen (Bergen University College), on 4 November 2003, in response to the question 'What are the most important challenges for the joker?', Boal explained:

As the joker you have the responsibility to coordinate all the creations and the creators. But you also have to take care not to impose your own view. You are not superior to anybody. You have your opinion, you have

your intelligence, you can have all the qualities you have, but you never say I am like this or I have more knowledge of this; that is the basics of it. [. . .] Why is it called the joker? In Portuguese it is ‘coringa’, in Spanish ‘comodin’, but in English, unfortunately, joker also relates us to joking. We say ‘jokering’ and not joking, because it means the white card. A joker, a real joker, is a person who can help the people write a play, help people do the blocking of the play, help the people with the music, with the text, with everything. That is the white card, so the responsibility is to learn more and more and know more and more, so that you can teach in many ways. That is a bigger responsibility. But you have to teach in a democratic way, to respect the other ones. When the audience want to discuss what they think, the joker’s responsibility is a moral responsibility above all. It is important not to use this privileged position to impose ideas, because it is a privileged position.

Boal’s work is often considered in relation to applied theatre and theatre in education, and therefore it is understandable that his concerns in the interview extract focus on the ethics of such a role and the power that comes with the role. However, in an interactive theatrical event that focuses on a fictional narrative, these concerns may be less relevant as the artistic impact and the quality of the experience will often take precedence.

### **1.11 Re-imagining the Spect-actor**

To re-imagine the roles of host and guest within theatre, do both host and guest need to play by different rules? In order to develop the possibilities of a theatrical event, theatre practitioners have focused on the actor–audience member relationship as the core of the event. As well as his focus on alternative non-theatre spaces, Grotowski’s description of an experienced leader and of the outside participant demonstrates how paratheatre practice attempted to reconfigure the meeting between actor and audience member by re-framing their roles in relation to the event’s structure. Boal wrote extensively about liberating the audience member from a perceived passivity and re-defined this newly achieved role as ‘spect-actor’ or ‘audience member–actor’.

If the audience member acts, what becomes of the useful critical distance that could accompany the former position? How far is it even possible to evaluate from within? Perhaps for this reason, Boal advocates not so much an abandonment of the audience member role as a reconstruction of it. ‘Spect-actor’ is Boal’s chosen term: as the name implies, a figure

who deliberately and self-consciously inhabits both worlds, observes and acts . . . But, since Boal emphasises the importance of the audience member going ‘inside’ the drama, it might appear that his proposal contradicts Brecht’s rather than developing logically from it. (Babbage, 2004: 42)

However, despite the dissimilarities in both practitioners’ approaches to the passivity of the audience member, Babbage stresses the fact they share an underlying aim: ‘to enable audience members to know the reality of their own social situation and of the dramatic action simultaneously’ (2004: 42). Flanagan’s (2009) notion of playing critically also refers to this dual consciousness of reality and fiction, allowing the player to simultaneously suspend disbelief and be hyper-aware of his/her condition as a player. For instance, in *Drylands*, Part II of *Hotel Medea*, guests are witness to Jason’s unfaithful behaviour towards Medea, and later have an opportunity to take a photo with him for his political campaign. Having experienced the attitude of his campaign team towards Medea and her children, the guests have an opportunity to opt-out of the campaign photo with candidate Jason or to use the photo as an opportunity to protest (which many did).

A number of contemporary theatre artists have continued to address the audience’s perceived passivity on stage through theatrical experiments and writing over the decades, such as writer Peter Handke’s *Offending the Audience, And Self-Actualisation* (1971) and the work of director Tim Etchells (1999) with Forced Entertainment in the UK. Etchells reflected on the ‘irreducible fact of theatre—actors and an audience to whom they must speak’ (quoted in Freshwater, 2009: 7). Etchells’ work pushes boundaries of what is expected from the theatre stage. Forced Entertainment performances, which Etchells directs, have displayed instances where audience members are individually insulted having their deaths predicted from the stage, or have challenged the accepted duration of a theatre piece by lasting several days. His work plays heavily on audience’s expectations of theatre and the accepted conventions to which theatre audiences and actors play. Etchells is also known as a solo artist, but his theatre work with Forced Entertainment seems to operate exclusively within the auditorium–stage dynamic on which we have seen most theatre audience theory to be based (Etchells, 1999).

Perhaps most surprising is the extent to which the stage–auditorium relationship defines the guest–host relationship even in some of the most alternative contemporary theatrical events in the UK. Punchdrunk has produced a number of immersive large-

scale theatre events which often take place in large disused buildings that are meticulously designed, similar to impeccably detailed film sets. Guests are physically immersed in these environments, surrounded by carefully selected scenery and props. Each guest can choose their journey through the rooms and watch the scenes in any order and from (almost) any position they choose to. But most importantly, every guest is put in a mask they are asked not to remove. Although they can watch the action from very close, their anonymity is preserved and being cast as voyeurs of the action heightens their role as merely observers (Punchdrunk, 2006–07).

*Hotel Medea* is explicit in its intention to engage individuals in its fictional narrative using rituals and game-play to create a community where guests engage playfully with each other as well as with the hosts. In *Hotel Medea*, the notion of intimacy is not merely spatial, and certainly not voyeuristic. The guest in *Hotel Medea* is not anonymized. On the contrary, s/he is often at the centre of the action (Figure 6).







**Figure 6.** Guests improvise provocative rhyme, dance and song as a wedding gift to Jason and Medea in *Zero Hour Market. Part I, Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

Punchdrunk, on the other hand, claims to be in the business of escapism, and wants to return to another kind of

theatrical intimacy which does not seek communion, but which plays a different game with the theatrical contract and the distance between the audience member and the performer. The mask maintains distance, whilst allowing proximity of a controlled kind. Performer and audience member–participant can occupy the same physical and fictive space, without the latter having to reveal themselves, without them having to be present as a recognizable social subject. (White, 2009: 228)

This voyeuristic relationship encouraged by Punchdrunk, which allows audiences not to reveal themselves, works against the possibility of building a community of audiences. Hidden behind their masks, their relationship with the actors (and each other) is merely comparable to an enhanced computer screen—where participants can decide what to look at, for how long and from how close or far—but they are not co-authors of their experience, and they are not allowed to fully participate in the subject matter being explored.

### 1.12 Embodied Perceptions of Shifting Spaces

We often consider a theatrical experience in light of previous ones we have had. In the same way, we build expectations from the moment we are faced with invitations to events that are similar or widely different from those we have experienced in the past. In order to affect the way guests' expectations influence their behaviour during an event, *Hotel Medea* tries to shift guest positioning in space throughout the night as an attempt to reconfigure architectural conventions embedded in past experiences of theatre events. These are the conventions on which we build our understanding of our role in an event, and by disorientating the guests spatially and constantly shifting their spatial frame of reference, *Hotel Medea* attempts to give guests the opportunity to perceive their role in the space—and therefore in the event—in a different light. McConachie describes the relationship between the impossibility of buildings being empty spaces precisely because guests' minds cannot be a 'blank slate':

The necessity of place for human experience and knowledge raises significant questions for theatre artists and scholars. Certainly it renders impossible the modernist hope for an 'empty space', a theatre building devoid of experience and memory in which artists might inscribe new images on a audience member's *tabula rasa*, [John] Locke's master metaphor for the mind/brain as a blank slate. As humans, we make all building spaces into places and fill them, even as we are seeing them for the first time, with the world that is in our minds. Because the mind is not a *tabula rasa*, theatre buildings can never be empty spaces. (2008: 134; emphasis in the original)

The spatial relationship between the guests and the hosts, both physically and metaphorically, is a defining factor in shaping how the guests expect they are allowed to behave in a certain space. Is it possible then to make a parallel argument here for the impact any space will have on guests, thus influencing how they perceive an event and consequently how inclined they might be to take a proactive role and participate in this theatre event. In other words, can a type of space be more conducive to certain types of guest participation than others?

According to Bennett, 'non-traditional theatre has been presented in non-traditional, less institutional venues. [. . .] Nevertheless the architectural elements of a community centre, a union hall, [. . .] will impose ideologically on performances and the audience's perception of them' (1997: 125). Here, Bennett refers to architectural elements at play in non-traditional sites for performance, and which go beyond the



stage–auditorium architecture but nonetheless may impose ideologically on the guest’s perception. Although these events may take place in sites not originally designed for theatre, she starts to highlight other influences that may have considerable impact on a guest’s perception of these events, such as the type of transportation used to get there or whether tickets had been purchased in advance or not. While Bennett (1997) focuses specifically on the guests as a collective in their perception of the event through the space in which these events happen, my intention is to go beyond the sender–receiver model of performance analysis to look at a single guest’s whole experience as s/he participates in an event, and guest perception is only one of the elements of this experience.

‘In *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), [Maurice] Merleau-Ponty reminds us that our entire experience of the world is embodied and that this embodiment frames our every perception and thought’ (Freshwater, 2009: 19). Freshwater expands by saying that ‘some aspects of corporeal response and behaviour commonly shared by theatre-goers remain little explored’ (2009: 19) Both Merleau-Ponty and Freshwater’s arguments attempt to consider a more holistic understanding of a guest’s experience of an event, however they also are based on assumptions explored earlier regarding the guest simply fulfilling a watching role from the auditorium. Freshwater’s explanations are based on the fact that ‘audience members bring their whole bodies with them into the auditorium, not just their eyes’ (2009: 18; see also Merleau-Ponty, 2002).

*Hotel Medea*, for instance, contains moments where guests are helped to bed by actors and sung to sleep while they hear the dialogue between Jason and Medea from a distance. Through gestures and sometimes text, hosts suggest to their guests that they experience a certain scene in such a way that they might not rely on what they see as their only mode of perception. The host here dedicates their attention to a small number of guests, and at times only one at time. This offers each guest a kind of attention seldom experienced in theatre, and provides the host with a more intense opportunity to observe guest behaviour in the proposed circumstance. Through interviews with guests, I have also identified a direct relationship between moments of individual embodied perception through role-play and the moments that audience members find most memorable (ZU-UK, 2011).

As mentioned earlier, immediately after publishing *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968), Grotowski initiated a phase of his work called paratheatre, also known as the ‘theatre of participation’ or ‘active culture’, which lasted from 1969 to 1978 where he

‘shift[ed] his focus away from theatre art and questions of technique towards eliminating the distinction between guests and hosts in events that involved spontaneous contact between experienced leaders and outside participants’ (Polish Cultural Institute, 2011). It might come as no surprise that Grotowski’s paratheatre phase of work did not take place in buildings built for conventional theatre shows. Paratheatre sessions took place often in natural environments and attempted to abandon the inherited conventions of the actor-audience relationship.

I will return to Grotowski’s earlier definition of theatre as *what happens between*, and focus on other theatrical elements which shape, influence and frame *what happens*. In the case of paratheatre, we could take the roles of ‘facilitator’ and ‘participant’ to describe the potential roles that hosts and guests might take up in participatory theatrical events such as *Hotel Medea*. As John Freeman reports, ‘Cathy Turner [in *Wrights and Sites*] takes a view of site-specific performance as that which is “freer to renegotiate relationships with audiences than performance within traditional spaces” (2007: 62).

The fact that Grotowski’s chosen site for work was relocated to a drastically different architectural site from that of a theatre building helped him achieve an unconventional relationship between those facilitating the event and those participating in it. In order to explore alternative possibilities of what happens between host and guest, or in this case facilitator and participant, Grotowski needed to re-frame the theatrical event in an unconventional site. There are similarities between his intentions and the work of Howells mentioned earlier, but on a different scale. Howells used domestic environments in some of his work in order to explore what could happen between host and guest. Grotowski also removed a range of elements that characterize a conventional relationship with the public. Paratheatre did not include, for example, the purchase of tickets, curtain calls or a stage–auditorium. In *Hotel Medea*, many of these strategies were also applied to the space where hosts and guests met, but in contrast to Grotowski and Howells the fictional theatrical narrative was not abandoned. In fact, *Hotel Medea* makes explicit use of the unfolding narrative to contextualize what happens between host and guest.

### **1.13 Expectations of an Overnight Event: The Arrival at *Hotel Medea***

Prior to experiencing *Hotel Medea* in July 2010 as part of LIFT, guests arrive at the O2 Pier (formerly Queen Elizabeth II Pier) and are greeted by a member of the cast. They board a small boat which takes them across the Thames to Trinity Buoy Wharf. *O*

*Capitão*, as the character is called and who bears resemblance to the role of a master of ceremonies or compère, greets the audience as they arrive, and later creates a bridge between the audience and the event through the use of dramatic devices such as narrating, translating and commenting on key moments, thus highlighting their importance to the dramaturgy.

As an attempt to develop a methodology for guest interviews as part of the show, *o Capitão* asks for each audience member's verbal authorization to interview and film them on his personal mobile phone. By interviewing the audience members one by one this scene between the host and the participant generates individual data, which can later be used as a basis for understanding what guests are prepared to reveal about what they expect from the event. Guests are encouraged to critically reflect on their role prior to the official beginning of the performance. *O Capitão* is a device of the event and invites the audience to 'play critically' as well as collect individual testimonies regarding people's expectations about what they think is about to happen (ZU-UK, 2010). As mentioned in the earlier introduction to the role of *o Capitão*, he can be observed as having a similar role as the joker in Boal's forum theatre, where the actor facilitates guest experience, and debates and poses questions which alert the guests to a more critical observation of their experience as they participate.

As suggested, as problematic as the assumption that a space can be made 'empty'—devoid of meaning and associations—is the assumption that guests can start watching a show (or indeed participating in it) from a blank slate or a neutral point. This assumption would suggest that their beliefs, cultural references or mental health should be left behind in order for them to receive and perceive the show without prejudice, references or expectations when the metaphorical curtain opens. As well as the personal memories that audience members have of theatre events they have attended in the past, a number of other expectations play a considerable role in 'shaping receptive mood', as Bennett writes in her chapter 'The Audience and Theatre' (section 'On the threshold of theatre', 1997: 125). Bennett considers a number of factors prior to the official commencement of a theatre event which help define a guest's role and, consequently, engage the guest's expectations about what will be presented to them long before the show officially starts:

[T]he role of the theatre audience involves the audience member's interaction with [the] performance in both social (audience member) and private (individual) capacities. But these roles do not begin as the curtain rises. Already it is evident that issues such as cultural background and

selection play significant parts in constructing these roles and, indeed, in getting audiences into theatres. (1997: 125)

Guest expectations prior to attending a theatre event are a strong factor that helps determine their experience of the live event. Earlier notions of a homogenous *target audience* seem unable to address the multiplicity of cultural backgrounds, political beliefs and other factors at play in fast-changing global cities such as London. This calls for a more precise model that regards audience members as individuals, to attempt to account for the range of contrasting or even contradictory experiences that guests can personally have of the same event, sometimes on the same night. It is simply not possible to cater to each and every particularity of each and every guest who attends *Hotel Medea*. However, a dramaturgy of participation aims to acknowledge the cultural contexts of where an event is staged, as well as individual responses from guests, and to equip hosts to encourage individual guests to participate on their terms within a narrative built to account for, and assimilate, individual behaviour.

As Freshwater points out, ‘the common tendency to refer to an audience as “it” and, by extension, to think of “it” as a single entity, or a collective, risks obscuring the multiple contingencies of a subjective response, context, and environment which condition an individual’s interpretation of a particular performance event’. (2009: 5). Academics and critics have written extensively *on behalf* of guests in the past, often ignoring the wide range of personal responses from guests and making assumptions with little or no evidence regarding the guest expectations of the events in a play. Jessica Hillman believes that, increasingly, ‘audience expectations are valued because they hold the key to profits’ (2010: 6). Concerning this subject she interviewed Bert Fink, senior vice president of communications for Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization, who reminds us that ‘theatre has an unspoken contract with its audience; if a theatre promises Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Oklahoma!*, they had better deliver that. Don’t call it that if it’s distorted beyond recognition’ (Fink, quoted in Hillman, 2010: 6). Although *Hotel Medea* did not intend to employ marketing strategies inspired by *Oklahoma!*, Fink makes a valid point regarding the set up of expectations prior to the arrival of guests. In this sense, events such as *Hotel Medea* need to carefully consider how the experience offered to guests—and its differences with other similar events—can be made explicit prior to the purchase of tickets. For instance, calling the trilogy *Medea*, as opposed to *Hotel Medea*, would have certainly generated different expectations in the interested audiences.

Fink specifically talks about the promises a company makes to potential guests through their marketing campaign. If we were to consider Bennett's (1997) observation that the guest role begins before the curtain rises, and that even the mode of transport the guest uses to get to the site of performance influences their *receptive mood*, then why should we stop there? If we consider the power a marketing campaign can have on a prospective guest, then we should certainly consider the first time a guest hears about the event as their first engagement with the production. This widens even more the gap between guests who purchased tickets months in advance and those who decided to turn up at the door and watch whichever performance was on offer.

Amongst other elements, *Hotel Medea*'s contract with its guests is defined by the price of its ticket at £40 (full price) in 2012. The price is relatively good value in the context of theatre tickets, especially when considering the cost of the three separate parts of the overnight trilogy as well as of catering for breakfast. The contract with its guests is also defined by what the event *promises* to its customers through its direct or indirect marketing campaign. Although the event is by no means aiming to reach a specific demographic or geographic area of theatregoers, guests for *Hotel Medea* have often been reached through the marketing campaigns of international festivals and venues hosting the company. These organizations have identified the potential the event has to attract younger, thrill-seeking guests who are looking for an 'alternative night out'—and very often guests who dislike conventional theatre. Our ideal audience of guests would be made up of a wide range of individuals as opposed to a specific group of consumers. However, we observed that despite the marketing campaign that included hosting festivals and venue-related events, the demographic was rarely homogenous, and also changed over time, during the course of a performance run owing to information spread by word of mouth, from guests who had experienced the trilogy.

Expectations are also inseparable from the conventions attached to a specific art form or genre such as musical theatre for instance, especially if the guest is a frequent theatregoer. However, the task of researching the myriad possibilities of what guests might expect from an unusual theatre event is a complex one, but one which can take us closer to understanding individual guest responses and perceptions regarding their role within a participatory event.

#### **1.14 Micro-events**

Anthony Jackson and Shulamith Lev-Aladgem state that '[i]n such theatrical events, participation goes beyond the "reception process" of the performance and becomes a

concrete physical action' (2004: 209). Play theorist Sutton-Smith, author of *The Ambiguity of Play* (2009), defends the importance of considering play in all of its forms, and asserts that any definition of play must apply to both adults and children. In order to help frame guests' experience of these micro-events as Jackson and Lev-Aladgem's 'concrete physical action', it is useful to look at Sutton-Smith's 'play quadrilogue' which offers a starting point to study the contract among guest, host and space in the moment when a shared action is performed. Sauter's (2000) concept of the theatrical event offers the idea of 'playing culture' in order to frame the interactive theatre event as an event based on the culture of playing, as opposed to literary culture for instance. Flanagan (2009), too, develops ideas of 'playing critically' where the player is both inside the action as well as highly aware of the overall game structure.

The guest in *Hotel Medea* uses the heightened awareness of his/her role as a ticket-paying guest and at the same time participates actively in the action of the event. Flanagan's use of the term 'critical player' is useful to understand the guest who is invited to take on an active role within the event, for instance during moments of interactive game-play. It offers a useful framework to explore the agency of the player within game-design, offering strong parallels with interactive theatre practice and its relationship with the dramatic narrative. These conceptual frames help apply the idea of a dramaturgy of participation—made of a series of moments as micro-events—to the narrative of the performance, taking into account the many types of guest participation during *Hotel Medea*.

The fundamental difference between theatrical scenes and micro-events is that the former is a defined moment within the narrative in which something happens in a specific period of time, and the latter represents the relationship guests have to a spatial reference (i.e. to a space familiar to them), such as a wedding venue, a market, a club or a shrine. In every micro-event, these familiar spaces host a self-contained event within the overall event. The order in which micro-events happen, however, is of extreme importance to the experience of participation of each guest, and to their understanding of the unfolding narrative. The behaviour of hosts and guests within micro-events belongs to a culture of playing as opposed to a written culture to which theatrical scenes and plays belong: 'There is something very physical about the traditions of playing culture. [. . .] Only through the physical experience and the physical skills can someone acquire the rules of playing. [. . .] Playing culture takes place here and now and it is organized to be experienced at the same time [as] it is created' (Sauter, 2000: 9).

Although overlaps can certainly be identified among all four elements in Sauter's (2000) theatrical event, I concentrate on a combination of the playing culture and theatrical playing as the basis for understanding the micro-event. Placed within Sauter's description of theatrical playing, each micro-event can be defined by four key elements: the guest's role, the host's role, the spatial environment and the narrative context. The characteristics of a specific micro-event can be defined as the combination of the guest's level of immersion or critical play, the host's devices to engage with the participating audience, the role that the environment plays in this contract and, finally, its place in the Medea myth. In other words, what happens between host and guest, where it happens and, eventually, what role it plays within the overall event's dramaturgy.

In the following chapters, I frame the way in which participation is designed in each part of the *Hotel Medea* trilogy. *Hotel Medea*'s event structure consists of three different types of participation design: participatory rituals, immersive environments and interactive game-play, which form the basis for the next three chapters. These different approaches to participation design help *Hotel Medea* establish the rules of engagement between its guests and hosts throughout the night. In the following three chapters, I identify instances of these three design approaches in all three parts of *Hotel Medea* in different measures. However, the foundation for each part of the trilogy is predominantly based on one of these three approaches. In Chapter 2 I look at four micro-events selected from Part I, *Zero Hour Market*, where the guest–host interaction is based on *participatory rituals* as its main rule of engagement; in Chapter 3 I examine three micro-events from Part II, *Drylands*, where *immersive environments* are the predominant design structure; and in Chapter 4 I study four micro-events from Part III, *Feast of Dawn*, where *interactive game-play* defines most instances of interaction between guest and host.

## CHAPTER 2

### Participatory Rituals in *Zero Hour Market*



**Figure 7.** Guests wear Medea masks to help her hide from Jason in *Zero Hour Market*. Part I, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

The term ‘participatory rituals’ refers to the engagement that guests exercise in relation to the performed actions by other guests and by the hosts of *Hotel Medea* (Figure 7). An example of a participatory ritual within *Hotel Medea* occurs when guests are invited to learn repetitive dance steps and lyrics to songs, in order to be able to perform these actions later with the hosts as a shared ritual for Medea. These might also require the guest’s direct involvement in the preparation for key dramatic events that are supported by all hosts and guests, such as washing the naked bodies of Jason and Medea in preparation for their wedding or collectively building a shrine for Medea’s dead children. The guests perform such participatory rituals as physical actions. This allows them to perceive moments in the myth narrative as a lived experience, as an embodied perception of the event. They perform repetitive actions as opposed to being put in the role of observers of the action. This gradually intensifies their relationship to fellow guests and hosts in a shared action with unmediated roles and status, such as in Turner’s



*communitas*, since all guests and hosts seek participation in the same role. This also increases their ownership over the event by being an integral participant in it.

Hosts and guests perform side by side in Afro-Brazilian participatory rituals Bumba meu Boi, from the northern state of Maranhão, and Cavalo Marinho, from the north-eastern state of Pernambuco. These events rely strongly on repetitive percussive rhythms and songs that define moments of change within the dramatic structure of the event (Ferretti, 2010). Since these folkloric celebrations are embedded into the local cultures, participants do not require instruction and training in order to be able to perform roles. However, the role of the captain is an essential element. *O Capitão* (or master of ceremonies in other instances) is the main coordinator and producer of the events, ensuring every element of the production, from costumes to licences, is properly managed. Another essential element sustaining participation in its original form is the repetitive percussive rhythms that serve as a shared reference for both experienced and less-experienced participants. The soundtrack for Part I in *Hotel Medea* comprises live and electronic music that punctuates moments of change in participation. This allows guests to engage with the actions performed by the hosts, by using the same rhythm as a shared language. The fact that guests are invited to participate in the role of tourists means that it matters very little whether they seem good or bad at moving their bodies, as this would be expected of anyone attempting a new skill for the first time. The fact that they are deciding to try is enough for the experience of a shared purpose between hosts and guests, and for a collective action to be established.

As a brief observation, it is important to make a distinction between moments of participatory ritual and those of interactive game-play, discussed later in Chapter 4. Actions guests perform in participatory rituals are generally repetitive physical movements, call and response song or tasks that are performed by the guests and hosts as a temporary community. They often create a collective action, repeated in the same rhythm by the guests and hosts. These actions are different from those they perform as individual game players in interactive game-play. Although individual guests engaging in interactive game-play are also essential parts of a temporary community, their actions and tasks can be different or even contrary to each other. Guests that are invited to play roles during the later chapters in *Hotel Medea* are given a game scenario in relation to the narrative and are able, as individuals, to improvise as part of that scenario. Also, as discussed later, some moments are composed of two or more of these elements, where individual guests are given game-playing agency within an on-going participatory ritual.

Within the current field of immersive practice, guests are often invited to interact with characters, but rarely invited to role-play themselves. And when they are invited to role-play, it is usually an individualized experience as opposed to a communal ritual or game. Guests in *You Me Bum Bum Train* (YMBBT's production of the same name), for instance, experience a series of changing scenarios without any dramaturgical link. They are taken from room to room and given a new role each time in various contexts, such as a mechanic in a car garage, a waiter in an expensive restaurant or a radio presenter in a live radio show (see Kate and Lloyd, 2004–, YMBBT productions in 2010 and 2012). These scenarios include several actors, but only one audience member at a time, so guests in *You Me Bum Bum Train* never interact with other guests, and are therefore unable to perceive their experience as part of a community.

## **2.1 Part I: Zero Hour Market**

In *Zero Hour Market*, the guest–host interaction is based on participatory rituals as its main rule of engagement, borrowing elements from Brazilian rituals and rhythms. By *participatory rituals* I refer specifically to the research carried out by *Hotel Medea* directors in the north-east region of Brazil (2007–09), through which we were able to isolate performance elements used to facilitate participation over long periods of time, and apply them to our own creative process. These were mainly repetitive rhythms, the role of the captain and the hosts as facilitators for less-experienced guests. In this participatory design structure, the overall aim is that guests and hosts perform the same actions collectively. Hosts serve as references when a new ritual starts, and guests gradually join in as soon as they learn the movements and songs.

In Deise Faria Nunes' (2011) research on sacred rituals and the performer's dramaturgy, she analyses the role of Afro-Brazilian religious rituals and myths in relation to actor training in Eugenio Barba's *Odin Teatret*. Nunes quotes the American historian of religion Catherine M. Bell to find a definition of ritual for the purposes of her study. Bell (1997) utilizes six general factors that characterize ritual-like activities, namely formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism and performance. However, Nunes' study has focused predominantly on the role of performance from the perspective of a stage–auditorium spatial relationship. In addition, Bell's writings on ritual and performance inevitably follow the widely accepted relationship between actors and audiences as a frame. For the purposes of my research on participatory rituals, I have chosen to use only the most appropriate of

Bell's factors to help me situate my work in relation to ritual theory. Bell's description of 'invariance' in ritual-like activities relates specifically to 'a disciplined set of actions marked by precise repetition and physical control. For some theorists this feature is the prime characteristic of ritual behavior' (Bell, quoted in Nunes, 2011: 13). The key contextual difference between the intended relationship of hosts and guests in *Hotel Medea* and the theatrical work Nunes' research is concerned with is that most *Odin Teatret* audiences observe the work of the performers passively. Therefore, they are observers of the performer's ritual, as opposed to active participants in a ritual-like activity. In *Hotel Medea*'s Part I, *Zero Hour Market*, the hosts invite guests to be active participants in all rituals, through precise actions and repetition.

Observing guest behaviour when invited to participate in the ritual activities in Medea's land, it became clear that simply giving guests *permission* to participate and encouraging them was not enough. Through interviews with guests and observation (ZU-UK, 2011), we noticed guests of early versions of the production felt they were not prepared to join in. The forms felt culturally alien to them and they did not feel they were capable of executing the same actions the hosts were demonstrating through repetition. Although making the guests feel 'alien' in Medea's land was an intentional feature of the dramaturgy, it worked against their ability to join in as participants. We noticed this particularly when we observed reactions of non-Brazilian guests in London (2009) as compared to those of Brazilian guests in Rio de Janeiro (2010). Therefore, Part I of the *Hotel Medea* trilogy started to introduce isolated elements of the rituals in a training camp for guests. At the same time, hosts invited guests to behave as guests rather than as observers. This allowed both the narrative and the participation to co-exist, where guests know they do not belong to this fictional land but at the same time are invited to participate fully in the events presented especially for their visit. The next section describes specific moments of the dramaturgy where different devices were used to engage guests to become participants of the theatrical rituals.

## **2.2 Micro-event 1 at 23.50 h: Audience Training Camp (video available at: <https://vimeo.com/18161739#t=2m23s>; 00.02.23 to 00.02.51)**

As discussed in the introductory chapter, guests are approached individually by *o Capitão*. Soon after being introduced to the event in their meeting with their first host, guests are sent to their next experience before the event officially starts at midnight. Guests have already experienced a heightened level of foreign influence via the *Capitão*'s thick Brazilian accent and his flamboyant dance moves. In this next stage,

however, hosts receive audience members in a calm and matter-of-fact manner, very similar to how an usher might check audiences' tickets before entering an event. They speak clear English, and do not say more than they need to. If their experience with *o Capitão* raises their anxiety in relation to what may happen in the event they will be entering, this moment is devised to give guests the opposite sensation. The aim of the hosts, who play the role of Medea's guards, is to inform guests about the rules of Medea's kingdom, teach them the skills they will need in order to participate fully in the event as well as reassure them individually that they are perfectly capable of executing any involvement expected of them in the event.



**Figure 8.** Hosts coach guests in rhyme, dance and song before entering Medea's land in *Zero Hour Market*. Part I, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

Hosts train audience groups of 6–10 people at a time, asking them to perform simple roles so as to establish their current level of skill and be able to prepare them accordingly for the night (Figure 8). The decision to keep the average host–guest ratio as 1:6 throughout *Hotel Medea* is made based on observation of how much intimacy a host can sustain with a group of guests before the guests feel part of a large mass of people. Being an individual in a group with only six other people means guests can still have (meaningful) exchanges with other guests. For the hosts, it also allows them to be

flexible and responsive to different inputs from different individuals at different times. As soon as a group has achieved the aims of a training station, their host asks them to proceed to the following station where another host awaits them. The tasks grow slightly in complexity to help guests build confidence in their own physical and creative abilities. Guests end up with a stamp of ‘achievement’, a symbolic certificate that reminds them that they have now passed their training and are ready to participate—both fictionally, as tourists visiting Medea’s land, and as active audiences who have been trained to participate.

Another example of how the dramaturgical engagement with the narrative is first set up with guests is the handing out of a printed leaflet from Medea’s kingdom, written in poor English (to add to the framework of this land as *foreign*) that contextualizes the event guests are attending (Figure 9). It outlines the rules visitors to Medea’s land need to abide by. At this moment, the single most important element of the dramaturgy all guests need to be aware of is the importance of the Golden Fleece for Medea’s kingdom. Once guests are aware that the Golden Fleece is the most valuable possession in this foreign land—even if they do not yet know what it is—they are able to comprehend the level of security concerns from Medea’s guards as well as the context for Jason’s invasion with his Argonauts in the subsequent scene.

In the previous chapter, I defined a micro-event to be a quadrangular relationship at any given time in the event—between four key elements: the guest’s role, the host’s role, the use of physical space and the fictional moment (or context) it represents. So, as a micro-event this is perhaps the most essential moment in *Hotel Medea*, where guests are able to have a go at participating in a facilitated and nearly risk-free environment, thus preparing them to join in as soon as the event starts at midnight. The role of the hosts, performed in a matter-of-fact manner, also includes inviting guests to see the structures behind the event, exposing how the event is made and encouraging them to participate critically and to role-play as part of the narrative. This is perhaps the most literal example of participatory rituals, where hosts demonstrate gestures, song and rhyme, and allow audiences to learn through repetition, in their own time. The spatial environment mimics that of a military training camp, with clear stations. This is intended to give guests an understanding of stages of learning, where they progress as soon as their current stage has concluded.



“Bem Vindo!”  
Welcome visitors to

*N*ational Day  
of the *G*olden Fleece  
at World famous Zero Hero Market!

Enjoy cultural celebrations and local delicacies  
in honour of our Glorious Golden Fleece, and  
its guardian and protector, The Royal Princess  
Granddaughter of the Sun, Medea.

**Please obey the following SECURITY  
MEASURES:**

- 1) Do not photograph the Fleece or any part of  
its location.
- 2) Do not loiter near the Fleece, keep always  
moving.
- 3) Do not bringing large bags or overcoat  
pockets into Market.
- 4) Do not put hands in pockets in the vicinity  
of the Fleece.
- 5) Do not wear clothing of inappropriate  
nature.
- 6) Please operate with Security Enforcement  
Personnel at all time.

***Thank You.***

Only official local product may be purchased at the  
Market using only accepted forms of currency.  
Removing fleece or any fleece related paraphenelia from  
Market is an offensive  
Possesssing, purchasing or selling the Golden Fleece is  
Punishable. by Order of the Princess.

**Enjoy your stay  
at the Zero Hour Market.**

**Figure 9.** Copy of printed leaflet inviting visitors to celebrate ‘National Day of the Golden Fleece’. Part I, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2010).

Finally, the significance of this micro-event in the overall narrative is to establish the land the guest is about to enter as foreign land. The attitude of Medea's guards resembles that of border guards, and highlights the fact that, although guests are welcome here, they do not belong here. In the overall narrative, this is the 'Day of the Golden Fleece'—the only day in the year on which Medea's kingdom opens its doors to visitors who want to see the Golden Fleece and celebrate its importance to Medea's royal family.

**2.3 Micro-event 2 at 00.00 h: The Market (video available at: <https://vimeo.com/18161739#t=3m26s>; 00.03.26 to 00.10.27)**

Another selected micro-event in *Hotel Medea* is the on-going practice-led experiment on the use of shifting performance spaces and their impact—often disorientating—on guests. As a non-Brazilian in London or Edinburgh, guests are invited to experience an environment displaying foreign cultural references, and their experience unfolds through a tactile relationship with the space as well as through music, smells, striking visuals, narration and market-seller cries. For a Brazilian audience, depending on their geographical upbringing, their relationship with the space will tend to evoke similar sensations, although a large number of musical references and the language spoken will give them a sense of familiarity that a London audience will not experience. However this initial sense of familiarity is not a problem, as it does not become commonplace. We have intentionally included new elements, such as electronic music, unconventional scenery material and unusual construction of Brazilian Portuguese grammar, which balance their experience with that of a non-Brazilian guest.

This second micro-event I have chosen to look at is the official opening of *Zero Hour Market* (Part I of the *Hotel Medea* trilogy), which starts exactly at midnight. Guests have just finished their training, and are invited to wander in and out of mobile stalls that sell samples of food and drinks sourced from different regions of Brazil. As well as being affected by other senses, what guests see and hear as part of their embodied perception of the market scene is also considered, even if their other senses might be more evident. The main language spoken by the hosts in the market stalls is Brazilian Portuguese. Barely any lights are available, making it very hard to see the space or people around with much clarity. A DJ, who is playing very loud samples of Brazilian Coco music over a Brazilian rhythmical beat, adds another sonic layer to this environment, rich in foreign cultural references used in their original context to encourage guest participation. As mentioned above, this is made intentionally 'other' to

both Brazilian and non-Brazilian guests, so they are able to identify this environment as foreign to them as soon as they arrive.

Medea's royal guards welcome the guests as foreign visitors to the Day of the Golden Fleece celebrations. Market-sellers are wearing metal structures attached to their waists which hold a large satellite dish above their heads from which long strips of coloured ribbons drop to form a curtain of ribbons around the host. The 15 hosts role-playing as market-sellers call out in Brazilian Portuguese for visitors to enter their curtain of ribbons. As they try to sell visitors small samples of the Golden Fleece, other hosts play the role of Medea's royal guards and persistently search for illegal produce by entering the ribbon tents in random intervals. Guests are among as many as 15 tent structures surrounded by ribbons, which they enter and exit as they wish, making their own journey through the loud marketplace. As foreign visitors to Medea's land, they have been told previously that the Golden Fleece is a local treasure, owned and protected by princess Medea, and that only today, the Day of the Golden Fleece, foreign visitors are allowed in Medea's land to pay respect to and celebrate the power of the Golden Fleece. However, as they enter market tents, visitors are invited by the market-sellers in pidgin English to bid for the illegal samples of the Golden Fleece and are asked what they would give in exchange for it. The market-sellers are not interested in cash as exchange for their products. Instead, they ask each guest which of their treasured personal possessions or relationships they would give up in order to have the Golden Fleece, teasing guests to share personal information in exchange for the market-seller's performance. By adopting a conversational tone and responding to the conversations they may have with guests, the hosts invite them to pitch for the purchase of the goods they are selling. They also use the myth of the Golden Fleece to pose questions to the guests, both in English and Portuguese. These questions address issues such as eternal life or the ambition for power and love, and are posed so as to invite individual guests' views on it. By being addressed as buyers, the guests are continuously cast as tourists in this foreign market. The questions themselves are not crucial here since they are spoken mainly in Brazilian Portuguese. The host's intention, however, needs to be clear in order to invite the audience member to attempt to engage in dialogue about value and trade.

The host here plays a role that might be perceived dramaturgically as a market-seller, but s/he is not bound by a psychological portrayal of a character in the story. The hosts do not need to perform a pre-rehearsed script; instead, in the market scene, for instance, they are guided by a number of pre-established rules and tasks. These tasks are



created based on the intended dramaturgical relationship between guest and host. For instance, the market-seller needs to create strategies to get the buyer's attention and once inside the tent s/he will need to engage the potential buyer in a dialogue that will almost certainly lead to a purchase. As soon as a second new guest enters, the host must retain the first guest's interest as well as make the new guest feel curious and join the on-going bidding for the seller's wares. The hosts seek to engage with guests as individuals by acknowledging their presence as part of the event and the role they might want to play in shaping the dramaturgy of that show, with the intention of making this a mix of a historical re-enactment and a co-authored theatrical game (Figure 10).



**Figure 10.** Guests inside market tents in *Zero Hour Market*. Part I, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

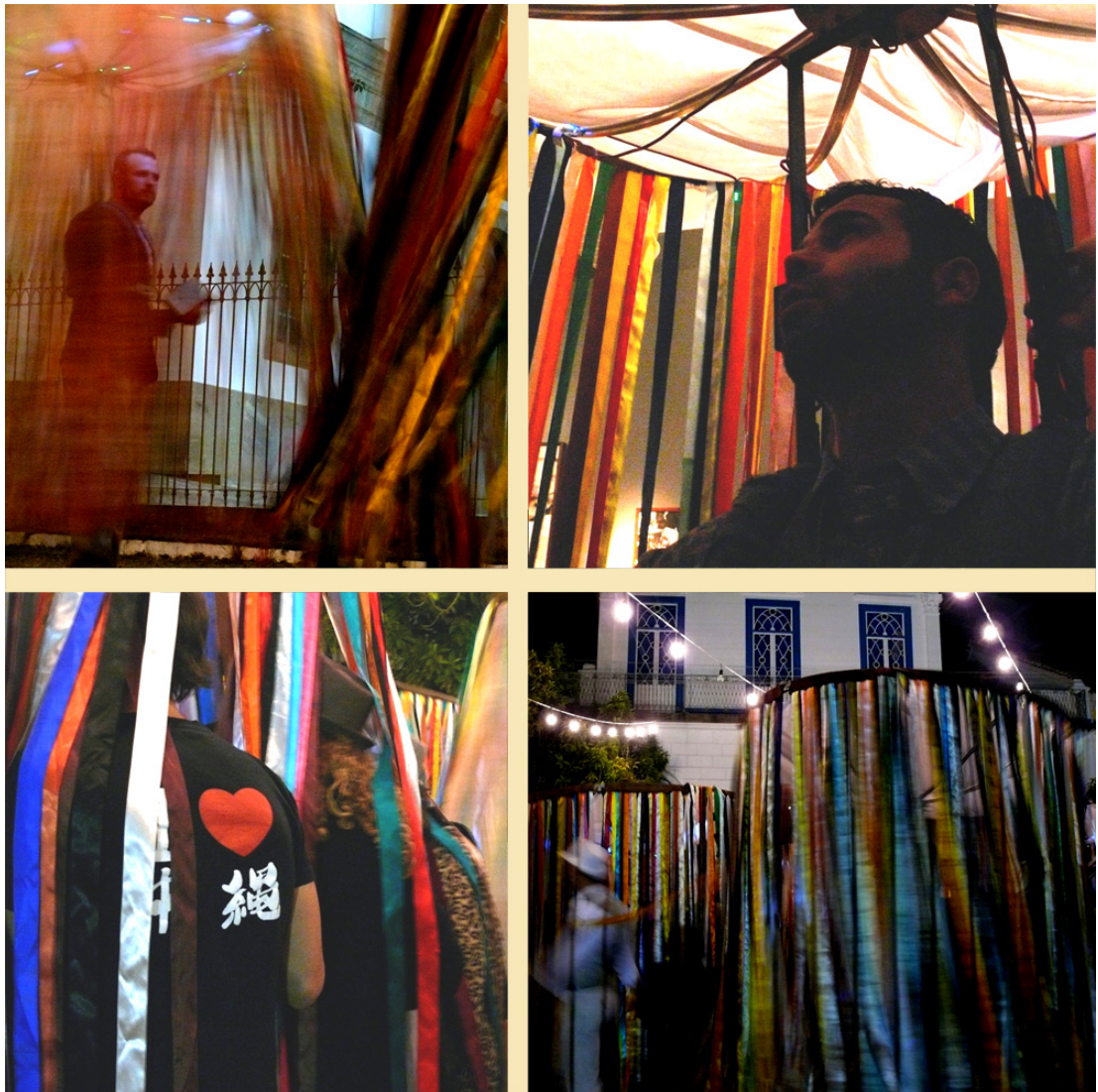
This micro-event sits just outside the existing myth of Jason and the Argonauts, prior to Jason's invasion of Medea's land. In the myth of Jason and the Argonauts, Jason gathers a group of mercenaries (the Argonauts) in Greece in order to make a long trip to Persia. In *Zero Hour Market*, Medea's land is created from Brazilian cultural references and Jason's from British ones. Guests stand across the whole space, thus not taking a cultural side in the battle. Although guests are cast as foreign visitors of Medea's land, they are not aligned with either Medea or Jason. Jason and his Argonauts

invade Medea's land in search of the Golden Fleece, which Jason needs to take with him to Greece in order to reclaim his throne from his uncle. Medea is the guardian of the Fleece, a gift given by Helios—the Sun god—to Medea's father to celebrate her birth. However, Eros—the god of love—is sent to make Medea fall in love with Jason, and so she helps him steal the Fleece from her father, marries Jason and leaves her land with him, killing her brother in order to escape. The original intention for creating the market as the opening scene of *Hotel Medea* came as a response to the myth of Jason as a moment that preceded Jason's invasion of Medea's land with his Argonauts.

The aim of this micro-event was to create an immersive environment that would be perceived by a non-Brazilian London audience as a foreign land and by Brazilians as an aspect of Brazil, a kind of 'home' but strange enough for them to still feel and behave like visitors. In this way, when Jason and his Argonauts invaded, the guest's previous experience of this land would make them more implicated with the environment. This personal experience of Medea's land would allow them to have a wider perspective of both the parties involved in the conflict over the Fleece, since Jason represented a culture more aligned with that of the guests themselves. There is an intentional use of confusing cultural references. The juxtaposition of complex cultural identities, including gender-bending and clashes of folkloric and mixed-media elements, prevents an easy exoticization of the event by the guests. It also adds to a guest's disorientation, so as to keep the guest's role fluid within the event. This is achieved through a gender swap between Jason's Argonauts (played by Amazonian-style women) and Medea's clan (played by a group of men in suits). In addition, the costume characterization of Medea's clan and Jason's Argonauts makes use of unexpected visual elements, such as suits and ties for Medea's supposedly 'barbaric' culture, and bare-breasted warriors following Jason's 'civilized' mercenaries. (The theme of 'gender wars' in relation to the myth of Medea is discussed in further detail in micro-events 3 and 8.) Brazilian and non-Brazilian guests are presented with numerous references, including music, language and scenography, to encourage familiarization with certain elements and a foreign relationship with others.

The spatial arrangement constantly shifts, because all tents are made from lightweight materials attached to the bodies of the hosts, who constantly spin and change directions making for a disorientating experience for the guests. This disorientation, created with the shifting structures as well as the loud Brazilian Portuguese calls, is intentionally used as an immersive device in order to allow guests to lose architectural references of the venue in which *Hotel Medea* is taking place. This

micro-event, where all guests are immersed in the marketplace, only lasts 15 minutes. However as soon as *o Capitão* announces Jason's imminent invasion through his megaphone, the tents disappear in as little as 10 seconds, leaving the guests in a bare and silent space.



**Figure 11.** Guests inside market tents in *Zero Hour Market*. Part I, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2010). Photograph by Flavia Correia (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/flaviacorreiabombix/>). Reproduced with permission.

The experience of being engulfed by an enticing environment of sound, movement and colour, with tent structures comprising ribbons that allow guests to easily walk in and out of them, is successful at removing fixed spatial references that guests might have when they first enter the space. They are offered the opportunity to physically experience a foreign environment, as opposed to a representation of a foreign environment that they are expected to understand through symbolic cultural

representation. The use of familiar environments that do not belong to a conventional audience–actor relationship also allows guests to behave differently, while remaining engaged with the narrative of Medea’s myth through the familiar environment of the marketplace. As a micro-event this moment uses various design structures, including game-design, to establish participation with the market-sellers and immersing hosts in the environments of the multi-sensorial marketplace (Figure 11). As mentioned earlier in McConachie’s description of Locke’s *tabula rasa*, the use of a shifting environment around the guests is perhaps the closest an event could get to a blank slate—not by aiming to generate a truly empty space, but by using a space that can quickly shift form and size, therefore encouraging guests to remain open to a range of behaviours as opposed to a conventional one.

#### **2.4 Micro-event 3 at 00.40 h: The Wedding Preparation (video available at: <https://vimeo.com/18161739#t=38m50s>; 00.38.50 to 00.48.05)**

The third micro-event I have chosen to focus on in Part I is the moment when Jason and Medea are being prepared for their wedding. The wedding of Jason and Medea is a crucial event in the narrative of the myth of Medea, and one that becomes particularly relevant when, 10 years later, Jason betrays Medea by having an affair with and agreeing to marry a younger princess (see Part II, Chapter 3). Allowing guests to take charge of the royal wedding preparations, including washing the actors’ naked bodies, chanting repetitive hymns and dancing and painting their skin, implicates them in the act of Jason and Medea’s union and therefore creates a personal experience—and memory—which will later enrich their experience of the betrayal. This also provides guests with a more intimate relationship with hosts, inviting them to experiment with more challenging offers to participate. As opposed to a mere sequence of events in which audience members read through the actors’ interpretation of a story, here guests are invited to conduct key events as part of the dramaturgy, and are thus partially responsible for its development. Also, it is at this moment that the guests experience being divided into male and female groups in order to wash the bodies of Jason and Medea separately in preparation for their wedding. Later, in Part III (Chapter 4), the gender division is used as a participation device in relation to Jason and Medea’s acrimonious separation.

As a micro-event, this moment is first established through a clear division of the space in two parts: one for male guests and another for female guests. The political and aesthetic influence for the separation of sexes as an extension of the narrative was



initially developed during research on the myth. As an early outcome of *Hotel Medea*'s preliminary research in cultural representation, Medea's clan is intentionally made up of male hosts in full suits, and Jason's Argonauts consist of bare-breasted, Amazonian-like female hosts. This representation of Jason's Argonauts and Medea's clan was the result of an early process of design to find a provocative aesthetic to represent the clash of cultures, both contemporary and mythical. This inspired the design of a wedding preparation where female guests washed the naked body of Medea (Figure 12), mediated by male hosts, and where male guests washed the naked body of Jason, mediated by female hosts. As well as helping deconstruct gender representation as another layer of cultural representation mentioned earlier, the swapping of genders between Jason's Argonauts and Medea's clan also introduces the theme of gender role-play that reappears when Medea finds out about Jason's betrayal.



**Figure 12.** Female guests prepare Medea for her wedding. Part I, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

The participation design used in this micro-event is that of participatory rituals, where hosts carry out a series of actions with the purpose of washing and adorning the bodies of Jason and Medea for their wedding. Hosts use flannels, water, herbs and

jewels, and paint as they move to an Afro-Brazilian song. The hosts invite guests to take over the tasks, and step out as soon as guests appear to have gained confidence in preparing Jason and Medea. At the same time, male and female guests and hosts sing the same song ‘*Oro mi ma*’ for the goddess of sweet or fresh waters, Oxum (or Orubá in African). Although there is a danger of exoticization of the source cultures owing to the lack of translation at this stage, the intention is to approach the song simply as a physical action. Similar to earlier gestures learnt through repetition, the song becomes one more tool through which guests and hosts build a participatory ritual. Guests quickly join in with the song lyrics, as they have practised this song earlier in the audience training camp. This micro-event is almost suspended from the narrative; however, it allows guests and hosts to perform the same roles as they prepare the main characters for their union—a key moment in the dramaturgy of the myth of Medea. The repetition of the same lyrics and movements over a period of time (10 minutes) also contributes to guests entering a soft trance where their focus is on doing as opposed to observing the action.

**2.5 Micro-event 4 at 01.00 h: The Jongo (video available at: <https://vimeo.com/18161739#t=1h00m20s>; 01.00.20 to 01.03.19)**

The final micro-event chosen from Part I of the trilogy is perhaps the most dramatic moment guests experience till this stage. As the celebrations for the wedding draw to a close, the party atmosphere suddenly turns tense as Jason announces it is time he leaves with his new wife and the Golden Fleece. At this moment, *o Capitão*, who has served as a distanced narrator throughout *Zero Hour Market*, interrupts the event to challenge Jason by saying, ‘You will only take Medea and the Golden Fleece away from this land over my dead body’ (ZU-UK, 2010). It is at this moment that *o Capitão* summons all guests and hosts to close a circle around Medea and Jason so that there are no exits for escape. The aim is that all guests have invested emotionally, through active participation, in the success of this relationship. They have been implicated in the unfolding narrative and, therefore, feel like they cannot simply watch passively as Jason steals this land’s most valuable treasures: Medea and the Fleece. When invited by *o Capitão*, guests promptly join the circle and have been observed to passionately play the role they have been invited to perform by not allowing Jason or Medea to leave the circle. The DJ then plays a new rhythm, the Jongo, which highlights the dramatic tension of this moment but also refers to an earlier rhythm that guests were introduced to earlier in the audience training camp.

The fact that guests have already practised this dance step in micro-event 1 means that the design structure of participatory rituals is introduced in a matter of seconds, with hosts initiating the steps and guests following immediately after. This is an essential component of the participation design towards applying a dramaturgy of participation. Otherwise, this dramatic moment of tension in the narrative would be dissipated if hosts had to struggle to follow a new dance step. Instead, hosts and guests immediately barricade Jason and Medea with their collective dance. The spatial familiarity suggested in this micro-event is achieved through the use of a music beat akin to a night club, including a dark atmosphere with occasional flashing lights and hosts approaching guests encouraging them to dance freely to the beat. Jason and Medea seem to give in to the pressure and join the dance; however, during this new celebration, Medea poisons the members of her clan one by one including her brother. Guests and hosts slowly realize the growing pile of bodies that starts to stack in the middle of the dance floor as Medea and Jason escape with the Fleece.

Participatory rituals are a useful approach to building extended collective actions where repetitive rhythms and movements are used. Although participatory rituals are often made up of simple gestures and movements, they can grow in complexity as soon as guests are confident with the level of participation. Participatory rituals can also build emotional engagement with the narrative over time, allowing for other dynamics to be achieved, such as taking on a physically active role such as not allowing Jason and Medea to leave the space.

Peter M. Boenisch in his article ‘Acts of Spectating: The Dramaturgy of the Audience’s Experience in Contemporary Theatre’, describes his experience as an audience member in *Hotel Medea*, and stresses the positive impact of the strategies employed in order to prepare audiences to participate, which he considers ‘as an important factor contributing to the genuine audience emancipation that [Jacques] Rancière himself does not sufficiently take into account, as he privileges rational processes of “translation” and interpreting’ (2012: 234). In the article Boenisch describes his overnight experience as a guest in *Hotel Medea*, and goes on to analyse the way in which guests were received earlier in the night:

Let us remember that we had received some guidelines and instructions on a leaflet as we entered *Hotel Medea*’s ‘Zero Hour Market’ around midnight, as well as well as being instructed in the dance steps – a group dance which allowed us to participate while not being oddly and never carelessly exposed [. . .]. [T]he relational dramaturgies we exemplarily

encountered with Ivo Van Hove and in *Hotel Medea*, acknowledged us fully as spectating subjects – in our needs, but also in our fears and anxieties. They took care of us, and in that sense the ‘hotel’ metaphor in the very title of *Hotel Medea* confirms the site of meaning in the relational dramaturgy: the ‘Hotel’ had nothing to do with the interpretation of the Medea-myth here, yet everything to do with our own engagement as spectators staying overnight. (2012: 234)

In this chapter, I have discussed four micro-events in relation to participatory rituals, where the need to provide guests with information, tools and skills in order to participate is, perhaps, what became most essential. As a model applicable to other projects exploring participation in immersive theatre, dramaturgy of participation isolates concrete examples in *Hotel Medea* where guests were gradually ‘skilled up’ towards moments of more intense participation. The second element, operated through strategies that hosts make use of, is the use of space, set and hybrid cultural references in order to disorientate guests spatially. Although the idea of an ‘empty space’ is not achievable in practice, the use of shifting spatial configurations gives the impression of constant change to guests, who are immersed in an environment they feel simultaneously familiar with and uncertain of (what it will become next). Other ritual-like activities, such as the washing of the bodies of Jason and Medea, serve as bonding experiences for a community of guests and hosts and also successfully introduce themes of the narrative that will re-run later in more confrontational events. Finally, I have discussed how the narrative-based rituals allow guests to experience moments in the narrative in an almost ‘lived’ way, and as a result guests experience a sensation of responsibility for the unfolding events.

In terms of the aims of the dramaturgy of participation, this means guests have ‘warmed up’ their bodies through active participation, have gained and applied new skills as well as have a deeper and embodied understanding of the myth. Even for guests who do not experience the second and third parts of the trilogy, this has already been a complete experience—both physically and as the re-telling of the myth of Jason and the Argonauts. In the following chapter, I discuss the role of guest-to-host ratio to explore how the logistics of audience capacity and management can affect individual experience. I also look at a less



pro-active role-play within immersive environments in Part II of the trilogy,  
*Drylands*.

## CHAPTER 3

### Immersive Environments in *Drylands*

The term ‘immersive environments’ refers to the artistic composition of the performance environment that surrounds every individual guest. Each environment’s design needs to be based on the dramatic narrative of the myth of Medea, so that the guest has the impression of being spatially submerged in the myth rather than observing it unfold from the outside. This does not necessarily mean spaces need to be hyper-realistic or pursue cinematic detail in order to convince a guest that s/he is inside a particular fictional space. However, simply being spatially in the centre of the dramatic action allows the guest to experience an event as an all-engulfing fictional universe. The exception is when a guest is not comfortable being immersed in a universe s/he has little control over. For this reason, when this participation design is successfully executed, *Hotel Medea* guests are at their most passive state. In other words, guests allow themselves to be immersed in the environment, and thus become an immersed subject. Although guests may be dressed in pyjamas, holding a teddy bear and being told a bedtime story, if they do not allow the event to immerse them, they might experience opposite sensations, such as alienation or a feeling of being patronized by the hosts. This is rarely the case with *Hotel Medea* guests, since people who have attended the overnight event are proactively seeking an alternative experience to conventional theatre and willing to be guided through a number of familiar and unfamiliar experiences, not always comfortable ones. The sensation of being patronized could still be the case even for the experience-seeking audiences, but the training hosts have to undergo helps carefully militate against this.

In Part II, *Drylands*, apart from being spatially immersed, guests are also immersed in the narrative by experiencing the same sequence of events from three different perspectives. In a Brechtian sense, in terms of offering guests a deconstructed and layered understanding of theatrical representation, this is perhaps the most effective example in *Hotel Medea* of a critical engagement of the guests with the narrative. A guest who has experienced a scene in pyjamas from a bunk-bed in a child’s room later experiences the same scene as a guest invited to Medea’s house, in a conversation with her handmaiden; and the guest later also joins Jason’s campaign team to experience the same narrative through live security camera footage and political audio commentary. It is also useful to notice that as the critical awareness of the guest increases in relation to

the event, his/her ability to be immersed is not affected. Therefore, guests are simultaneously able to be both a part of and an observer of their own experience.

In their introduction to *Immersive Gameplay: Essays on Participatory Media and Role-Playing*, editors Evan Torner and William J. White argue that *immersion* is ‘a fundamental concept for making sense of mediated (popular) culture in contemporary society’, and go as far as suggesting that ‘immersion is to the 21st century entertainment industry what *illusion* was to that of the 20th century’ (2012: 3). My overall research is primarily concerned with ritual-like and game-like structures as references to reconstruct the host–guest relationship in immersive practice, as opposed to producing a ritual or a game per se. In this context, Torner and White’s book *Immersive Gameplay* provides more accurate paradigms than other published works concerned simply with conventional theatre references precisely because of its focus on mediated culture. For instance, Torner and White identify specific types of players as defined by their engagement with immersion, such as *competitive gamers* who ‘immerse themselves in tournaments’, *simulationists* who ‘prefer photorealistic environments’, and *narrativists* who ‘become deeply involved only when they perceive the arc of a story during play’ (2012: 5). Emily Care Boss, one of the contributors to *Immersive Gameplay*, refers to the term immersion as ‘a concept that provokes and aggravates polemic posturing rather than producing academically viable discourse’. She asks, ‘is a player immersed when they “feel” they’re a character, or when an environment creates a sense of verisimilitude with the natural world, or when they reveal an emotional truth about themselves through a symbolic game?’ (2012: 5).

Immersive environments aim to address all three elements defined by Care Boss, where achieving one of the elements is not enough to immerse and engage guests. Some are more effective, or easier to achieve, than others. However, it is the very combination of meaningful role-play, spatial immersion and individual contribution that creates memorable embodied perceptions of the Medea myth. Spatial immersion is often designed and realized before the guests arrive, and therefore it is easier to achieve and adjust over time. Role-play, as discussed earlier, relies on the ability of the host to manage a guest’s understanding of their role within the larger narrative, as well as its developments over time. Finally, encouraging and managing meaningful individual contribution towards the event is possibly the hardest to achieve. The training for the hosts aims to prepare them for this very task, which relies on their ability to listen to any guest input at any stage and decide immediately how to respond without either blocking their contribution or disrupting the communal experience. In order to arrive at

the concept of a dramaturgy of participation, as opposed to immersion generically, I focus on a more precise analysis of elements comprising immersive environments in *Hotel Medea*'s Part II.

### **3.1 Part II: *Drylands***

In Part II, *Drylands*, immersive environments are the predominant design structure creating interconnected rooms through closed-circuit television (CCTV) and allowing guests to sleep in bunk-beds as Medea's children. Immersive environments refer to the use of design, architecture, technology and live performance to transform the guest's perception of a physical space, giving them the experience of being entirely submerged in a fictional reality. Although the isolated elements used to create environments are not necessarily *immersive*, the combination of the three networked environments through set, narrative and CCTV creates a complex and interlinked universe of events that surrounds guests spatially.

### **3.2 Micro-event 5 at 02.00 h: Children's Bedroom (video available at: <https://vimeo.com/18224931#t=16m55s>; 00.16.55 to 00.20.28)**

In terms of the audience's involvement with the action, this is a considerable leap in the level of intimacy that audience members have with the actors when compared with the market scene at the opening of the trilogy. Here, female hosts are dressed in white in the role of nursemaids and behave as older guardians of the guests, who are cast here as Medea's children. Nursemaids take the children by the hand and tuck them into bed. The six female hosts have been trained to perform their role as nursemaids in a reassuring, firm and caring manner. Once in their beds, guests are given a set of pyjamas to change into, as well as a cuddly toy to name and hold on to during this scene (Figure 13). The nursemaids constantly reassure the children that they will be looked after and that it is past their bedtime, so they are supposed to be asleep. At the same time, the hosts need to convey to the guests that they do not just have to pretend and are actually allowed to fall asleep if they so wish. This is particularly difficult for hosts to convey as this micro-event moment starts, since the guests do not yet know that they will have another chance to watch the narrative with Medea and Jason. In relation to the myth, this is 10 years after Jason and Medea's wedding (which happened in Part I of the trilogy). Jason and Medea have moved to Jason's land, have two children and Jason has become very close to the local royal family. Without Medea's consent or knowledge,

Jason accepts to marry the local princess to quickly arise to a position of power. At the very end of Part II of the trilogy, Medea finds out about the affair.



**Figure 13.** Guests in pyjamas in their beds. Part II, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

Guests in *Drylands* have the opportunity to experience the same micro-event three times, from very different spatial perspectives: as Medea's children in bunk-beds, as Jason's campaign team in a separate room filled with screens and headphones (Figure 14) and as Medea's guests in her bedroom—each one offering a different type of immersion. When experiencing this micro-event as Medea's children, nursemaids invite guests to experience a child's perspective of Jason and Medea's house, indicating it is their bedtime, offering them hot chocolate and telling them a bedtime story as they go to bed. The fact that guests can sleep up to 20 minutes if they wish combined with the repetition of the same scene three times from different perspectives generates in the guests a feeling of disorientation, but also of depth of experience. As opposed to the earlier spatial and cultural disorientations in the market, this time the disorientation does not refer to the lack of references in the physical space. Instead, guests find it hard to discern the order of scenes and their length, creating an experience some guests have referred to as similar to daydreaming or 'tripping out' (ZU-UK, 2011). This disorientation has been discussed earlier in relation to the shifting tents in *Zero Hour Market*, and perhaps it would be fair to say that hosts aim to explore and encourage guest disorientation as a strategy to keep guests open to shifts in participation and role-play, at times becoming less critically aware in order to become more immersed in experiences. In this way, the methodology uses these micro-events to move a guest from being a critical player to being an immersed subject. The positive outcome of this state is a fluid transition to a different space or stage in the narrative, which can enrich their experience before shifting to a more distanced and critical engagement with the myth.

At this stage guests react differently to the exhaustion and hosts need to be particularly mindful of guests' state of mind and body. Hosts have reported observing unusual behaviour from guests during this particular time of night, and although a rare occurrence this is often a moment when a guest might decide to give up staying awake all night, especially if they ingested alcohol earlier that evening prior to arriving at *Hotel Medea*. It is for this reason *Hotel Medea* does not offer alcoholic beverages to guests during intervals, and actively discourages them from consuming any alcohol prior to attending the event.

The spatial arrangement supports the way the story is told, as well as the relationship between guest and host. The physical space has Medea's bed in a central position against the main wall, surrounded by 12 bunk-beds placed in a horseshoe arrangement around Medea's bed. From the perspective of a child lying down in a

bunk-bed, the impression is of being in a different room to Medea's. However, the guests can clearly hear Medea and Jason, and it is as if a child lying awake in bed can hear his/her parents arguing from next door.



**Figure 14.** Guests in Jason's campaign room. Part II, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

As a micro-event, this sits within the overall dramaturgy as the moment that precedes Medea's discovery of Jason's betrayal. By being spatially embedded as members of the household, guests are able to experience the domestic tension building between the couple from the perspective of their half-asleep children. The children also develop a more personal relationship with Medea and Jason before they fall asleep, as Medea personally visits every child to give each a goodnight kiss, and Jason sends every child an SMS saying 'Goodnight. Daddy x' (ZU-UK, 2010). To sustain this intimate relationship between host and guest, *Hotel Medea* audiences have never exceeded 72 people per night. In part II, the total audience is divided into three rotations (perspectives/environments) described here. In the children's bedroom, for instance, 12 bunk-beds can hold 24 guests for each of the three rotations. I have also observed that a smaller number of guests would not necessarily provide a better experience for guests throughout the night. At the same time, while in immersive environments two guests



would receive more attention from their host when compared to four guests, participatory ritual moments (earlier in the trilogy) would not achieve the sensation of a ‘busy marketplace’ or a ‘crowded wedding celebration’ with a smaller group of guests. Therefore small groups would have a negative impact in creating moments of collective action.

As a micro-event within the overall trilogy, this moment is defined by the host’s role as a guardian of the guest and the guest’s (in the vast majority of occasions) acceptance as the offer to role-play as children. Since the early stages of development with audiences, *Hotel Medea* guests have accepted to wear pyjamas provided to them without exception. They have often played the part of the child by contributing comments about the bedtime story told by their nursemaids or asking questions about why their (fictional) parents are fighting next door. The spatial relationship set up by the bunk-bed in which the audience member lies is crucial both in defining the roles between nursemaid (host) and child (guest) and in allowing the guest the freedom to not watch the scene being performed nearby by Jason and Medea. By this freedom I mean that guests are released of the responsibility normally expected of audiences, that is, not to miss any part of the plot. By giving guests permission ‘not to watch the narrative’ they instead slip into a relaxed state of consciousness similar to that of a child going to sleep. In this way, the methodology allows for this environment to define a more suited experience that aligns the guest’s state of consciousness with that of the role they are playing, as part of the larger narrative.

### **3.3 Micro-event 6 at 02.00 h: Medea’s Guests (video available at: <https://vimeo.com/18224931#t=21m13s>; 00.21.13 to 00.22.06)**

Guests experience the three perspectives of *Drylands* in different orders depending on random allocation at the end of the first interval. For this reason, the three repetitions from the three perspectives are built so as not to require prior information in order to fully engage with the dramaturgy. The development of this model is based on a combination of logistical reasons (guest capacity) as well as on the dramaturgy of participation’s overarching ambition to move between large-scale communal celebration and small-scale intimate interactive experiences. One of the three perspectives experienced by guests is inside Medea’s bedroom. Guests are brought in to her room by Medea’s handmaiden, who is older than Medea’s children’s nursemaids and who has followed her from her original land in Part I. Medea’s handmaiden talks directly with male and female guests in Medea’s bedroom, asking them personal



questions about their current and previous relationships. This dialogue, between Medea's handmaiden and the guests was not scripted; however, the host playing the handmaiden had undergone exercises to help her establish a breathing and walking rhythm (imperceptible to the guests) which helped her remain in control of the rhythm of the conversations, regardless of their content. Although completely verbal, this is a risky participation where guests are asked to confess to morally dubious activities in front of their fellow guests. The host's aim here is to create a sense of shared community where guest confessions are not judged. In relation to the narrative, what follows is the breakdown of Medea and Jason's relationship. Medea's handmaiden facilitates the confessions as she massages the guests' hands with moisturiser. This micro-event uses the familiar space of a friend's bedroom, where guests can be more intimate by sitting on a cushion or on the bed.

This immersive environment places the guests exactly in front of Medea's bed, where Jason and Medea argue later in the scene. As if participating in a television programme akin to a reality show, guests are invited in to Medea and Jason's most private space. This opportunity allows guests to become familiar with their relationship and notice the tensions that have built over time since Medea left her land and killed her family to support Jason's ambition. As discussed earlier, guests are often at their least pro-active when surrounded by an immersive environment. In this case, this close-up experience of the domestic relationship between Jason and Medea provides an additional layer to the guests' other two experiences—as children and as part of Jason's campaign team. This is purposely a passive presence that the guests encounter, in order to experience the role of Medea's guests in her house. From this point of view, similar to that of visitors to Medea's land in *Zero Hour Market*, the guests witness once again Jason invading Medea's and the children's space—this time, followed by a camera crew, not Argonauts.

#### **3.4 Micro-event 7 at 02.00 h: Jason's Campaign Room (video available at: <https://vimeo.com/18224931#t=5m40s>; 00.05.40 to 00.12.03)**

Apart from being spatially immersed, guests are also immersed in the narrative by experiencing the same sequence of events from three different points of view. The function of immersive environments in the dramaturgy of participation is to deepen guests' experiences in the key elements of the narrative before the final events unfold. When we look at the major events in Part III, *Feast of Dawn* (Chapter 4), we can draw direct parallels between guests' immersive experiences in Part II, *Drylands*. Guests later

respond to Medea's revenge in a deeper and critical way, as a result of experiencing Jason's betrayal as his children, as Medea's friend and as Jason's campaign contributor. By undergoing a range of role-play scenarios that expose cynical, confused and sympathetic understandings of the same sequence of events, a guest is immersed in the narrative world of the myth as opposed to simply following a linear narrative.



**Figure 15.** Guests in Jason's campaign room contribute with their personal ideas towards his campaign. Part II, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

A guest who has experienced a scene in pyjamas from a bunk-bed in the children's room can then experience the same scene as a guest invited to Medea's house, in a conversation with her handmaiden, and then join Jason's campaign team to experience the same narrative through live security camera footage and political audio commentary (Figure 15). The immersion experienced by guests as part of Jason's campaign team is a combination of the spatial arrangement and audio-visual stimuli. Guests are invited to sit down and fill in a questionnaire regarding Jason's image as their chosen candidate and are offered a cup of strong black coffee from the machine in the office corner. While they answer the questions on their forms, they are surrounded by CCTV monitors that show, in a variety of angles, a combination of edited campaign footage as well as real-time images from Medea's bedroom and the children's bedroom.

Guests participate through their answers to the questionnaire, which are later integrated into the narrative of the campaign discourse; they also wear headphones through which they hear the voice of Jason's campaign manager. His voice is rehearsed to have the right timbre and tone so as to encourage relaxation in the listener. The audio starts as a documentary of one day in Jason's life; however, it soon turns into a meditative mantra, which induces guests into a soft trance. As they slip into a dream-like state induced by the live narration, they watch the CCTV screen disintegrate into a sequence of hypnotizing images of Jason's smiling face and smarmy repetitive winking.

The space resembles a security room where 20 monitors are used for surveillance and where the guests might look for suspicious activity. The hosts perform the role of campaign crew, who also visit Medea's bedroom in order to interview Jason in his home environment. The guests are invited to see how Jason's team sets up the filming environment, as well as what images they use to edit the best possible image for Jason as a candidate who the guests would feel confident in supporting. The editing of images and audio is conducted in real time to reflect guest responses written in the form they filled when they arrived.

A key feature of *Drylands*' immersive environments is the fact that guests can see other guests performing different roles in the same micro-event. Guests from Medea's bedroom can see the children in their beds, who in turn can see Medea's guests in her room. Guests in Jason's campaign room can see other guests as both children and Medea's guests through CCTV cameras. This networked awareness of how the three rotations interrelate spatially allows the guests to participate critically by having an understanding of the overall structure they are part of, especially after watching the real-time CCTV footage in Jason's campaign room. This prepares them to participate in more complex scenarios later, when male and female guests are split into different groups with opposing aims, and to align themselves with either Jason or Medea.

In order for immersive environments to be applied as a participation design structure, the roles of hosts and guests need to be aligned with the narrative as well as the spatial arrangements of every environment. This model's most challenging feature is that guests need to accept the invitation to be immersed through role-play, thus allowing themselves to be immersed by the dramaturgy. In *Drylands*, since every guest is effectively a part of the spatial design for other guests, if any guest were to decline the invitation to participate, the consequences would weaken every guest's experience of the event.

### 3.5 The Question of Agency

In her article ‘Wisdom of the Crowd: Interactive Theatre Is Where It’s At’, published in *The Guardian Blog*, Gardner (2010) observes audience behaviour in a current trend in alternative British theatre, which offers audiences the opportunity to participate, or to ‘play’. It is important, however, to consider what happens once audience members lose their spatial frame of reference, move from numbered seats in a dark auditorium to unusual locations and are asked to carry out game-based tasks. Gardner’s (2010) earlier observation that audience behaviour ‘can be quickly unlearned’ considers that the effect ‘sitting politely in rows’ has on the behaviour of audience members is conditioned too, and which she calls traditional theatre behaviour. Once the spatial relationship has been reconfigured, what are the strategies used by the actors in order to address both logistical and artistic challenges that arise when audience members are invited to participate? Jacques Rancière speaks of ‘active’ and ‘passive’ audience membership not as opposites but as two elements essential to understanding audience member emancipation: ‘That is what the word “emancipation” means: the blurring of the boundary between those who act and those who look; between individuals and members of the collective body’ (2009: 19).

Another point in question when talking about immersive theatrical events and game players is the issue of agency—both in terms of how genuine agency can be defined in such events as well as in terms of a generalized position in theatre scholarship that agency implies an intrinsically positive outcome to the relationship between an event and its guests. One of the main dangers in approaching agency in interactive theatrical events from an apolitical stance is not taking into account obvious or subtle relationships of power as well as how the event functions under global market rules. Pierre Bourdieu’s *habitus* is the mechanism through which he acknowledges that the agent requires the understanding of value in a given situation in order to be able to exercise agency: ‘[*Habitus* is] the strategy generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever changing situations . . . a system of lasting and transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciation and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks’ (1977: 72).

Gareth White, speaking about Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*, observes: ‘In Bourdieu’s metaphor, social life is not a work of art in which we paint ourselves according to the appropriate convention, but a marketplace where we hope to get the most for our capital, but need to have learnt its value before we can do so with skill’

(2009: 223). *Hotel Medea* aims to equip its guests with the necessary tools and skills prior to their interaction within the theatrical event, so that guests can interact with autonomy. Guests are never simply left to wander in the performance spaces, unless they play a role that requires them to walk around on their own. Different from events such as Punchdrunk's *Faust* (2006–07) and dreamthinkspeak's *In the Beginning Was the End* (2013), guests in *Hotel Medea* are guided through highly controlled participatory environments where participation is offered within contained scenarios in order to sustain their level of engagement with the narrative.

White (2013) also writes about self-agency and self-ownership in relation to *Hotel Medea* in his later book *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation*. In relation to his experience as a guest in *Drylands*, when invited to play the role of the child in the bunk-bed, he observes that '(w)hen in Zecora Ura's *Hotel Medea* I put on pyjamas and get into a bunk bed, drink hot chocolate and cuddle the toy that has been given to me, I have a sense of self-agency; I experience myself causing these events. I also have self-ownership, as these things happen to me, even as I play a part in causing them to happen' (2013: 183–4). In this instance, the notion of self-agency and self-ownership is dependent on the host's careful negotiation between offering the guest invitations to role-play while, at the same time, giving the guest the sensation that s/he is initiating these experiences (by accepting the invitations). If the host is too forceful at 'guiding' the experience of the guest, his/her perception of self-agency will be lost.

Perhaps White's description is the most accurate analysis of the hosts' intention during Part II of the trilogy (*Drylands*). The successful engagement of guests throughout this part of the trilogy is certainly a shifting, constant negotiation between less pro-active role-play and critical engagement with the politics of Jason's campaign. However, the logistics of guest rotation in three groups of 24 is also a point to highlight in this chapter, as it is an essential element of retaining the most appropriate guest-to-host ratio in order to keep guests engaged as individuals in key moments of the narrative. Finally, the ability to discuss private opinions in relation to the myth's subject matter with Medea's handmaiden works as an additional bonding exercise between guests. It builds on the temporary *communitas* created through the night and developed spontaneously during the intervals, similar to Turner's definition (2011: 131). It is also interesting to observe that the development of guest-to-guest relationships, which have emerged spontaneously in the intervals between the parts of the trilogy, suggests that the event allows guests to create original relations with fellow guests, and hosts, an occurrence unforeseen by the dramaturgy of participation. Although the methodology

does not offer full and unrestricted agency to guests within its structure, it achieves what White describes as self-agency and self-ownership, and can serve as a catalyst for guest agency to create new relations. In this way, the moments of agency afforded to the guests during *Hotel Medea* have a number of restrictions, such as how long guests are allowed to remain in a particular space, or asked engage in a given task. Although guests are not often aware of this, hosts carefully guide guests through a pre-designed series of interactions in line with the dramaturgy of the event. This is in order to ensure guests are guided through the most engaging elements of the narrative, and therefore the larger interest here is based on guest experience and engagement as opposed to agency per se. Now, in the subsequent Chapter 4 I look at how these elements employed by a dramaturgy of participation culminate in different applications of game-play towards collective moments where all three participation designs overlap as *Hotel Medea* comes to a close.

## CHAPTER 4

### Interactive Game-Play in *Feast of Dawn*



**Figure 16.** Male guests disguised pretend to dance in order to spy on female guests in Club Exile. Part III, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

The term ‘interactive game-play’ refers specifically to opportunities guests have to change the course of the dramatic narrative—even if momentarily—through their direct input, or indeed to take the lead in a scene within a game structure with pre-agreed rules and objectives. In the opening of the *Hotel Medea* trilogy, for example, guests are given the opportunity to compose rhymes and dance steps, which are then repeated by hosts and other guests (Figure 16). Although these interactions do not change the overall narrative of the myth, they offer alternative perspectives of the myth for that moment, which is a moment intentionally suspended from the unfolding narrative.

[T]he behavior is separate from those who are behaving, the behaviors can be stored, transmitted, manipulated, transformed. [. . .] The work of restoration is carried on in rehearsals and/or in the transmission of behavior from master to novice. [. . .] Restored behavior includes a vast range of actions. [. . .] [I]t can exist in a nonordinary sphere of

sociocultural reality as does the Passion of Christ [. . .] (Schechner, 1985: 36)

In his book *Between Theater and Anthropology*, Schechner (1985) offers three important observations when describing ‘restored behaviour’ in relation to re-enactments: firstly, the nature of restored behaviour as separate from those who are behaving; secondly, the nature of behaviour as material which can be transmitted from master to novice; and thirdly, the application of restored behaviour to historical and mythical re-enactments. More akin to re-enactments than to openly interactive games, most instances of interaction in *Hotel Medea* offer a very modest level of agency to its guests, as discussed earlier. Rather, the focus is on the use of interactive game-play where guests experience an active role as co-creator, experiencing self-ownership and self-agency. By engaging creatively with the action—whether the guest can in fact change the course of events or not—the guest is able to experience the event through a different all-encompassing layer.

In order to define an event’s dramaturgy of participation, I have focused on a small selection of micro-events from each part of the trilogy. These 11 micro-events were specific moments as part of the larger event and capture a range of applications of the proposed methodology within the unfolding narrative of the event. These micro-events were selected from the *Hotel Medea* trilogy for being the most memorable moments for guests, who were interviewed one year after the event took place (ZU-UK, 2011). The three design approaches have allowed me to break down the rules of engagement in *Hotel Medea* used to persuade guests to join in with the action, and through comparative studies to understand the effect this might have on overall guest participation in the event.

#### **4.1 Part III: *Feast of Dawn***

In Part III, *Feast of Dawn*, interactive game-play defines most of the instances of interaction between guest and host. Guests are disguised, communicate through a silent code and play hide-and-seek with a Medea seeking to kill them. The use of interactive game-play is applied to codes, rules and structures borrowed from game-design in order for guests to increase their ability to affect the narrative around them, turning the guests into proactive players and characters in the dramaturgy. In addition, due to the time of night in which this part of the trilogy happens, the changes between roles guests and hosts play and the key events in the narrative now occur at a much faster pace to retain guests’ engagement with the event.



**4.2 Micro-event 8 at 04.30 h: Club Exile (video available at: <https://vimeo.com/18360422#t=00m00s; 00.00.00 to 00.1003>)**

After finding out about Jason's betrayal, Medea locks her bedroom and turns it into a clandestine venue called Club Exile. Her handmaidens switch off all CCTV cameras, and as the female guests enter Club Exile—'a club for heartbroken women'—the men are refused entry. Jason's team guides male guests back to Jason's campaign room where they are briefed about the situation. From the perspective of Jason's team, there is growing concern that Medea's actions might impact negatively on Jason's last day of campaigning. The use of game design to develop interactive game-play allows for experiences guests have had in earlier events to form their references for role-play. Previously, guests would start engaging as witnesses of a conflict, and then gradually become active participants by mirroring gestures and actions of hosts. At this stage, guests are first made aware of the unfolding events in the narrative and their direct role in the events. Then hosts consult guests as to what they think the strategy should be. This shifts the power dynamic between guest and host for the first time in the night, as not only are guests able to supply content (as guests of Medea and Jason's wedding) but they can discuss the structure of the game itself. Once guests suggest to the hosts that they need to infiltrate Medea's room, Jason's campaign team teaches the male guests a silent language of gestures so that, once inside Club Exile, they can communicate among themselves without raising suspicion about their mission. In order to gain entry into Medea's bedroom, every male guest is offered a wig and lipstick. Once disguised, they are instructed to use their mother's name as their new identity and to stay in close communication with the male hosts—who are also disguised—should they notice any suspicious behaviour inside the club (Figure 17).



**Figure 17.** Male guests disguised in Club Exile. Part III, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

The separation of men and women is a chosen device to provoke the ‘battle of the sexes’ issue, which is a key thematic to the myth of Medea and Jason. This theme was introduced to *Hotel Medea* guests first with Jason’s female Argonauts and Medea’s male clan, then in the preparation for Medea’s wedding (both in Part I) and later discussed by Medea’s handmaiden in Part II. Jason’s campaign room is necessarily a *macho* environment, with strong coffee brewing in the corner, computers and gadgets abound and the ‘host-speak’ is direct and jingoistic. Once inside Club Exile, male and female guests are individually allowed to play a game of secrecy and observation, but they are also separated by gender into groups with different aims in the game. The women are encouraged to send SMS texts of emotional support to Medea when they enter the club. The spatial arrangement is similar to a cabaret stage (previously Medea’s bed) surrounded by tables and auditorium (previously the children’s bunk-beds). As a micro-event, this moment sits within the overall dramaturgy of participation to represent the externalization of Medea’s emotional state in the form of a cabaret and uses interactive game-play to allow guests to participate in a gender war as Jason decides to marry a new princess in order to advance his ambitions.

Once men enter the room dressed in wigs and lipstick, the atmosphere is both tense and humorous. Medea's cabaret acts on stage include listening to the pains inside her body with the use of her microphone, a song with her handmaidens as backing vocals and a dance to represent the poisoning of her wedding dress as a gift to be sent to Jason's new bride. Male hosts constantly instruct male guests to look out for suspicious activity and try to decode messages intercepted between female guests. At the end of this micro-event, Medea brings her dead brother back to life in order to exact her revenge by killing Jason's new bride. The structure of interactive game-play is used to build communities with opposite targets alongside the key themes in the narrative, which highlight Jason's fear of Medea's revenge. Male guests, through the use of wigs and lipstick, are encouraged to be pro-active within fixed aims set by the hosts. Their use of costume has a two-fold consequence, serving as an encouragement for them to act as a team with a shared purpose and as a signal to all female guests that they are being approached by an 'other' community with opposing interests.

There is a distinctive difference between immersive game-play when compared to the first participation design. Here, humour is used in order to raise a guest's awareness as a critical player, who is now invited to co-author the rules of the games with hosts and fellow guests as dramatic changes to the narrative take place. The earlier use of a more 'serious' approach to participatory ritual, through physical engagement in repetitive action, now allows guests to have a lighter approach to the myth. It is because of their earlier *lived* experience, physically in Part I and through depth of immersion in Part II, that guests are able to playfully explore quite dark elements of the myth through play. A dramaturgy of participation has allowed for this to happen by building the type of experience over time and creating a space for serious play which would not be possible had it not been preceded by participatory rituals and immersive environments.

#### **4.3 Micro-event 9 at 05.00 h: The King's Soldiers (footage unavailable owing to blackout)**

This is the moment in the trilogy where role-play is pushed to its extreme, both in terms of how aggressive and dark the actions of the soldiers might come across and in terms of the juxtaposition of gender identity and power exchange between male and female guests. Taking advantage of the guests' exhaustion at 05.00 h, and their renewed enthusiasm for game-play encouraged by the use of humour and the uncertainty of events following Medea's plans for revenge, hosts propose rapid shifts of space (between Medea's room and the campaign room) under the simulation of a hostage-

capture situation. Male guests who start Part III of the trilogy as victims of Medea's plans become spies to re-gain control, then later become hostages of female guests pretending to be soldiers in a double-bluff to help Medea carry out her revenge. At this stage in interactive game-play, a dramaturgy of participation is also being used to intentionally stretching the guests' engagement with role-play and game-play in order to keep them engaged at such a difficult time of night.

As fear builds around the potential threat of Medea's revenge plans, Jason's campaign team closes down Club Exile and arrests all the female guests from Medea's club. King Creon—the father to Jason's new bride—sends his soldiers to storm Medea's house to threaten her and force her to leave his land. At this point all the female guests, previously arrested by Jason's team, are given torches and balaclavas and told to take a hostage firmly by the wrist. Each female guest, now wearing a balaclava, holds hostage a male guest who is still wearing make-up and a wig. As the king's soldiers storm Medea's room to tell her to leave this land, all the female guests in balaclavas are told to make their hostage kneel on the floor, place their finger behind their hostage's head and tell them firmly: 'Be quiet, woman'. Holding this position, the female guests repeat threatening lines to Medea in unison, after they are instructed by the male hosts to do so. The juxtaposition used earlier in *Zero Hour Market* to critically address cultural and gender representation is now embedded in game-play to offer another layer of critical complexity to a guest's role-play.

This stage of the narrative represents the moment that Medea has to negotiate the terms of her stay with the king, who does not yet know of her plans to kill his daughter—Jason's new bride. Since all the female guests were allowed into Medea's women-only club earlier, they are now punished by first being arrested, and then are asked to wear balaclavas and stage a fake threat to Medea using the male guests as women. The relationship between the guests and the narrative in this micro-event shifts from a more open game-play environment, where guests can work together towards a group aim, to a role-play game, where guests are instructed about what to do. Although the instructions from the hosts are very precise, almost choreographic, the guests play roles that belong to a hierarchical relationship between guest and host. Therefore, as the role-play becomes more chaotic and unpredictable, guests are happy to carry out new commands from their superiors—played by male hosts. This moment ends as news arrives that Jason's new bride was given Medea's dress and burnt alive as she tried on the poisoned dress.

#### **4.4 Micro-event 10 at 05.00 h: The Cupboards (video available at: <https://vimeo.com/18360422#t=01h04m40s>; 01.04.40 to 01.20.00)**

The moment that guests remember most, as found through guest interviews (ZU-UK, 2011), happens towards the end of Part III, *Feast of Dawn*. Audience members are asked to consider their role as children in relation to the other guests also playing children—their brothers and sisters. They are asked to play critically by themselves being in charge of a micro-event within the larger event and by understanding the structure they are able to play prior to engaging in role-play. The narrative is suspended, which allows guests to play an autonomous role within the event where they have creative freedom. Guests can ask other audience members questions, tell jokes, stories or sing songs as they hide from Medea. As personal stories and memories surface, the realities of the personal information and that of the role of the child start to blur. Adult material and children's games both belong to this co-existing reality of the fictional and the factual, in a strange game of hide-and-seek. The initial ritual-like activities since midnight followed by immersive environments and a chaotic role-play launch guests into their own environment, unmediated by hosts. The fact that guests have experienced such a varied range of role-play, including contributing personal information to discussions within the narrative, means that they have experienced themselves as fictional and real-life players. Beyond the aim of developing a deeper experience for each guest individually, the ultimate aim of dramaturgy of participation in *Hotel Medea* is to prepare guests to author and manage their own game-play. This is the moment when all strategies used by dramaturgies of participation converge so that space can be created.

This moment comes immediately after Medea resolves to murder her children and starts to pursue the guests, who are dressed in children's pyjamas. In their role as protectors, the nursemaids lead the guests role-playing children to small cupboards or hidey-holes in groups of five to seven. One guest is named the 'older child' and is put in charge of the safety of the others, as the host leaves the cupboard. In the moment the host abandons the children, they are told that 'everything is going to be okay', that the host will look for a safe place to go to and that s/he will be back soon. In the minutes that follow, the host leaves audience members to their own initiative to entertain each other through role-play until they receive the host's phone call. This is the first time during the whole night that guests are abandoned by their hosts. The participation design here seems to reflect the moment in the narrative where Medea's children cannot trust their mother and do not know what will happen next. The host does not leave any

rules, apart from telling them to ‘stay here and wait for my call’ (ZU-UK, 2010). The guests undergo a variety of playful exchanges throughout the night and at this point improvise a relationship with other guests based on game-play.

The physical space used by the hosts and the guests, as the name of the micro-event suggests, resembles a cupboard in which to hide from Medea. The confinement adds to the proximity and intimacy between audience members and heightens the drama played out as a game of hide-and-seek. After the groups of children (guests) are left on their own for nearly 10 minutes, their nursemaid calls the mobile phone of the ‘older child’ in charge and asks him/her to entertain the ‘younger ones’ by telling them a story, and reassuring them that they will be okay. After guests are left to role-play on their own, the host calls them and guides them through various corridors, stairwells and rooms to a safe place, which they do holding hands and following the instructions of the ‘older child’. A total of 12 different groups of guests dressed in pyjamas and holding hands are guided to various safe locations. The success—or otherwise—of this moment is wholly dependent on the host’s ability to play/act his/her role as nursemaid to the children (guests) while at the same time acknowledging its fakery. This requires a mixture of confidence and humour on the part of the host, who has to take the adult guests’ phone numbers without breaking the role-play based on the myth narrative.

What I believe makes this moment in the micro-event most memorable is that no hosts are involved in this experience. Once guests are instructed on how to behave towards their ‘siblings’, they are told to wait until they receive further instructions. Therefore, a new relationship is created between the guests, where they need to sustain the role-play, improvising with strangers who are in a very intimate space and all dressed in pyjamas. If there is a ‘peak’ moment in the dramaturgy of participation, this is it. All the effort that hosts invest in skilling up and empowering guests to play should reach a moment of *independence* in which, although it only lasts 10 minutes on average, guests are left unattended and are given complete freedom to improvise within perhaps the most dramatic moment in the narrative, where their mother is trying to kill them. Guest reactions at this moment have varied wildly, from remaining in silence until receiving the phone call from their maid to hiding in another found space and remaining there beyond the end of the event. However, most interactions in *Hotel Medea* encourage guests to retain their role-play and proceed to create or develop games as soon as the host leaves. This is stimulated since they know there is not much time before something else happens, as well as the fact that they are all wearing pyjamas and holding their teddy bears. Although there is no script, this moment epitomizes the

combination of all tools employed earlier by dramaturgy of participation, since it has equipped guests to in effect run their own micro-event, where they are the creators of their script and players of their own game.

**4.5 Micro-event 11 at 05.30 h: The Shrine (video available at: <https://vimeo.com/18360422#t=01h20m35s>; 01.20.35 to 01.23.02)**

The shrine is an instance of collective action within the micro-event narrative (Figure 18), and is the last fictional event that happens as part of the myth. It certainly borrows from the earlier ritual-like activities, where hosts serve as references for what guests should do and offer them an invitation to join in.



**Figure 18.** Guests collectively build a shrine for Medea's children. Part III, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

This micro-event has as its dramaturgical background the death of Medea's two boys. Two guests are found by Medea and placed in their deathbeds. They are requested to lie still and keep their eyes closed. It is 05.30 h and the other guests (children) are seen creeping and hiding around the building, being guided by their nursemaid on a mobile phone, as they try to escape their death. They enter a new space, one that is immediately recognizable through visual and aural codes: candles, flowers, soft lamenting and the



sound of an organ. Ahead of them lie two still ‘corpses’—the bodies of two guests wearing children’s pyjamas. Medea gives every guest a poisoned kiss, using a new drop of fake blood for each guest.

This moment mirrors the goodnight kiss Medea gave to the children (guests) in the beginning of Part II, as they lay in their bunk-beds. After her kiss, guests’ pyjamas are removed and they are silently directed by the hosts to create a shrine using flowers, candles and cuddly toys, which they place on and around the dead boys. During this micro-event, we observe that certain familiar codes are dutifully abided by. What guests are expected to do is recognizable to them and is learnt behaviour. Guests respond to the task in a quiet and solemn mood, one by one engaging in creating a shrine and slowly building the set through their efforts. An air of sadness settles over the event, which is interrupted moments later by daylight as the balcony door is opened, revealing a large breakfast table where the guests and hosts break fast together, in silence (Figure 19).



**Figure 19.** Guests and hosts share breakfast at dawn. Part III, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

Although most of Part III’s participation is constructed using interactive game-play, the narrative resumes with the death of the children and guests are invited by the



hosts—with the use of participatory rituals—to join them in mourning the death of Medea’s children. This is the closing action as part of the narrative, and the last landmark in the challenge that guests and hosts set out to achieve when they arrived, that is, spend the night awake. The environment of mourning for the death of Medea’s children is conducive to a shared action familiar to guests that replicates a funeral-like behaviour. It is symbolically an opportunity to say goodbye to all the roles they played throughout the night, before guests and hosts can de-role and transition back to their external environment.

The four micro-events described in this chapter expose a dynamic that emerged as a result of the basic need to keep guests awake. Similar to Parts I and II of the trilogy, we have had to respond to the kind of physical and mental states guests go through as they attempt to stay awake through the night. In the conclusion, I will attempt to do the opposite, as I try to dissociate dramaturgy of participation from *Hotel Medea* in order to consider its applicability to other creative processes.

## CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 introduces key elements I use to propose a dramaturgy of participation as an approach to creating immersive theatrical events that take into account the experience of each audience member. I locate *Hotel Medea* within the wider field of immersive practice, propose a terminology that more accurately describes the roles of actor and audience in *Hotel Medea*, and then explore the notion of a spontaneous temporary community which comes together for a shared (real-life) purpose. I also discuss the importance of a training programme for hosts in order to help them achieve a delicate balance between fictional representation and facilitation skills when hosting pro-active guests. I draw parallels between Boal's (1979) joker and spect-actor and the roles of the host and the guest. Using Sutton-Smith's (1979) play quadrilogue, Flanagan's (2009) critical player and Sauter's (2000) definitions of playing culture and theatrical playing, I propose the micro-event as a frame to describe and analyse instances of guest–host interaction in the overnight trilogy in later chapters. By discussing the role of the architecture of theatre buildings and their impact on the expectations of audiences, I also propose ways in which a dramaturgy of participation can de-construct guest expectations of an event and re-define a contract between guests and hosts, different from that of a conventional theatre play on a stage. I use Grotowski's (1968) definition of theatre to move away from the physical stage towards the direct relationship between actors and audiences. I also discuss Brecht's (1964) attempts to politicize audience members and examine the extent to which *Hotel Medea* encourages similar behaviour by inviting guests to play critically. Towards the end of the chapter, I refer to McConachie's (2008) research on embodied perceptions as a way of approaching the experience of an audience member, who is at the same time an insider (a participant) and an outsider (an observer of the event). I then move on to challenging the notion of achieving an 'empty space' for audiences, proposing instead the strategic use of disorientation to achieve a similar result. Chapter 1 concludes with the reminder that for the dramaturgy of participation to be successfully applied to an immersive theatre production, it requires care that goes beyond the staging of an event as well as careful management of guest expectations many days, sometimes weeks, before guests arrive at the event.

Focusing on Part I of the *Hotel Medea* trilogy, in Chapter 2 I use participatory rituals as an approach to audience participation within the event. In *Zero Hour Market*, guests are guided through various repetitive activities which enables them to gain and

practise new skills. These skills later form the basis for shared actions performed in unison by guests and hosts. I borrow from Bell's (1997) description of ritual-like activities and Nunes' (2011) research on Brazilian folkloric rituals to help frame the relationship between Afro-Brazilian ritual practices and the actor training programme developed for *Hotel Medea* hosts. In micro-event 1, the Audience Training Camp, I define the relationship between the training originally developed for the hosts and the training later used to coach guests as they arrive to prepare them to accept invitations to participate. I also stress the importance of the participation offered to guests being in line with the fictional meta-narrative explored in the myth. In order to avoid instances of gratuitous participation, every opportunity to join in should also be an invitation to experience the narrative more deeply. In micro-event 2, the Market, I return to the use of shifting special arrangements (as well as cultural references) as a strategy to disorientate guests and, therefore, encourage them to remain in a fluid understanding of what their role is in the event. In micro-event 3, the Wedding Preparation, I describe how guests become actively involved in the preparation of the bride and groom simply by observing the actions performed by hosts. Themes explored later in the dramaturgy are also introduced at this point in the chapter, illustrating the dual development of both an increase in participation and a deepening of the narrative. Micro-event 4, the Jongo, looks at how guests are implicated in the narrative by taking an active role when a dramatic moment unfolds. Although guests are ultimately not able to prevent Medea from killing her family and leaving her land, they do physically attempt to keep Medea with them. Overall, Chapter 2 highlights how the Part 1 of the overnight trilogy functions almost as a warm-up—physical and emotional. Guests are not only exposed to a very proactive interaction with hosts but are also exposed to and implicated in themes that are explored again in later stages of the event.

In Chapter 3, I discuss immersive environments as an approach to further developing the range of experiences offered within the dramaturgy of participation. I mention Care Boss' (2012) discussion on the challenging definition of immersion, as well as the perceived opposition between passivity and agency. In *Drylands*, the choice to remain passive allows guests to be immersed by the fiction. Therefore, their ability to choose to remain a passive part of the narrative highlights their agency. The three micro-events discussed in this chapter (micro-events 5–7) are repeated thrice in the trilogy, allowing all guests to rotate twice to experience this moment in the narrative from three different perspectives. The intention behind the use of multiple layers of perspective and immersion is directly related to the richness of experience offered to the

guest, and also to the critical effect on their understanding of the structure behind the event. While in Part I of the trilogy guests create a temporary community with a common goal, in Part II guests have a more intimate relationship with hosts and are able to take on a less proactive, but nevertheless critical, role in the unfolding of the events.

Finally, in Chapter 4 I analyse four micro-events as part of the final part of the trilogy, *Feast of Dawn*. With interactive game-play I am able to propose a game-like structure, where guests improvise role-play with different objectives and tasks depending on the stage in the narrative. In micro-event 8, Club Exile, guests engage in a gender war and have very clear objectives. They respond to a key dramatic development with Medea finding out about Jason's betrayal. By playing the role of groups with conflicting objectives, guests play a gender-bending spy game. While male guests try to prevent Medea from carrying out her revenge, female guests take on tasks to further her plans and ensure Jason pays the price for his ambition. In micro-event 9, the King's Soldiers, the game is taken to another level when female guests take on the disguise of male guests, and add an extra layer of role-play to the interaction between guests and hosts. These interactive games become spaces in which guests can experiment different routes within what seems an inevitable fate, as part of Medea's revenge. Most importantly, micro-events 8 and 9 are a build-up towards micro-event 10—where guests are left on their own in small groups while Medea tries to find them and murder them to get her revenge. In micro-event 10, the Cupboards, guests are left unattended in pyjamas and are able to conduct their own narrative and games for a period of up to 10 minutes. Within the dramaturgy of participation, every different stage that precedes this moment is a preparation for this moment, where fictional and personal roles blur, where guests are at their most exhausted (around 05.00 h) and when the narrative is about to reach its peak (their death). What follows is micro-event 11, the Shrine, where we return to a shared ritual, where the whole community of hosts and guests mourn the fictional death of Medea's children, marking the end of the overnight event.

### **5.1 A Dramaturgy of Participation beyond *Hotel Medea***

These topics explored in my thesis have been discussed through the use of micro-events that refer to specific relationships within the *Hotel Medea* trilogy. In order to draw conclusions on the matters raised in the previous chapters it is useful to step outside the event to look at the dramaturgy of participation as a potential approach to be applied to the wider field of immersive practice. As described at the beginning of the thesis, one of

the purposes of pursuing this research was the potential application of participation design approaches emerging from this research beyond this specific project. Any artist considering the application of a dramaturgy of participation as a positive lens in the making of immersive experiences should first consider the aims of the *Hotel Medea* project and the context for the event. A dramaturgy of participation was developed as a means to offer a deeper engagement for audiences as individuals; however, it was also developed for a clear cultural context (Brazil–UK collaboration), for a specific time frame (midnight to dawn) and for the re-telling of the myth of Medea. Several elements of the hosts’ training, the use of rhythm and ritual-like activities as well as the themes present in the games—such as revenge, betrayal, gender wars and colonizer/colonized—were ways of addressing the aims of *Hotel Medea*. Having said this, there are numerous elements present in a dramaturgy of participation that I believe can be extracted from *Hotel Medea*’s micro-events and transposed to processes that aim to offer a deeper engagement with individuals.

For instance, the micro-event as relationship, inspired by Sutton-Smith’s (1979) play quadrilogue, has proved a useful frame to define relationships, responsibilities and expectations at any given moment in an event. The use of micro-events, however, as seen in previous chapters, can only be applied in the context of other micro-events and in relation to the overall dramaturgy of participation. Creative practitioners and researchers interested in exploring ways to immerse guests using a dramaturgy of participation must clearly define roles for guests and hosts at each and every stage of an event. These can (and perhaps must) change as the event unfolds; however, there should be no ambiguity as to what is expected of hosts and guests in a micro-event.

Further, in order to define what the offer to participate is, and how hosts offer it, the overall invitation must be at the centre of the exploration. Similarly to *Hotel Medea*’s invitation to stay collectively awake throughout the night, micro-challenges as part of micro-events must relate to the macro-challenge, whatever that may be. Only then, with a clear overall objective, and a chosen narrative or dramaturgical journey, can a dramaturgy of participation be developed successfully. Every other element discussed in this thesis will inevitably be a consequence of other contexts and choices, such as a story being re-enacted or a political aim being pursued. Working with concrete references will allow for micro-events to point towards the kind of physical spaces needed for a specific host–guest relationship to take place. It will also allow for a chronological order for micro-events to build and expand on the experience offered by the previous micro-event. Inevitably, as with any reflexive practice, time must be

allowed for ideas to be explored prior to major decisions being made, and so this process of applying a dramaturgy of participation might not take shape exactly as described here; however, this should simply serve as a reference. Once aims of a process are clearly defined, the very structures and approaches offered by participatory rituals, immersive environments and interactive game-play should be questioned, and developed if necessary.

In the conceptual process of defining such structures and objectives, other elements (presented in Sub-sections 5.1.1–5.1.9) can be used as a palette at any given point in the exploration in order to test the guest–host relationship and/or raise new research questions as part of the practical enquiry.

### **5.1.1 Audience Training/Actor Training**

Training involves developing strategies to skill-up audiences based on the same programme or research conducted with the actors. It is likely that no matter what type of programme is developed for actors in order to prepare them to sustain audience interaction in an immersive event, smaller audience training programmes can be developed as a result, thus bridging the gap of knowledge and skill between actors and audiences. This empowers audiences to participate and constructs a stronger skill base to tap into whenever audiences are invited to participate.

### **5.1.2 Spatial Disorientation**

The spatial disorientation strategy involves using mobile structures and shifts of light/sound to change points of reference for the audience. Regardless of the spatial context of an immersive project, there is a danger of giving strong architectural references to the audience, which will, as a result, condition them to a particular behaviour. Therefore, it can be productive to shift spatial references regularly, thus inspiring the audience to keep their understanding of space—and therefore their behaviour—fluid and open to invitations to participate and role-play.

### **5.1.3 Temporary Community-Building**

A community-building exercise requires offering ways to interact and construct shared fictional realities. It is advisable to avoid engaging audiences as individuals as they will compete with each other for a more customized experience. Instead, it would be useful to consider ways to engage individually with each audience member, providing small

groups of audiences with fictional roles, dramatic events and games which encourage them to work together to move the game—or the experience—to the next level.

#### **5.1.4 Fictional Context/Meta-event**

Engaging audiences as players, without disregarding narrative development, is the basis for developing a meta-event. This helps create fictional contexts for every game, ritual and opportunity to participate. It is important to ensure that relationships explored by audiences and actors belong to the chosen/constructed fictional space-time, so that every game, interaction or ritual deepens every audience member's experience of the narrative—as opposed to distracting from it.

#### **5.1.5 Intimacy/Logistics**

Shifting between epic theatrical moments and personal intimate experiences requires a careful definition of audience-to-actor ratio. Structures that provide a context for large group participation can be important for building a joint challenge that every actor and audience can work towards. However, intimate exchanges between actors and audience members allow actors to fine-tune their understanding of the audience's eagerness to participate and accordingly adjust the tone of their behaviour to encourage further participation. The audience can be allowed to lead on decisions regarding audience-to-actor ratio, and vice versa. For each particular role audience members and actors have, there will be a suitable ratio aligned with that type of engagement.

#### **5.1.6 Role-Play and Personal Memory**

Certain spatial relationships can trigger particular memories. Making use of familiar spatial arrangements, sounds, behaviours, props and costumes can trigger in the audience personal memories that enhance their experience of the chosen narrative. The natural environment can be taken into consideration for instances being explored in the narrative, looking specifically for familiar environments with which audience members have an immediate relationship.

#### **5.1.7 Technology as Container and Communicator**

Considering the use of technologies that allow for immediate audience input is an essential tool in performances and performance studies. From quizzes to questionnaires, interviews to photo sessions, exploring ways to embed audiences in the content that is created and experienced helps expand the scope of the performance. The technology

used must be aligned to the meta-narrative chosen and must allow audiences to feed information, images and other content in order to experience ownership of the experience.

#### **5.1.8 Game-Play and Suspended Narrative**

Game-play creates ‘pockets’ of agency in parallel to dramatic events. Games can be played by audiences in role just after or just before a key event in the unfolding narrative. Audiences can experience agency - as opposed to ‘become agents’ - in relation to key themes of the drama and deepen their ownership and experience of the event, without altering the course of events. While playing in role, audiences can also perform for each other, irrespective of whether they have common or opposing goals within the game.

#### **5.1.9 A Collective (Real-Life) Challenge**

It is crucial to define an invitation based on a challenging task. When all audiences and actors sign up to the same challenge, there is an immediate sense of purpose that every action goes towards. This should be aligned with the themes of the fiction; however, this should be a real-life challenge that allows actors and audience members to be ‘doers’ in the event, and share the climax of achievement at the end of the event.

As a result of a practice that applies many or all of these elements to the creative process, it is very likely that a new methodology will emerge. It would be naïve to expect a dramaturgy of participation to be applied in full without any adjustments, since it responds directly to the aims of a particular project and its subject matter. Therefore, I believe the approaches developed for *Hotel Medea* have a three-fold significance: they are a robust starting point for an enquiry; they present a series of approaches for development of creative material and immersive structures; and they help create a framework to be applied at a later stage of development for investigation and analysis of the guest–host relationship.

### **5.2 Memory**

In David Wiles and Christine Dymkowski’s *The Cambridge Companion to Theatre History*, Fiona Macintosh mentions that an

archiving project, entitled ‘My Hotel Medea: The Audience as Document’, which was developed at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in March 2011, involved two groups, one consisting of those



who had watched an all-night show entitled *Hotel Medea* at the Arcola Theatre, London, in February 2009 and another of people who had missed the production. The archiving process in this instance involved not only recording first-hand experiences of a show but also capturing information from those whose knowledge had been acquired at second or even third hand. (2013: 273)

*Audience as Document* (or *AAD*) was a live research event developed by *Hotel Medea* directors and researcher Joseph Dunne, and presented as an interactive art exhibition. *AAD* used participant memories one year after the event to research the impact *Hotel Medea* had on guests who had experienced the overnight event in the summer of 2010. A year after experiencing the event, guests were asked about what they remembered most about their overnight experience. Guests then chose one of their most memorable moments and spoke about it to the *AAD* exhibition attendees, who had never experienced *Hotel Medea* as a live event. *AAD* took place at Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Summerhall, Edinburgh, and OI Futuro, Rio de Janeiro (ZU-UK, 2011). The choice of a public exhibition format to conduct this research with audiences was an attempt to invite guests to participate in their own memories through the act of performing them for new audiences. Although the *AAD* event is not the focus of this thesis, it is necessary to acknowledge its importance in providing rich information regarding *Hotel Medea* guest perceptions of their own participation in the overnight event, based simply on what they remembered a year after their experience.

Individuals who experienced *Hotel Medea* in 2010—both in Rio de Janeiro and in London—were contacted in 2011 and invited to participate in an exhibition of their memories. Participants of *Hotel Medea* in Edinburgh in 2011 were also contacted. Those who could not attend but were interested in contributing were asked to write about the three most memorable moments from their experience of *Hotel Medea*. They were gently guided through their own memories of the night, with no intention of helping them select any particular type of memory, but simply the three strongest memories they had. Guests were never corrected if their account was partly inaccurate, so they could express the exact details they remembered. Despite their re-telling of their memories not being ‘historically accurate’ at times, it exposed just how memorable their experiences of participation were. Although the number of responses was relatively low when compared to the number of people who attended *Hotel Medea* (only around 10% responded), the vast majority of *AAD* participants (70–80%) remembered most those moments in the narrative when they were role-playing.



**Figure 20.** Guests in pyjamas are told a bedtime story by their host in *Drylands*. Part II, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

These memorable moments chosen by guests have been explored throughout this thesis as micro-events. When observed in relation to the intentions of the dramaturgy of participation, these memorable moments match the moments in *Hotel Medea* that focus on giving individual guests freedom to engage proactively with the narrative, often through role-play (Figure 20). The information offered by guests of *Hotel Medea* one year after their experience was a useful gauge of how dramaturgical decisions through a dramaturgy of participation can intentionally help shape a future memory of an event. As discussed earlier, if a key aim of the dramaturgy of participation is defined as encouraging guests to co-create what they themselves experience, then observing their memories (as what they chose to own and re-tell others) offers an insight into how meaningful certain experiences were to those individuals.

The chosen micro-events reflect the moments most guests mention when asked about after the event. However, based on interviews held with actors in *Hotel Medea* and the extensive observation of guests during the performance events in Rio de Janeiro, Edinburgh, Brasilia and London, one firm conclusion can be drawn: although guests might remember strongly similar moments, no two guests respond in the same way to an invitation to participate. This observation might sound terribly simplistic, but this means that models of cognitive perception, when used on their own, can prove very limited when studying proactive audiences.

Guests (male and female) have also said other moments of participation they remember most also include the cupboards scene when guests hide from Medea as she tries to kill them, and washing the naked bodies of Medea and Jason in preparation for their wedding in Part I. Additionally, they mention frequently the moment when the male guests dress up as women and adopt their mother's name in order to gain access to Medea's (female-only) Club Exile in Part II. Breakfast at dawn with actors also remains one of the most remembered moments for audiences as the last shared action of the overnight event. It is a complex moment of transition from play to reality, when audiences emerge from the night into the brightness of day.

A complex approach to audience research is required in order to account for the multiplicity of individual responses when guests are invited to play. *Hotel Medea*, however, provides a fluid and ever-changing structure that allows individual response and interaction while tightly managing guests to be at the right place, at the right time so as not to miss key parts of the overnight experience.

### 5.3 Re-enactment



**Figure 21.** Guests take part in Jason’s campaign photo-shoot and pretend to celebrate Jason’s election victory in *Drylands*. Part III, *Hotel Medea* (ZU-UK, 2012). Photograph by Ludovic des Cognets (<http://www.ldescognets.com>). Reproduced with permission.

More akin to historical re-enactments than openly interactive games, most instances of interaction in *Hotel Medea* offer a very modest level of agency to guests. We, the directors, focused on the use of interactive game-play in instances when the players experience an active role as co-creator (Figure 21). By engaging creatively with the action—whether they can in fact change the course of events or not—the guests are able to experience the event through a different layer. Arguing for the need to emancipate spectators, Rancière discusses the wider implications of the term ‘passive’ in the relationship between the notions of active and passive citizens: ‘Emancipation begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting ...’ (2009: 13). Although Rancière (2009) has clear views regarding agency in relation to emancipation, our interest has been in investigating the *experience of* agency as opposed to *actual* agency. The experiences lived through role-play in fictionally constructed situations can provide participants with a tangible sensation of empowerment, even if they do not actually provide participants with complete agency in relation to the event itself (see Hook, 2012: 62).

Theatre events offering participation to audiences today face the difficult task of designing participation that enhances the narrative as opposed to distracting from it. Theatre events that take advantage of an audience's thirst for game-playing often shift the audience expectations of the event by presenting the event as a game and replacing expectations audience members might have of a conventional theatre event. Thus, the focus shifts to encouraging audiences to unlearn their theatre audience behaviour (as opposed to enhancing their existing behaviour) through opportunities to participate within a dramaturgy they both watch and are an intrinsic part of. This behaviour, noted by Gardner (2010) in her article on participating audiences, is symptomatic of a larger trend in theatre practice in the UK in the past decade. British theatre companies Punchdrunk, Shunt and dreamthinkspeak have led the way by presenting work in unconventional venues across London. Their success was soon incorporated into the mainstream, being presented in association with the National Theatre in its offsite programme, making these companies immediate references in the field. Consequently, terms such as 'participatory', 'interactive' and 'immersive' have been used in various marketing campaigns across the UK, including the National Theatre programme and LIFT. The notion of an immersive experience has also permeated corporate events for brands such as Red Bull, who want to be associated with thrilling experiences such as radical sports.

Firstly, few of these events, however, have succeeded in enabling audience members to meaningfully experience the live event as both passive observers *and* proactive participants, as opposed to one *or* the other. Although this may be because of a series of different factors, I believe this is mainly due to a lack of training methodologies to allow actors to have the skills and experience necessary in order to manage intimate interactions with audience members in tandem with a compelling unfolding dramaturgy.

Secondly, the guests need to be exposed to the structure behind the event, as opposed to being encouraged to suspend their disbelief throughout the whole event. In *Hotel Medea* this is done, for instance, by letting the guests know how the story ends, and by allowing the technical team to work visibly onstage as opposed to backstage and hidden from view. The focus of the hosts is more akin to a historical re-enactment than a play performed on a stage. In this instance, I would like to borrow a phrase used by Pine and Gilmore: in search of a memorable experience for customers, they defend businesses' need to 'make fakery honest' (2011: 55). By allowing the guests to understand how the *faking* process is constructed, as opposed to a fictitious reality

sustained from beginning to end, guests are inspired to interact with the event as players of a game or actors in a re-enactment.

Thirdly, I believe such events require a participation-led dramaturgy, which considers the perspective of each individual at every stage of the event. Our work as directors of *Hotel Medea* focused on allowing guests to be immersed in emotions and environments present in the Medea myth, by overlapping and at times contrasting different layers of immersion. The way we approach this design process is through a six-year-long period of research with and without audiences, selecting situations that resemble familiar situations for the guests or that trigger reactions and feelings similar to those being lived by the characters in the myth.

Different from immersive theatre practice in the UK, such as companies mentioned earlier in the chapter, we did not focus primarily on the fictional representation of the issues addressed by the myth: colonization, betrayal, murder. Neither did we choose to replace a theatrical narrative for a fully interactive game. And certainly we did not choose to allow audiences simply to wander around spaces, hoping for a meaningful sequence of events. Instead, through trial and error—especially through error—we found parallel participatory tools that create experiences akin to those themes in the myth of Medea (carefully designed to be experienced in a specific order, culminating in breakfast at dawn). By casting audience members in specific roles, giving them permission to participate and constructing a dramaturgy that is audience-centred, they will both surrender to and actively participate in their own customized and memorable experience:

[C]areful and caring is the dramaturgic relation that shapes *Hotel Medea*: We are taken seriously in our needs as an audience, including the acknowledgement of our tiredness in the middle of the night. We have the opportunity to *really* take a nap, and the opportunity to share the concluding communal breakfast. The production of course also engages our enjoyment of participating in play, in playing roles, and above all in participating in ways that are precisely different from the clichéd ‘participatory performances’ where no one wanted to sit in the front row. (Boenisch, 2012: 234; emphasis in the original)

There is no promise of genuine agency here, and as such it is not delivered. The majority of guests, however, having experienced lead roles as key players within micro-events would describe their experience as genuine agents in the shared narrative space. The promise instead is of ‘lived experiences’ via opportunities to participate offered by



hosts and defined by guests as moments where each individual decides whether and how to accept invitations to participate.

#### **5.4 Failure**

If we are to look at the guest's journey through the night, the invitations to participate offered in Part I, *Zero Hour Market*, are used first in a physically active way. In other words, a 'warm up' for the guests is an introduction to participation. The guests are then immersed in different environments, which introduces them to various perspectives and levels of intimacy, to eventually give them enough confidence to role-play on their own, interacting playfully among themselves without the presence of hosts. However, a closer observation of guests in past performances of *Hotel Medea* allows for a more complex understanding of the factors that support, and those that hinder, the successful application of the dramaturgy of participation.

*Zero Hour Market* has, to this date, been performed in different locations in Brazil and the UK between 2008 and 2012, including in an open-air amphitheatre, a circus tent, a church square, an art gallery and a warehouse. Owing to their specific architectural elements, each of these spaces has had a different influence in guests' understanding of how and when they are allowed to participate in the drama. When performing in Aldeia de Arcozelo, in the mountainous region of Rio de Janeiro, audiences were allowed to wait in an auditorium of a proscenium theatre because of the wet weather conditions. The theatre had its curtains closed and, as we have explored earlier, audiences used to the stage-auditorium dynamic immediately took their seats expecting the production to take place on stage. Once the event was about to start, the audience members were reluctant to leave their seats and come outdoors for the beginning of the event. The hosts noticed that even when explicitly invited to participate guests were reluctant to join, often standing back to watch from a distance. After that night, it did not rain, and the auditorium was not used as a waiting area again, and consequently this audience behaviour was not noticed again. As discussed earlier in the thesis, guests are conditioned to a specific behaviour when attending a theatre event. Therefore, extreme care is required for familiar elements to be removed from the event, in order for a new contract of expectations—and consequently a new behaviour—to take place.

Whether indoors or outdoors, the market scene provides the guests with a space that is constantly changing, since the actors (tents) do not remain in the same spot. The hosts compete for the audience's attention trying to lure them into their tents. As a

micro-event, the market scene operates by disorientating the guests spatially, allowing each audience member to take responsibility for his/her own journey through the tents and decide whether or not to interact with the sellers. Guests take on a variety of roles, either by engaging intensely in dialogue with a host or by standing outside the tents and observing the whole space from the outside. The tents are able to fill the empty space and also leave very quickly—transforming the space for the next dramatic moment in the narrative. By the end of this scene, the audience members have effectively warmed up for the upcoming propositions to participate in different ways.

So, in what ways does the opening market in *Hotel Medea* provide a departure from the stage–auditorium dynamic between guests and hosts? Sauter chooses to call playing culture ‘the “eventness” of theatre’ (2000: 12). In order to get closer to that ideal, *Hotel Medea* has had to re-configure the way in which actors interact with audiences so that the here and now is highlighted through one-on-one improvised exchanges of dialogue between guests and hosts. Achieving this understanding of the ‘here and now’ has been a delicate balance between the host’s portrayal of market sellers and the facilitation required to engage guests meaningfully in the experience. In the first public performance of *Hotel Medea* at the Arcola Theatre in 2009, guests were given local currency (coins) to spend in the market. The market sellers also had actual produce, including nuts and alcohol that they would trade for the coins. However, after the first performances, we noticed that the exchange between guest and host was very superficial. Guests were too familiar with the trade of currency for product and therefore engaged in a fast-paced behaviour, going from tent to tent to compare and decide what to spend their limited money on. In the following year, we decided to remove both the fictional currency and the produce entirely. Instead, the products were unattainable and the cost was much more than guests were ready to offer for them. This enabled guests to engage with a host for longer periods and discuss personal perspectives on value, philosophy and belief. After the currency was removed, guests were asked what they would offer in exchange for illegal pieces of the Golden Fleece. In exchange for the most valuable item on earth, guests were asked whether they would trade darkest secrets or a member of their family. This proved much more effective as an engagement tool, as well as setting up the themes present in the Medea myth.

During the conception period of *Drylands*, as well as throughout the rehearsal process for this scene, we were presented with numerous concerns, both logistical and in terms of guests’ role-play. The main concern was that hosts might have to engage with guests who either refuse to play the part of the child entirely or very



enthusiastically test the hosts by playing a difficult child. These are certainly concerns that would rarely, if ever, feature in a version of *Medea* for the stage. However *Hotel Medea* invites audience members to play different games throughout the night, making it a near-impossible task to predict behaviour as individuals play their newly assigned roles.

Although hosts had extensive rehearsal periods with imaginary audiences, as well as fellow actors and test audiences, it will always remain a possibility that a guest—who is possibly not used to such a level of interaction in a theatre show—may feel uncomfortable taking on a role within the dramaturgical structure of the event. This is especially the case when invitations—such as being asked to lie down in a bunk-bed—trigger in the audience member the feeling of vulnerability or threat. There are a number of reasons why guests may resist such invitations, ranging from personal associations with the spatial relationship that they have been invited to inhabit to culturally specific expectations of what behaviour is acceptable in a public space where other guests can watch their behaviour. As White observes, ‘(a) person can respond openly and straightforwardly to an invitation, if their prior experience and habitus equip them with the appropriate resources, and their awareness of other agencies does not intrude too strongly’ (2013: 186). It is essential for hosts to remain supportive and engaged in every guest’s experience. However, if the host is forceful in the slightest or comes across as guiding the guest’s experience too closely, the guest could easily disengage with an otherwise deeply immersed experience.

The cupboards scene expresses the peak in guest participation, where the scene depends almost entirely on the guests’ willingness to play. In previous scenes, such as the market and the bunk-beds, should guests decide not to play the part they are offered, hosts simply conduct these micro-events in a different manner. However, in the case of the cupboards scene, the micro-event depends on the guest’s willingness to use their own mobile phone so as to receive information from a host in order to guide the rest of the guests to a place they do not yet know. The heightened risk, for both hosts and guests, at such a late stage in the night (around 05.30 h) brings a new level of risk to the game-play, where guests are trusted with the experience of the event. Although guests are not able to change the outcome of the narrative, their experience for those 10 minutes is a disorientating and exhilarating journey. They are spatially lost, since they are looking for a ‘safe place’ from *Medea*. But they have also been put in charge of other guests’ well-being, which means they cannot abandon their groups. In the background they hear screams from other guests in other groups who are also running

through corridors and staircases to try and escape their death. On one of the evenings during the 2011 performance of *Hotel Medea*, one of the groups of children could not be reached by mobile phone. As a result, they remained hidden for nearly 30 minutes. They appeared at the breakfast table, still wearing their pyjamas, after waiting for a phone call that never came because the phone signal was poor where they decided to hide. At a different performance in 2010, a group of guests simply did not accept the invitation to role-play children, and remained silent for the period while hiding, until they were led to the next location.

The instances where the micro-events described failed to achieve their aims allow for some insight for a more complex understanding of what is required in order for a dramaturgy of participation to be applied successfully. These micro-events are meant to offer an initial progression of guest participation—from a plot that warms guests up for what is to be expected to one where they are finally left to their own devices at five in the morning. By experimenting with role-play, shifting performance spaces and different dynamics of play between hosts and guests, *Hotel Medea* offers a varied range of interactive structures that can be used to further study participating audiences and the degrees in which audience members chose to participate. Any elements that fail to achieve their aims, however small, might jeopardize the guest's experience for the rest of the event.

## **5.5 A Post-immersive Manifesto**

The application of a dramaturgy of participation in *Hotel Medea* certainly enabled very successful outcomes in relation to the engagement of guests. This approach also has potential for future theatrical projects that want to put their audiences in the centre of the experience. However, it is not enough to simply apply these elements as a creative process. In order to develop a relevant approach to each guest individually, a wider understanding of current trends is also required. The proliferation of immersive productions has had a direct impact on contemporary audiences' expectations of future immersive events in the UK. An acknowledgement of this fact is key in framing the event prior to the audience's arrival. As discussed in previous chapters, in order for an event's guests to engage both as players and as audience, ways in which the event is communicated and presented form essential elements in shaping the rules of interaction for guests. There is an emerging level of complexity when attempting to re-define guests' expectations of a so-called immersive event. As the term *immersive* becomes more ubiquitous, and marketing experiences within and beyond arts industries are

branded as immersive, ever-larger audiences will share a common understanding of what immersive should be. This will drastically impact on future audience behaviour, and addressing this expectation will become an essential issue in encouraging guests to play critically. In order to encourage guests to be critical players (Flanagan, 2009), it is essential to provide them with the necessary skills and to make fakery honest (Pine and Gilmore, 2011) to allow guests to be ‘in on it’, thus empowering them to engage critically and playfully with the event.

At the time of completing my writing, the zombie apocalypse-themed chase events *2.8 Hours Later* (Slingshot, 2014) and *The Generation of Z: Apocalypse* (Farry et al., 2015) were presented in London and other cities across the UK to sold out audiences. *2.8 Hours Later* is a game where players (audiences) get to run from zombies (actors) in order not to get infected. As audience members turn up they are given a printed map and told to go in a team of six to a specific spot in the grid. Audience members go from place to place as a group trying to find out where to go next. They find actors who might give clues or tasks in order to find out the exit route, or to find a cure for the infected. At different points throughout the whole event actors chase players. The game ends in a ‘zombie disco’ where players find out whether they have been infected or whether they have survived. In this example, the element of narrative is secondary and the participant’s main concern is not to get caught. This is perhaps the most extreme example where an immersive experience is almost solely focused on the survival game dynamics. In *The Generation of Z: Apocalypse*, the audience is divided into four groups before being taken by actors through other rooms trying to find a safe route away from zombies. Actors focus on conveying the plot to the audience at every turn of events. The audience is divided into four large groups that each follow a different thread of the main story through a different physical route. In this experience, audience members are consulted by actors at a key moment in the narrative about whether to take a risk letting a child back into the safe zone. Audience members have no real agency in relation to the event, apart from helping with small tasks, such as help stitch an actor who needs medical attention, and hold a door that was holding a group of zombies away. In the other extreme of audience participation, this event is perhaps a slightly more participatory version of a promenade play about zombies—especially when compared with earlier examples of immersive theatre in the UK.

While attending dreamthinkspeak’s promenade production *In the Beginning Was the End* (2013), I heard a small group of audience members actively seeking to

find ‘hidden rooms’. The audience was allowed to make their own journey through a pre-established route, indicated at times by signs and at others by performers. In each new performance space we entered, this group of audience members tried to open every door, drawer and cupboard they could find. Every time they realized they had intentionally been locked to avoid audience access, they would respond in a frustrated way making reference to Punchdrunk’s productions. One of them said to the others: ‘I’m sure this is what we have to do. We have to look for secret things. I know. I’ve been to immersive theatre before. In the *Masque* [referring to Punchdrunk’s *The Masque of the Red Death*], I found a secret room’ (dreamthinkspeak, 2013). There are two crucial elements to be observed from this audience member’s behaviour in this specific instance. First, her experience of Punchdrunk’s show had encouraged her to approach this immersive theatre event with a personal mission to get the most of her experience (Alston, 2013). This meant she was not focusing on the actions performed by the actors around her, thus dis-engaging with the narrative being explored in this event. Second, her individual mission did not allow her to engage with other audience members—with the exception of her friends who had attended the event with her. It is not enough to look critically at the impact events such as Punchdrunk’s *Masque of the Red Death* have on contemporary audiences, as Alston (2013) points out, since the proliferation of similar events seems inevitable. However, artists who intend to put their audiences at the centre of their artistic experience must take these factors into account in order to re-frame their audience’s experience of the event. As Gardner’s (2010) observation highlights, audiences are keen to change their behaviour when invited to do so. However, in order to engage audiences beyond game-like tasks, it is important to articulate this invitation in a careful manner. Hosts need to be adequately trained to oversee their journey, and the methods of communications used by the production require careful consideration.

This is the context in which I suggest that a post-immersive approach may be asked for. Care Boss (2002) suggests that the term immersive is not helpful in producing viable academic discourse, calling it a ‘tar baby’ (see also Torner and White, 2012: 8). The term might be also ineffective when setting up expectations for an audience as well. By this, I do not mean there should be a complete rejection of immersive experiences. However, a post-immersive approach to a dramaturgy of participation may perhaps allow artists to encourage their audiences to create creative networks within the audience members, pulling together to experience shared immersion—as opposed to a one-on-one secret VIP experience. Whether small or large,

audience communities can experience with strangers a collaborative environment that is seldom explored. Boal (1979) once defined theatre as rehearsal for revolution. A post-immersive approach to participation can provide audiences with extraordinary aesthetic experiences while, at the same time, allowing strangers to create a utopic collaborative space for innovation. It is not enough to see theatre as ‘what happens between actor and spectator’, as actors are able to perform as the hosts for this shared rehearsal, allowing guests to explore their own shared experiences in relation to the theatrical narrative.

As a result of this research project, I am keen to map the development of a post-immersive approach to theatre, where theatre may be what happens between strangers. I see dramaturgy of participation as the precise point of departure for a practice that provides environments where strangers can create relations suspended from existing participation structures. I have identified in each stage of the dramaturgy of participation elements that help provide individuals with the tools, information, skills and confidence to engage in playful and challenging role-play. Also, precisely because a dramaturgy of participation starts from the place of re-enactment, it provides a safe starting point for those who are least likely to engage in role-play. This gradual increase in complexity allied to the care that hosts apply to guests’ experience facilitates a transition from observer, through critical player, immersed subject and co-author, to agent.

In conclusion, it is important to remember that *Hotel Medea* was first conceived in 2006, and presented to British and Brazilian audiences between 2009 and 2012. The dramaturgy of participation has allowed me to identify invaluable information about guests’ expectations and behaviours. This understanding needs to respond to the current field of immersive practice and games. It is a new context where such experiences are more ubiquitous within and beyond the arts and, therefore, have a great impact on audience expectation. Apart from the development of a new methodological approach to making and analysing immersive theatre, I see the potential for developing the guest–guest relationship as being the most important, and unexpected, outcome of this research. The reason for this conviction is the potential for strangers to be able to re-imagine their relationships with each other within a playful and critical environment, where status and roles are fluid and interchangeable. There is a distinct lack of awareness among companies and artists about how to encourage and manage spontaneous audience–audience game-play in the field of immersive practice in the UK. We have seen isolated instances where audience members play roles within a game and are encouraged to interact, such as in Coney’s *A Small Town Anywhere* (2011).

However, they always require an external structure that does not aim to prepare them with the skills they require to author their own experiences unmediated by actors.

My intention is to use the findings from my PhD research in relation to the making of ZU-UK's future project *A Decalogy of Loneliness*. Based on ten separate interactive artworks in various locations throughout the course of a day, *A Decalogy of Loneliness* is inspired by the last 10 hours of sanity of a man, before he decides to stab his wife to death. The initial aim of this new production is to develop ten experiences that reinterpret elements of a work-day routine, from a dinner date to a phone call or a taxi ride. Each of the ten parts will engage a different number of guests, and will use varying levels of agency in relation to the main narrative. Although I don't necessarily see a dramaturgy of participation as the starting point for this creative process, I intend to use specific elements as described earlier in this chapter as stimuli for specific enquiries. Almost every element which arose from this research project, including Intimacy/Logistics (5.1.5), Spatial Disorientation (5.1.2), and Game-Play and Suspended Narrative (5.1.8), will become a focused process of investigation where I will isolate aims of each decalogy piece in order to explore deeper relationships between guest and host, as well as guest and guest.

What I propose is to focus on the core objectives of the dramaturgy of participation as guiding principles for a future enquiry; namely, collective action, complex and critical representation, self-ownership and fluid role-play. Through the observation of these elements, I believe more elaborate tools and strategies can emerge to encourage stranger-to-stranger unmediated immersive game-play and role-play. This objective can not only offer better relationships and experiences within immersive practice as a whole but hopefully it can also point to a shift of trend in the near future which offers a post-immersive approach to spontaneous *communitas*.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY (20,952 words)

- Allain, Paul (2003). *The Art of Stillness: The Theater Practice of Tadashi Suzuki*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Alston, Adam (2013). 'Audience Participation and Neoliberal Value: Risk, Agency and Responsibility in Immersive Theatre'. *Performance Research* [Special edition: On Value], 18(2): 128–38.
- Artichoke (2005– ). 'About'. *Artichoke Trust*. Available at: <http://www.artichoke.uk.com/about/> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- Babbage, Frances (2004). *Augusto Boal*. London: Routledge.
- Barbican (2014). *Digital Revolution*. Conceived and curated by Barbican International Enterprises. Performed at the Barbican Centre, London. Available at: <http://www.barbican.org.uk/digital-revolution> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- Bell, Catherine (1997). *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bell, Catherine (2009). *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, with a Foreword by Diane Jonte-Pace. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bennett, Susan (1997). *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*, 2nd edition. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Bennett, Susan (2006). 'Theatre Audiences, Redux'. *Theatre Survey*, 47(2): 225–30.
- Bishop, Claire (2012). *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. London: Verso Books.
- Bharucha, Rustom (1993). *Theatre and The World: Performance and the Politics of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Blast Theory (1991– ). 'Our history and approach'. *Blast Theory*. Available at: <http://www.blasttheory.co.uk/our-history-approach/> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- Boal, Augusto (1979). *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Translated from Spanish by Charles A. and Maria-Odilia Leal McBride and Emily Fryer. London: Pluto Press.
- Boenisch, Peter M. (2012). 'Acts of Spectating: The Dramaturgy of the Audience's Experience in Contemporary Theatre'. *Critical Stages*, 8 (Special Article No. 26). Available at: <http://archive.criticalstages.org/criticalstages7/entry/Acts-of-Spectating-The-Dramaturgy-of-the-Audiencesquos-Experience-in-Contemporary-Theatre#sthash.q8IMCFwx.dpbs> (Accessed: 16 August 2015). [Reprinted in Katalin Trencsényi and Bernadette Cochrane (eds), *New*

- Dramaturgy: International Perspectives on Theory and Practice*. London: Bloomsbury, pp. 225–42.]
- Bond, Kate (2013). ‘BBC4 interview on *You Me Bum Bum Train*’. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b011l0fw8> (Accessed: 12 March 2014).
- Bond, Kate, and Morgan Lloyd (2004– ). *You Me Bum Bum Train*. Co-created and directed by Kate Bond and Morgan Lloyd. Performed in a disused building in Stratford, London. Available at: <http://www.bumbumtrain.com> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brecht, Bertolt (1964). *Brecht on Theatre*. Translated and with Notes by John Willett. London: Methuen Drama.
- Brook, Peter (1968). *The Empty Space*. New York: Avon Books.
- Care Boss, Emily (2002). ‘Thoughts on Why Immersion Is a Tar Baby’. *The Forge Forums Read-Only Archives*. Available at: <http://www.indie-rpgs.com/archive/index.php?topic=4640> (Accessed 24 July 2015).
- Coney (2006– ). ‘About Us’. *You Have Found Coney*. Available at: <http://coneyhq.org/about-us/> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- Coney (2011). *A Small Town Anywhere*. Performed at Battersea Arts Centre (BAC), London. Available at: <http://coneyhq.org/2012/01/21/a-small-town-anywhere-2/> (Accessed: 15 July 2015).
- dreamthinkspeak (1999– ). ‘dreamthinkspeak: About’. *dreamthinkspeak*. Available at: <http://dreamthinkspeak.com/about> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- dreamthinkspeak (2005). *Underground*. Conceived and directed by Tristan Sharps. Performed at the Old Abattoir, Clerkenwell, London, as part of BITE:05 Young Genius Season, Brighton Festival, UK. Available at: <http://dreamthinkspeak.com/productions> (Accessed: 14 August 2015).
- dreamthinkspeak (2013). *In the Beginning Was the End*. Commissioned by and performed at Somerset House, London, 28 January–30 March. Available at: <http://dreamthinkspeak.com/productions> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- Etchells, Tim (1999). *Certain Fragments*. London: Routledge.
- Farry, Benjamin, Simon London and David van Horn (2015). *The Generation of Z: Apocalypse*. Produced by Charlie McDermott. Directed by Michael Hurst and Colin Mitchell. Performed in a disused building in East London. Available at: <http://www.thegenerationofz.com/#!/genz> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).



- Ferretti, Sergio Figueiredo (1995). *Rethinking Sincretism*. Translated by the author. São Paulo: EdUSP.
- Ferretti, Sergio Figueiredo (2010). 'Popular Culture and Immaterial Wealth'. Translated by the author. Available at:  
<http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=321129115018> (Accessed: 17 March 2012).
- Field, Andy (2009). 'Up All Night: The Intimacy of *Hotel Medea*'. *Guardian Theatre Blog*, 6 February. Available at:  
<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2009/feb/06/zecora-ura-hotel-medea-arcola> (Accessed: 4th April 2010).
- Flanagan, Mary (2009). *Critical Play: Radical Game Design*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Freeman, John (2007). *New Performance/New Writing*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Freshwater, Helen (2009). *Theatre & Audience*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gardner, Lyn (2010). 'Wisdom of the Crowd: Interactive Theatre Is Where It's At'. *Guardian Theatre Blog*, 28 February. Available at:  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/theatreblog/2010/feb/28/interactive-theatre-connected-coney-lift> (Accessed: 4 April 2010).
- Gardner, Lyn (2014). 'Adrian Howells Obituary'. *The Guardian*, 24 March. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/mar/24/adrian-howells> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- Grotowski, Jerzy (1968). *Towards a Poor Theatre*. Edited by Eugenio Barba, with a preface by Peter Brook. New York: Routledge.
- Grotowski, Jerzy (1997). 'Performer' (Thomas Richards, trans.), in Richard Schechner and Lisa Welford (eds), *The Grotowski Sourcebook*. London: Routledge.
- Gurawski, Jerzy (1962). Set design for Grotowski's *Kordian*. Available at:  
<https://niepokoje.wordpress.com/tag/lata-60/page/4/> (Accessed: 16 August 2015).
- Hampton, Anthony (1975– ). 'About: Bio'. Available at:  
<http://www.anthampton.com/home.html> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- Handke, Peter (1971). *Offending the Audience, And Self-Accusation*. London: Methuen.
- Hays, Michael (1981). *The Public and Performance: Essays in the History of French and German Theater, 1871–1900*. London: UMI Research Press.
- Hillman, Jessica (2010). 'Tradition or Travesty? Radical Reinterpretations of the Musical Theatre Canon'. *Theatre Topics*, 20(1): 1–10. Available at:

<https://jessicahillman.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/radical-revivals.pdf>

(Accessed: 1 December 2014).

Hook, Nathan (2012). 'Circles and Frames: The Games Social Scientists Play', in Evan Torner and William J. White (eds), *Immersive Gameplay: Essays on Participatory Media and Role-Playing*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., pp. 52–70.

Jackson, Anthony, and Shulamith Lev-Aladgem (2004). 'Rethinking Audience Participation: Audiences in Alternative & Educational Theatre', in Vicki Ann Cremona and the Theatre Research Theatrical Event Working Group, *Theatrical Events: Borders, Dynamics, Frames*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, chapter 8, pp. 207–36.

Kasai, Toshiharu, and Kate Parsons (2003). 'Perception in Butoh Dance'. *Memoirs of the Hokkaidu Institute of Technology*, 31 (2003): 257–64. Available at: <http://www.ne.jp/asahi/butoh/itto/method/butoh-perception.pdf> (Accessed: 1 April 2012).

Leabhart, Thomas (2007). *Etienne Decroux*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Lecoq, Jacques (2002). *The Moving Body: Teaching Creative Theatre*. Translated from *Le Corps poétique* by David Bradby. London: Methuen Drama.

LIFT (1981– ). 'About LIFT'. *London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT)*. Available at: <http://www.liftfestival.com> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).

Lyngstad, Mette Bøe, and Stig A. Eriksson (2003). 'Interview with Augusto Boal about *Rainbow of Desire*—From Europe to South-America'. Transcribed from videotape by Jørn Lavoll for Høgskolen i Bergen (Bergen University College), 4 November. Available at: <http://www.dramaiskolen.no/dramaiskolen/media/Interview%20with%20Augusto%20Boal2pdf.pdf> (Accessed: 3 January 2011).

Lynne Bowman, Sarah (2012). 'Jungian Theory and Immersion in Role-Playing Games', in Evan Torner and William J. White (eds), *Immersive Gameplay: Essays on Participatory Media and Role-Playing*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., pp. 31–51.[Note: The Kindle edition of this book was referred; however, for convenience of citation, quotes have been cross-referenced with page numbers of the print edition.]

Machon, Josephine (2013). *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Macintosh, Fiona (2013). 'Museums, Archives and Collecting'. In David Wiles and Christine Dymkowski (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Theatre History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 267–80.
- Martin, Jacqueline, and Willmar Sauter (1995). *Understanding Theatre: Performance Analysis in Theory and Practice*, with contributions from Erika Fischer-Lichte, Kirsten Gam-Holmström, Patrice Pavis and Claude Schumacher. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (2002). *Phenomenology of Perception*. New York: Routledge Classics.
- McConachie, Bruce (2008). *Engaging Audiences: A Cognitive Approach to Spectating in the Theatre*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Montola, Markus, and Jaakko Stenros (eds) (2008). *Playground Worlds: Creating and Evaluating Experience of Role-Playing Games*. Finland: Ropecon ry. Available at: [http://2008.solmukohta.org/pub/Playground\\_Worlds\\_2008.pdf](http://2008.solmukohta.org/pub/Playground_Worlds_2008.pdf) (Accessed: 14 July 2015).
- Mumford, Meg (2009). *Bertolt Brecht*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- National Theatre (1963–). 'About the National Theatre'. *National Theatre*. Available at: <http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/discover-more/welcome-to-the-national-theatre/about-the-national-theatre> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- National Theatre Wales (2011). *The Passion*. Written by Owen Sheers. Directed by Michael Sheen and Bill Mitchell. Performed in several public and private spaces in Port Albert, Wales. Available at: <https://www.nationaltheatrewales.org/passion> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- Nunes, Deise Faria (2011). 'The Dances of the *Orixás*: From Sacred Ritual to Performer's Dramaturgy'. Master's Thesis. Norway: University of Oslo. Available at: <https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/24154/Trykktexverson.pdf?sequence=1> (Accessed: 10 November 2013).
- Pine, B. Joseph, and James H. Gilmore (2011). *The Experience Economy*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.
- Polish Cultural Institute (New York) (2011). 'A Grotowski Chronology'. Available at: <http://www.polishculture-nyc.org/index.cfm?siteid=217&itemcategory=35075&priorId=35073> [www.polishculture-nyc.org](http://www.polishculture-nyc.org) (Accessed: 4 May 2011).

- Punchdrunk (2000– ). ‘Company: About, Company Structure, People’. *Punchdrunk*. Available at: <http://punchdrunk.com/company> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- Punchdrunk (2006–07). *Faust*. Produced in collaboration with the National Theatre. Performed in a disused building in East London. Available at: <http://punchdrunk.com/past-shows>; <https://vimeo.com/19408848> (24 July 2015).
- Punchdrunk (2007–08). *The Masque of the Red Death*. Produced in collaboration with Battersea Arts Centre. Available at: <http://punchdrunk.com/past-shows/column/16> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- Rancière, Jacques (2009). *The Emancipated Spectator*. Translated by Gregory Elliot. London: Verso.
- Rappaport, Roy A. (1999). *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rotozaza (1998– ). Rotozaza: About. Available at: <http://www.rotozaza.co.uk/statement.html> (Accessed: 23 September 2015).
- Rotozaza (2010). *Etiquette*. Co-directed and written by Ant Hampton and Sylvia Mercuriali. Produced for Battersea Arts Centre (BAC) One-on-One Festival, London, 6–18 July. Performed at Stratford Circus, London. Available at: <http://www.rotozaza.co.uk/menu.html> (Accessed: 15 July 2015).
- Royal de Luxe (2006). *The Sultan’s Elephant*. Co-produced with Artichoke. Directed by Jean Luc Courcoult. Performed in several public spaces in Central London, 4–8 May. Available at: [http://www.artichoke.uk.com/events/the\\_sultans\\_elephant/](http://www.artichoke.uk.com/events/the_sultans_elephant/) (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- Rudlin, John (2002). *Commedia Dell’Arte: An Actor’s Handbook*. London: Routledge.
- Sauter, Willmar (2000). *The Theatrical Event: Dynamics of Performance and Perception*. Iowa: University of Iowa Press.
- Sauter, Willmar (2004). ‘Introducing the Theatrical Event’, in Vicki Ann Cremona, Peter Eversmann, Hans van Maanen, Willmar Sauter and John Tulloch (eds), *Theatrical Events: Borders, Dynamics, Frames*. IFTR/FIRT Theatrical Event Working Group. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, pp. 1–14.
- Schechner, Richard (1985). *Between Theater and Anthropology*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Schechner, Richard (1993). *The Future of Ritual*. London: Routledge.
- Schutzman, Mady, and Cohen-Cruz, Jan (eds) (1994). *Playing Boal: Theatre, Therapy, Activism*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

- Shunt (1998–). *Shunt: About*. Available at: <http://www.shunt.co.uk> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- Shunt (2003–04). *Dance Bear Dance*. Created by Shunt. Directed by David Rosenberg. Performed at Bethnal Green Arches, London. Video design available at: <https://vimeo.com/album/245523/page:1/sort:preset/format:thumbnail> (Accessed: 14 August 2015).
- Slingshot (2014). *2.8 Hours Later*. Produced and directed by Simon and Simon, once known as Slingshot. Performed in several public spaces in East London. Available at: <http://slingshoteffect.co.uk/index.php/ourgames/28-28hourslater>; <http://2.8hourslater.com> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- Sound&Fury (2000). ‘About Us/History’. Sound&Fury. Available at: <http://www.soundandfury.org.uk/aboutus.html>; <http://www.soundandfury.org.uk/history.html> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- Sound&Fury (2009–). *Kursk*. Written by Bryony Lavery and Sound&Fury. Directed by Amanda Boyle. Available at: <http://www.soundandfury.org.uk/kursk.html> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- Sutton-Smith, Brian (1979). ‘Epilogue: Play as Performance’. In Brian Sutton-Smith (ed.), *Play and Learning*. New York: Gardner Press, pp. 295–322.
- Sutton-Smith, Brian (2009). *The Ambiguity of Play*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Torner, Evan, and William J. White (2012). ‘Introduction’, in Evan Torner and William J. White (eds), *Immersive Gameplay: Essays on Participatory Media and Role-Play*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., pp. 3–12.
- Turner, Victor (2011). *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- White, Gareth (2009). ‘Odd Anonymized Needs: Punchdrunk’s Masked Spectator’, in Alison Oddey and Christine White (eds), *Modes of Spectating*. Bristol: Intellect Books, chapter 15, pp. 219–30.
- White, Gareth (2013). *Audience Participation in Theatre: The Aesthetics of the Invitation*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- WildWorks (2005–). ‘About Us’. *WildWorks*. Available at: <http://wildworks.biz/about/> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).
- ZU-UK (2001–). ‘Who Are ZU-UK?’. Available at: <http://zu-uk.com> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).

ZU-UK (2006–12). ‘Hotel Medea Project: What Is Hotel Medea?’. Available at:

<http://www.hotelmedea.co.uk/#!vstc9=clocknews/vstc0=about> (Accessed 24 July 2015).

ZU-UK (2009). *Hotel Medea*. Directed by Persis Jade Maravala. Performed at the Arcola Theatre, London.

ZU-UK (2010). *Hotel Medea*. Directed by Persis Jade Maravala. Performed at Trinity Buoy Wharf, for the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT).

ZU-UK (2011). *Audience as Document*. Presented at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Available at: <https://audienceasdocument.wordpress.com/audience-as-document/> (Accessed: 24 July 2015).

ZU-UK (2012). *Hotel Medea*. Directed by Persis Jade Maravala. Performed at the Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, London.

## APPENDIX

The Appendix first presents extracts from the Director of Training's (Persis-Jade Maravala) notes to actors and notes to audiences. These notes are followed by the script to the *Hotel Medea* trilogy. While editorial standardisations have been made silently in a few instances of typographical errors, the content/wording has not been altered and/or amended and the notes and script are presented verbatim.

### A1.1 Actor Training Programme

#### Notes to Hosts (May, 2010)

The absolutely fundamental aspect when starting Part II (*Drylands*) is the approach into the 'interval space' of the maids. It is a question of surety. The maids transgress from the ritual life of the Tambor de Mina (Aboquê music track from Pai Euclides, Tambor de Mina dances) into the excited bustle of a theatre show audience after the first interval. If you do not keep the pulse you will NOT have this surety. Your breathing and walk is in pulse. Your actions are always in pulse. You leave each other to find your 'children' but you are in pulse. Medea may be still and waiting but you remain aware of her and pulsate her energy too. You are reflections of Thelma (the older maid) and take care to keep her in the pulse as she has problems in this area. Keep the rhythm of the Tambor de Mina constantly in your flow. Ta-ta-ta ta-ta da-ta . . . And the simple steps in a circle. As audience are resting we create a roda [formation] and Raquel (lead maid) plays on the Agogô (instrument)—find the pulse with the step and the walk. Allow pulse to become an UNDULATION in the spine. Do not step in time—i.e. stop start stop start—rather allow the walk to be more natural as you will need to walk with audiences and cannot expect them to walk in time to the Mina. The pulse is always coming from the inside. In the interval moment as we can hear the audiences excitement and animation we absorb that energy and push it down to our feet using the steps and movements of the Mina dance.

\* \* \*

#### Notes to Hosts (May, 2010)

##### *On Engaging with Audiences When You Are in 'Zona Ritual'*

Hold your ground. Steadfast and re-assuring. Do not be swayed distracted or in any way pulled off your rhythm. Use the hours and hours of repetitive movements as a base—

come back to it constantly but LIGHTLY—as a feather touching a crystal ball. Keep a light touch with audiences and do not ACT. No acting at the audiences. What we engage it is real. What we engage in is the HERE AND NOW. We are not interested in pretence or make belief [*sic*]. We are here to perform a ritual that lasts from midnight to dawn. In this ritual others are invited too. They are invited to ‘play’ not ‘play along’.

As you approach your child be clear that you are looking at him or her. Use your body as one big channel for communication without using your voice. Speak through your eyes, breath and INTENT. Remember to use your spine in an open way. DO NOT TOUCH audiences unless it is very very specific. (Stroking forehead in bed etc.) Everything must be calm and deliberate. You are the ones the audiences can trust. They must be able to feel/sense that. Keep your instructions clear and do not falter or fumble. Remembering how the women in the House of Mina would move. Not slowly NOT SLOW MOTION. But deliberately and calmly with clear intent. Always run the action in your head first and then execute the action but do not go into zombie mode or into slow motion. Just see it first then [*sic*] do it and see how this grounds your action. Earth your movements.

\* \* \*

### **Notes to Hosts: Their Attitude to the Audience (June, 2010)**

#### *EVERYTHING HAS A PLACE, DEAR AUDIENCE, INCLUDING YOU*

Each thing, each object, each prop has a significance and a value. Nothing is in the ritual area/stage area for show or for a casual reason. Each ball of wool and knitting needle has its exact place. Each cough syrup and hot chocolate cup has its place. It has its place because it is part of your score as an actor but also because things through repetition gain their own significance. Each show is a re-enactment a re-telling of the myth. It is because of this re-telling aspect that we are not exactly acting. We include the audience in this playing. In the Grotowski centre the way that ‘witnesses’ (audiences) were placed was deeply impactful on me. Stools were placed in exactly the right spot for that person. Nothing left to chance. Everything deliberate and known, the sense of INVITE this had on the ‘witnesses’ was incredible. You become part of that MOMENT. This will be a unique experience because you are here and you are unique—that is what we are saying to audiences. It is because YOU are here that tonight will happen the WAY it will happen. So, choosing your children individually after the first interval is a full and deliberate act. You are saying ‘you are mine and I am



yours' for the next part of this ritual. Taking your children by the hand . . . leading them into the playing space and putting their pyjamas on is all done in silence and with great seriousness. It is the seriousness of their on-coming deaths. However, you must also know how to read their energies and match them slightly so that you can bring them down a little if necessary (apply mirroring technique).

\* \* \*

### **Notes to Hosts: Preparation for Jongo in Part I (July, 2010)**

#### *Jongo*

We use the Jongo as a way to follow on from the wedding scene to the murder scene. Medea will kill Agileus. But we know that. The Jongo will move us from wedding celebrations into a massacre. The dancing and party scene has to involve audiences. They are the party while the action rides on top. The audience/guests create the backdrop. In the Jongo it is important that people are confident and feel they have enough knowledge to be able to participate. They must be given tools and know they have full and total permission. At the top of the show the Jongo is practised. The Jongo is a kind of participation dance. It is an old ritual form played as a game and serving as both circle and partner dance. You are only partners for a short while. We have had to moderate the steps somewhat. The ORIGINAL steps are complicated and too difficult to expect audiences to follow. We have simplified it to a simple step · 3 and a small jump on the four.

*Important:* DO NOT JUMP HIGH always jump low—remember the closer to the earth everything is the better. The contact with the ground is a vital aspect (incl. capoeira) jumping and stomping etc. to wake up the gods and chase away the demons. The sequencing will be like this:

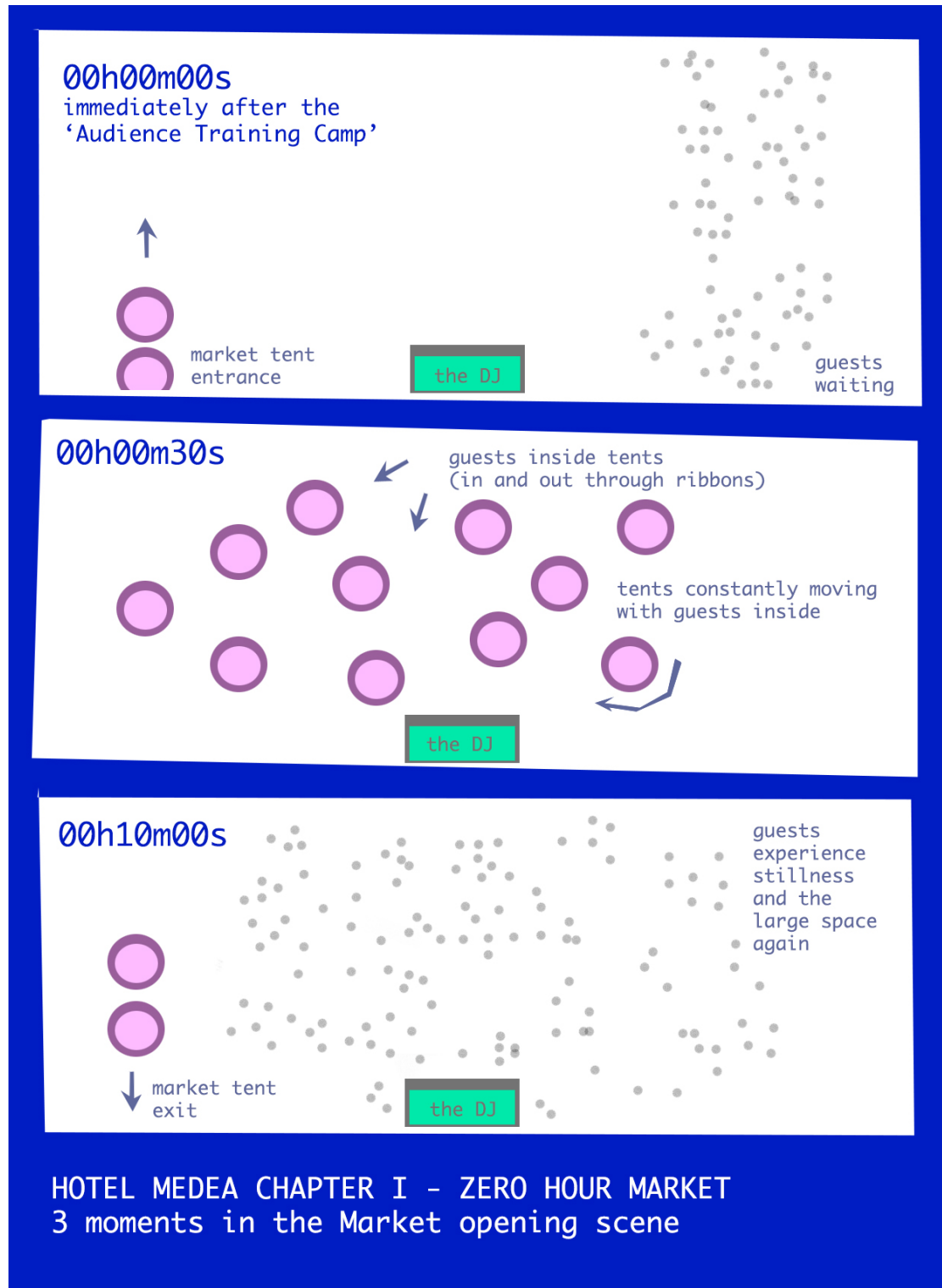
1. Me, James and Urias in centre start the steps with drum rhythms.
2. The captain is showing and allowing audiences to be led by him he tells audiences not to let Medea leave.
3. Cast start movement—side steps and small jumps.
4. Medea, Jason and Agileus fight for the Golden Fleece and Agileus leaves with Jason following. Medea tries to escape—audiences block her.

5. I go to cast member and we do the step to middle—we split and do the same to other cast members—all cast should be dancing and then go for audiences—make sure audiences look willing and happy. No grabbing people.
6. All cast focus on audience moving and dancing—use mirroring when appropriate. Do not force audiences. Invite. Always just invite and create space for them. Mirror their movements and start to change with them.

## A1.2 SCRIPT OF *HOTEL MEDEA*

[Version updated from Trinity Buoy Wharf, London, as part of the LIFT Festival, July–August 2010.]

### A1.2.1 Part I: *Zero Hour Market*



**Figure A1.** Ground plans for *Hotel Medea*. Author's compilation.

## **CAST**

THE CAPTAIN

THE MAID

BORDER GUARDS

MARKET SELLERS

JASON

THE LIEUTENANT

THE ARGONAUTS

MEDEA

THE CLAN

AGILEUS (MEDEA's brother)

### **Part I: *Zero Hour Market***

#### ***Audience arrival***

*Audience enter and collect their tickets.*

*They are met by the CAPTAIN.*

*Music is playing in distance for them.*

*The audience are collected by the CAPTAIN and taken by boat across the Thames to Trinity Buoy Wharf. After they disembark they walk up a pier bridge and are met by the GUARDS. The GUARDS each have their own checkpoint which is named and marked by a cone and flag. The journey is designed to prepare the audience for Zero Hour Market. In this way it floats between being within the narrative and outside of it, blurring the line between 'arrival' and 'the start' and provoking the expectations about 'participatory' theatre.*

#### **POINT 1. This point is positioned at the entrance from the pier bridge.**

GUARD 1: Good evening. Welcome to Hotel Medea. (*Hand out programme*) As you may or may not be aware, there are parts of this performance where you will be invited to join in/participate. To prepare you for this, we have a few checkpoints set up where my colleagues will be getting you up to speed for the show. So, if you could please make your way over to the first checkpoint over there, my colleague will take you when she is ready. Enjoy the show!

*Audience are given the guidelines/**Golden Fleece Day programme** – see text below*

‘Bem Vindo!’ Welcome visitors to

**National Day of the Golden Fleece**

Enjoy cultural celebrations and local delicacies in honour of our Glorious Golden Fleece, and it’s guardian and protector, The Royal Princess Granddaughter of the Sun, Medea.

Please obey the following SECURITY MEASURES

- 1) Do not photograph the Fleece or any part of it’s location.
- 2) Do not loiter near the Fleece, keep always moving.
- 3) Do not bringing large bags or overcoat pockets into Market.
- 4) Do not put hands in pockets in the vicinity of the Fleece.
- 5) Do not wear clothing of inappropriate nature.
- 6) Please operate with Security Enforcement Personnel at all time.

Thank You.

Only official local product may be purchased at the Market using only our venerable Medea currency. (Removing currency from Market is an offensive.)

Possessing, purchasing or selling the Golden Fleece is Punishable, by Order of the Princess.

Enjoy your stay at the *Zero Hour Market*.

**POINT 2. This sign says ‘RITUAL MOVEMENT’.**

*Groups of 8–12 audience members at time are directed to this point.*

GUARD 2: Good Evening and welcome to Hotel Medea. If you could please make a circle here with me . . . thank you. There will be times during tonight’s performance when you’re invited to dance. I’m going to teach you a couple of

the steps we'll be doing so that you'll recognize them when they come up. The first step is called the Jongo: it starts with 3 steps to the left, (*now the GUARD starts to demonstrate as she talks*) one, two, three, and a little falls with your feet together, as if someone has pulled a rug out from under your feet. Now exactly the same on the right hand side. (repeat until audience members have got the hang of it) That's looking great. Now I'm going to pass you on to my colleague at the next checkpoint Thank you and have a good stay.

*For the first boat-load of people, if there is time, they will also be taken through one or two more of the steps from Zero Hour Market, e.g. ones used during the Enfrentamento.*

**POINT 3. This point has a sign saying 'SPEED SKILLS'.**

GUARD 3: Good Evening and welcome to Hotel Medea. There will be moments during the night when you will be required to move quickly across the space. I'm going to give you a little practise at that now to limber you up and see how fast you are. If you could please line up behind this line in the tarmac . . . and on my word GO move as fast as possible to where you see the next yellow cone. On your marks, get set, GO . . . 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (*until they all reach the next point*).

**POINT 4. This point has a sign saying 'PARTICIPATORY SINGING'.**

GUARD 4: During the performance there will be lots of music and some singing, and you should feel free to join in with this. I'm going to take you through a few of the song . . . will you repeat after me . . . O Ro MI Ma / Ey Jongero (etc.)

*The aims and atmosphere of this point are summarized as: encouraging people to sing along and allay any nerves about 'singing'.*

**POINT 5. This point has a sign saying SPONTANEOUS RHYMING.**

GUARD 5: Hello and welcome to Hotel Medea, now at a certain point in the performance there will be an opportunity for you, if you so wish, to rhyme spontaneously. So we're going to have a little practise and loosen those vocab muscles, OK? Can I have a volunteer from this side of the group . . . thank you,

and one from the other . . . thank you. OK, using only one word each, rhyming between you . . . that's great well done.

*(If there is time and willing)*

OK so now let's extend this to a few words, making a rhyme between you and keeping to the same rhythm . . . such as; 'there was a woman from Spain . . .' and you find the next line . . .

Many thanks everyone, very well done, please see my colleague.

**POINT 6. This point is situated at the Entrance to the Chain Store, where *Zero Hour Market* is to be performed.**

'Hi every body

Do you feel ready?

Ready to participate?

You feel enough confidence?

And are you ready to accept the power of the Golden Fleece?

During the show sometimes you need to keep your mobile with you on silent but please don't use it to record any thing.'

*After passing through this point the audience is given a stamp on their hand and they go through to the performance space. Within the performance space they pass through the cloakroom and the refreshments stand.*

*In the space, Flavio, Leandro and Thelma are engaging the waiting audience in the following actions: Flavio and Leandro ask audience members if they would like to have their photograph taken with a Medea half-mask on. The MAID shows them their picture with the mask on. The MAID asks questions regarding what the difference is for people to see themselves on with the mask.*

***The CAPTAIN announces the first act – Zero Hour Market***

*He warns the audience to make room in the centre of the space.*

***The CAPTAIN: Text . . .***

*The tents wait outside (weather permitting) and enter through the furthest set of double doors into the Chain Store.*

*The actors enter in a circular trajectory, calling out from their tents. The tents take up their positions which are in the space between the ARGONAUTS and the CLAN entrance platforms.*

***Music cue – DJ Dolores chimes track.***

*With each chime of the track the SELLERS go to a different one of their positions. After the twelfth chime, the TENT SELLERS begin moving through their positions and begin their calls.*

***GUARDS' action***

*The GUARDS are on the periphery of the space and as the market begins to wake up, they begin to patrol.*

***Three stances for BORDER GUARDS***

- 1. Arms behind back with palms and thumbs interlinked.*
- 2. Arms folded across the top of the chest with left hand underneath right upper arm and right hand over the top of the left upper arm.*
- 3. Thumbs in belt/holster (cowboy style) with elbows out facing left and right accordingly.*

*They enter the tents periodically, looking around, shining torches, checking the vendor and the vendor's products.*

*If they suspect illegal activity they can empty the tent of people/ frisk the vendor/ give a gestural warning.*

***Calling sequence for TENT SELLERS***

*The actors begin their calling sequence. A short phrase to attract audience and sell their product.*

*Actors begin to move and call/speak to audience to attract them into the tents. The actors continue to speak more intimately to individuals and small groups in their tents*



*while remaining in contact with the calling sequence that continues parallel to these personal interactions.*

*Essentially there are three focuses of attention:*

- 1. Contact inside of the tents.*
- 2. Contact just outside of the tents.*
- 3. Contact with the ensemble.*

### ***TENT SELLERS' action***

*Five positions of selling/five positions of contrabandista (the fleece)*

*The selling actions are expansive, open. The contrabandista are contracted, contorted and hidden.*

*When interacting with the GUARDS – there is a sudden switch, the SELLERS acknowledge them by switching back to selling suddenly. They conceal what they have been doing. The tents have internal lighting systems which can be changed by the performer from warm to cold depending on whether they are selling the product or the fleece.*

*JASON and the LIEUTENANT are waiting in the car outside.*

*MEDEA is hidden.*

### ***ACT 1: THE MARKET***

***Context for the Market Trinity Buoy Wharf, London.***

*It is the Day of the Golden Fleece*

*The Golden Fleece is placed on a plinth in the performance space*

*The MARKET SELLERS work in relationship with the GUARDS.*

*There are two levels going on:*

- 1. That the MARKET SELLERS are in some way EVANGELICAL in their mannerisms and gestures and voice. This is based on research of evangelical religion and fanatics in Brazil. They sell simple, metaphorical objects – mirrors, salt, water, a single match all of which are used within the SELLER's pitches to provoke thought and get discussions going about life, death and desire.*

2. *An objective of the SELLERS is to sell contra-band parts of the Golden Fleece. So the SELLERS have one normal object to sell and a part of the Golden Fleece disguised in tin foil looking like a wrap of drugs. They try selling the sample of the Golden Fleece to the audience but always find a reason not to sell it or are stopped by the GUARDS. The GUARDS move the audience out of tents to all audience members flowing and circulating around the market from tent to tent. The GUARDS ask audience if they see or hear anyone trying to sell samples of the Golden Fleece to report to them immediately.*

**SELLERS:** *Four-point structure for improvisation:*

1. *A parable (tongue-in-cheek).*
2. *A product e.g. bread, mirror, matches (fire) or a used match.*
3. *The product is used as an opener to facilitate profound questions to the audience. Example questions are: 'What is the most important thing in your life?' and 'What do you most desire in life?'. The answers to these questions would open up challenges from the SELLERS such as 'Your health is more important than your family?'*
4. *Referencing the contraband (Fleece) as something that has special powers – i.e. making all your dreams come true.*

## **INDIVIDUAL TENT IMPROVISATION TEXTS**

### **Tent No. 4 – Flavio**

Qual a coisa mais estranha que você já fez em sua vida? Qual a coisa mais estranha você já fez por amor? Você se acha uma pessoa estranha? Você está pronto para ver? E para ser visto? É preciso ter coragem para se revelar, para ver e ser visto. Está escrito na palavra que 'Ele' está voltando e, quando 'Ele' chegar, apenas os que tiveram coragem de se revelar serão salvos. Os demais queimarão no fogo frio da eternidade. REVELE-SE! Hoje, o dia Internacional do Golden Fleece, é a oportunidade de salvação, REVELE-SE! Esteja pronto para ver e para ser visto. Objeto: Tenho em minha mãos, este espelho miraculoso. uma herança de minha bisavó – que ganhou o espelho diretamente de Medéia. Este objeto não é um espelho qualquer; ele pode revelar o que se normalmente quer esconder; ele mostra o que estava escondido no invisível: seus piores desejos; seus sonhos mais absurdos, suas frustrações mais vergonhosas e tudo que há de estranho em você e que você se esforça tanto para não ver. Você está

pronto para ver? Golden Fleece: junto com o espelho, minha bisavó ganhou um pedaço do Golden diretamente de Médeia. Alguém quer? Nem todos estão preparados para o poder do Golden. O que você pode oferecer em troca do Golden Fleece? Não estamos mais falando de dinheiro . . . É preciso agir. Para se ter o Golden, mesmo que um pequeno pedaço, um grande sacrifício precisa ser oferecido em troca.

**Leandro's Tent** – Produto: Sonífero

Você tem dormido bem?

O que tem tirado teu sono?

O que tem te incomodado?

Como posso lhe ajudar?

Como posso lhe ajudar nesse momento?

Há algo que eu possa fazer por você nesse exato momento?

Eu sei o que pode lhe ajudar. O caminho, o caminho do Tosão de Ouro. Que está escrito aqui, basta seguir a palavra e venerar o tosão.

Você sabe o que é o Tosão de Ouro.

Vou contar uma história que vai te ajudar a entender um pouco mais sobre o tosão de Ouro.

Há muito tempo havia um Rei, que era muito poderoso, pois possuía o Tosão de Ouro. Um dia esse rei foi chamado pelo Rei vizinho para uma reunião para unificar as nações. Mas um dia antes da reunião, o Rei caiu do cavalo e quebrou a perna. Então o irmão do Rei ficou revoltado, dizendo que o Tosão havia perdido o poder, que não protegia mais o Rei, que o reino cairia em desgraça se ninguém fosse para reunião. Ele blasfemou o tosão de Ouro, duvidou do poder do tosão. E então foi pra Reunião sozinho. Chegando lá, era uma emboscada, ele foi morto, decapitado, exposto em praça pública, tudo porque duvidou do poder do Tosão de Ouro.

Você entende agora o que é o Tosão de Ouro.

Você acredita no Tosão? Todo mundo levanta a mão e repete comigo.

‘Eu prometo, venerar o Tosão de Ouro de Corpo, Alma e espírito, ser fiel à ele e ser estar disposto a servi-lo à qualquer custo’.

Mas agora eu tenho aqui uma coisa muito especial, uma herança de família guardada a sete chaves. Um pedaço do Tosão de Ouro. Com esse material você pode desafiar a vida e a morte, realizar todos os seus desejos.

Qual seu maior desejo? Que desejo você gostaria de ter realizado?

O que você daria em troca para ter todos os seus desejos realizados? Tem que ser algo precioso. Fechem os olhos e pense na coisa mais preciosa que você possui. Agora abra os olhos. O que é? E você daria em troca do Tosão do Ouro? e Você?

### **Robson's Tent**

Eu vi. (chamado) Eu vi e vejo na palavra que é luz. Luz que conduz para a luz.

No dia santo do Gonden Fleece estajais prontos para ouvir a palavra que é luz, pois todo aquele que não estiver pronto para ouvir a palavra seja como o joio que será separado do trigo e devastado a ferro e fogo pois de nada vale.

E a palavra é luz mais também é sal. O sal que dá sabor à vida.

– O que dá sabor à sua vida?

– O que você busca na sua vida?

– Qual a coisa mais importante pra você?

Pois quem tiver ouvido ouça, a palavra que é a verdade mais também a luz. Luz para a luz.

### **Irlane's Tent**

Ações na tenda: Irlane Rocha

1. Pregão
2. Oferecer a semente
3. Fazer perguntas
4. Parábola (usar o livro)
5. Falar do toão
6. Oferece o toão
7. Voltar às perguntas

Perguntas:

Você já plantou

Quantas vezes você plantou e quantas vezes você conseguiu colher

O que você deseja colher

Você tem boa terra pra plantar  
Você já morreu  
Qual a coisa mais importante da sua vida  
Diga-me uma coisa que você jamais teria coragem de fazer

### **Tent Urias**

Como e o seu coração, pesado e negro como uma pequena pedra ou leve como uma pluma? Do que voce tem medo, do peso ou da leveza profunda? Voce tem inimigos? Precisa proteger-se, cuidado .eu tenho o escudo de prote;ao que voce precisa, que tornara seu cora;ao leve como uma pluma e resistente como a pedra. Eu possuo o tosaio de ouro. Com ele em seu poder voce pode tudo, consegue tudo que quer, ate mesmo ser feliz.

### **Tent Raquel**

Palito de fósforo, fósforo, palito. O amor é o fogo que arde sem se ver é ferida nos olhos de quem sente.

Palito, fogo, fósforo. É o estar se preso por vontade é servir a quem vence o vencedor. I can see your life more clearly. é ferida que desatina sem doer

O que falta na sua vida para ela ser ideal??? É um ter com quem nos mata lealdade, tão contrario a si é o mesmo amor

eu vendo palito de fosforo, fosforo, palito de fósforo eu vendo, O ideal traz felicidade? I can see your life more clearly

### ***ACT 2A: THE ENTRANCE OF JASON***

*The CAPTAIN prepares for the arrival of JASON and the ARGONAUTS.*

*The ARGONAUTS in tents have to leave to get ready*

THE CAPTAIN:                      La vem Jasao. We are being invaded!

*The CAPTAIN removes people from the tents and gets the audience to go to the sides of the space opposite each other and adjacent to the entrance of the ARGONAUTS entrance. Tents moved to the side of the space and actors came out of them.*

**Lighting cue** – *when the tents are out of view the actors turn off all their lights immediately.*

*The ARGONAUTS and the CLAN change quickly to get to their positions for the start of Act 2B – JASON's arrival.*

*The CAPTAIN checks that everyone is ready for Act 2B.*

*The CAPTAIN arranges the audience in two groups opposite each other and at 90 degree right angles from the end of the space where the ARGONAUTS and the CLAN enter.*

*The CAPTAIN formally announces the opening of Act 2B.*

**THE CAPTAIN:** Act 2B: The arrival of JASON and the ARGONAUTS!

## **ACT 2A: ARRIVAL OF JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS**

### **Music cue.**

*The ARGONAUTS enter. They are topless. They wear motorcycle helmets and boots and carry a weapon which has LED lights or torches attached so as to be used as self lighting. They move using the **Indian step (India de boi da baixada – The Indian of the lowlands)** two rounds per step, with their eyes looking always straight ahead. Their trajectories are always straight lines with 90 degree turns, creating a grid within their performance space. They have 6 specific positions of attack, each that also adhere to the straight lines of the grid within the body position.*

*The LIEUTENANT and JASON enter in the car. The LIEUTENANT exits car and opens the door for JASON. JASON walks in straight lines in front of the ARGONAUTS and the LIEUTENANT follows taking up position behind JASON holding a torch that scans the space.*

*JASON enters with the ARGONAUTS.*

*The ARGONAUTS' entrance is always choreographed according to the space, but will adhere to the ARGO principles. Straight lines only, gaze focused directly in front. Opening out peripheral vision. JASON stands in the middle of the line of ARGONAUTS and slightly ahead of them, making the point of the 'V'. JASON gives an impulse to his*

*First of six positions – which is a signal for the music to stop and for the ARGONAUTS to stop the step.*

JASON: Who's in charge of this fucking shithole?

*JASON gives impulse to second of six positions which is impulse for all the ARGONAUTS to move to their first of six positions.  
They hold this position.*

CAPTAIN: The entrance of MEDEA and the CLAN.

***The entrance of the CLAN.***

***Music: Marakatu. Step – Bayana Velha (old woman from Bahia).***

*MEDEA enters as the Queen of the Marakatu, with the MAID waiting at the side.  
She steps up to the platform. MEDEA is wearing a long train that the CLAN holds. They dance their choreography.*

*When the dance finishes they walk past each other – eyeing each other.  
At the end of MEDEA and her CLAN's entrance sequence the ARGONAUT's snap back into their position of readiness.*

MEDEA: Entao.

***As she says so they both snap into a position.***

MEDEA: Voce que e Jasao?

JASON: What? I don't understand you, speak English! Speak English!

CAPTAIN: Excuse me. Princesa, posso traduzir? I provide translation service very cheap. I accept VISA, Mastercard, . . .

JASON: OK.

MEDEA: Voce que e Jasao?

CAPTAIN: So you are the Jason?

MEDEA: E esses sao seus Argonautas?

CAPTAIN: And these are your Argonauts?

JASON: And you are?

CAPTAIN: Are you crazy my friend you don't ask who she is, she is the Princess.

MEDEA: Eu so Medea, Princesa desta terra .O que vea quer?

CAPTAIN: I'm Medea, Princess of this land. What do you want?

JASON: I've come for the Golden Fleece. Will someone get it for me?

CAPTAIN: [*Translates.*]

MEDEA: Obviamente voce nao entende o que e o Golden Fleece.

CAPTAIN: Obviously you don't understand what the Golden Fleece is.

*MEDEA walks past JASON.*

*JASON follows her bum with his eyes.*

JASON: I didn't come to understand it, I came to take it.

*JASON slaps MEDEA's bum. MEDEA reaches for a weapon from the CLAN and lunges towards JASON's neck.*

MEDEA: Nao, funciona assim jasao, o torzao nao pode ser levado a forca, alem do mais eu sou a guardia do fleece.

CAPTAIN: It doesn't work like that. The fleece cannot be taken by force, and anyway I am the guardian of the fleece.

JASON: Well Medea, I won't leave without it.

CAPTAIN: [*Translates*] Eu nao vou embora sem torzao.

MEDEA: Tenta.

CAPTAIN: Try it.

JASON: Fine.

*The CAPTAIN announces the arrival of AGILEUS.*

CAPTAIN: The entrance of AGILEUS, the brother of MEDEA.

**MUSIC CUE.** *AGILEUS enters in the movement of the warrior orixas – Ogun and Shango.*

*AGILEUS goes towards JASON.*

AGILEUS: Entao, voce e Jasao eu pensava que voce fosse un poco mais alto



JASON: What? Speak English. Eh? What you saying?

*AGILEUS provoking JASON, mimicking him.*

LIEUTENANT: He's taking the piss out of you Jay!

JASON: Stop taking the piss

*JASON swings his bat back as if to hit AGILEUS who is pointing his wooden knife at JASON. The CAPTAIN intervenes.*

CAPTAIN: So you want to fight, you want the war, fight like a man – we bring you the real war . . . *(brings out the ball first)* Footeballe!

*The CAPTAIN blows his whistle – collects the ball on a stick and starts to make ritualized movements with the ball as the two teams get into their positions to start the game. All the CLAN and ARGONAUTS involved in building goals out of the 9 platforms. The ARGONAUTS move from their entrance positions to the football positions using the principles of The Grid training – no curves, straight lines and sharp turns, no diagonals etc.*

*JASON takes off his helmet and passes his helmet and baseball bat to members of the audience. MEDEA takes off her head-dress and passes it to the MAID.*

*The CAPTAIN calls JASON and MEDEA to the centre – flips an imaginary coin and calls heads or tails –MEDEA wins.*

*The CLAN win the kick off –MEDEA gives her hand to shake JASON's, he goes to kiss her hand she pulls her hand away.*

*They go to their positions as coaches to the sides where the audiences are slightly in front of the two split sets of audience. The LIEUTENANT stands next to JASON goaded and coaching the team too. (The MAID can act as an aggressive Team Coach reflecting the later swearing at JASON in Info Rev.)*

## **FOOTBALL**

*ARGONAUTS use the grid formation to re-configure into their football positions.*

*The CLAN moves with capoeira-like movements i.e. close the ground but not Ginga.*

*The ARGONAUTS stay fixed in their formation (2, 3, 1) apart from a few steps forward and back.*

*They kick from the knee and can head the ball.*

*Dubious goal – the CLAN.*

*Foul on the ARGONAUTS – putting a knife to an ARGONAUT's neck.*

*Penalty – moment where the CLAN protest about the penalty, and make a wall the CAPTAIN says penalties don't have a wall and reaches for the gun that he has stolen from JASON – Leandro starts the Diving – All the CLAN and JASON and MEDEA meet in the centre of the space. They discuss whose team is at fault.*

*JASON forcefully kisses MEDEA to shut her up.*

## **RESERVOIR DOGS**

*The CAPTAIN blows his whistle.*

*Actors react to this kissing, get up from the floor and move into the **Reservoir Dogs preparation position**. The cast get into place by circling MEDEA and JASON with a ninja run: centre low to the ground; fast and silent; placing 4 points of foot in each step and stopping together as the kiss finishes. MEDEA goes to slap JASON and everybody snaps into the full **Reservoir Dogs position**.*

*This time with the weapons focused on both MEDEA and JASON and a CLAN or ARGONAUT respectively. Weapons and gaze to be directed at different points.*

*All the CLAN are released. MEDEA and AGILEUS leave their positions. MEDEA leaves her shoe on the floor in front of JASON. MEDEA has cast a spell and all the ARGONAUTS are frozen. She has to take off her shoe and leave it for JASON to find.*

*MEDEA TEXT from Avesta-o-Zand (or Zand-i-Avesta).*

*MEDEA reciting her text moves out of the circle formed, pushing and reconfiguring the ARGONAUTS weapons to face the floor as she leaves.*

*Simultaneous to this each audience member gets a Medea mask and they get the instruction to raise one arm. The CLAN and the MAID hand the masks out and give*

*instructions to audience. A beat is played by the DJ until all audience members have their masks and their arms raised.*

*The CAPTAIN blows his whistle and JASON and the ARGONAUTS are unfrozen they continue their line of action with the weapons for a beat and then turn to face the audience. JASON discovers the shoe and picks it up holding it above his head.*

## **THE MISSING SHOE**

*JASON and the ARGONAUTS take a moment to look at the audience.*

JASON: Which of you here is Medea?

Oh, you think this is a joke?

Do you know who I am?

Anyone here found not to be Medea will not be laughing any longer.

*JASON then instructs the ARGONAUTS to look for MEDEA – the ARGONAUTS retain their step and grid.*

JASON: Argonauts! Find her!

- 1. The ARGONAUTS fetch platforms to create a sort of gallows in the middle with two sets of steps for audience to walk up on*
- 2. The ARGONAUTS look in the crowd of audience for the men only.*
- 3. The ARGONAUTS separate the male and female audience to different sides of the room.*

*They move the men and women into two facing lines enabling them to view each other through the masks all wearing Medea's face.*

CAPTAIN TEXT to JASON . . . *find her Jasoa . . . look it's Medea Jasao . . . goading him etc.*

JASON: Move it.

Find her.

She's here somewhere.

I'll find her  
Bring her to me.

*The ARGONAUTS bring out one audience member at a time and bring them to JASON and the LIEUTENANT who are on top of the platforms. The ARGONAUTS organize themselves so that someone is always looking for audience members who have shoes that are easy to undo. They are identified by the ARGONAUTS raising one arm straight up in the air. The audience is then taken to JASON using the grid formation. The LIEUTENANT kneels and audience place their foot on the bended knee, the other ARGO supports the audience member on their opposite side. Take the mask and support audience member.*

*JASON then tries MEDEA's shoe on several of the men in the audience. No more than three. All other ARGONAUTS place themselves around the audience member framing the scene.*

JASON: This is not Medea.

*(Giving a reason for each person – improvised with the audience member.)*

*JASON calls forward one of the BULLS (AGILEUS) with a Medea mask.  
He tries on the shoe, JASON sends him back.*

JASON: That's not Medea her toes are far too long.

AGILEUS: Bota pra cima que eu quero ver.

*AGILEUS wearing the bull's head charges at JASON.*

### **ACT 3: ENFRETEMENTO**

*The CAPTAIN jumps on the platform and introduces this act.*

CAPTAIN: Act 3: The Enfrentemento.

- 1. The ARGONAUTS remove platforms and all actors create a circle with the platforms.*

2. *The CLAN collect up the masks.*
3. *The audience with the help of the actors create a roda around JASON and the AGILEUS. The encircling platforms are turned on their sides to create a ring.*

*The ARGONAUTS use the actions of the **casique** and the BULLS the actions of the boi on the outside of the roda integrated with the audience.*

*The ARGONAUTS follow one ARGONAUT who is leading the step – they will signal a change of step by lifting their weapon. The ARGONAUTS are also responsible for balancing the roda – the ARGONAUTS must be evenly spaced around the roda adapting to any changes.*

*The BULLS and the ARGONAUTS ‘buy’ the game and ‘fight’ in the roda.*

*JASON keeps on falling over and the ARGONAUTS have to continually rescue him. The LIEUTENANT calls to JASON to encouraging him to fight well (like a boxing coach).*

*Capitao stops play and they decide he should start off with an easy BULL and so they bring out the BOI VELHIO (OLD BULL) which is MEDEA.*

JASON: Show me some respect. I’m much better than that.

*MEDEA then enters as the OLD BULL and a fight ensues with MEDEA and JASON.*

*At first she plays to the idea of the OLD BULL but then her bull cloth is removed to reveal it is Medea as a bull and she overpowers JASON. This builds to a climax where MEDEA is in a position to win the fight. They go against one of the upturned platforms. But JASON stabs the OLD BULL in the head through the star with a dagger which has a red light. JASON and the LIEUTENANT celebrate aggressively directly to the audience but also including the CLAN and the ARGONAUTS.*

JASON: Come on!! Who’s the fucking winner now eh! Come on, let’s hear it then! What do you want eh! Who’s the winner then, let’s have it!

*MEDEA stumbles backwards to the centre of the space and Age removes her bull head-dress. She is slumped in AGILEUS’ arms. MEDEA has died.*

*JASON goes to the audience to ask them for a doctor. He doesn't believe that their archaic methods will help and is desperate. The LIEUTENANT tries to calm JASON down*

JASON: Medea.

Somebody get a doctor. Call a doctor

Help her. Somebody help her.

Don't just sing. (NB Add more about mumbo/jumbo voodoo stuff here)

Call an ambulance. Get her some water.

How was I supposed to know? That wasn't fair!!!

## RESURRECTION

*The start of the resurrection of MEDEA.*

*MEDEA is taken over the shoulder in the arms of AGILEUS or JASON until two circles are formed around MEDEA. AGILEUS and the CLAN rotate anti-clockwise with the Cazumba movement, while the ARGONAUTS rotate clockwise using the **Caboklo** movements. The CLAN and MEDEA in the centre. The ARGONAUTS making a larger circle around them. JASON freely moves in and out of the action sometimes going into audience continuing his text and calling for the music to be stopped. The LIEUTENANT continues his pursuit of JASON trying to calm him down.*

*The CAPTAIN leads the cast in singing whilst they rotate and gradually pick up speed:*

O meu boi morreu

Que sera de mim

Manda buscar outra mininha

La no piaui

*This song is repeated until a music cue when the ARGONAUTS' step changes and the CAPTAIN changes the call to Hey Boi!, the cast responding Hey! increases the pace of the circle.*

*MEDEA is resurrected and starts to move dynamically within the circle. JASON tries to catch MEDEA – it gets quite aggressive in the roda with the CLAN and JASON fighting over MEDEA. JASON keeps trying to get to MEDEA. Finally he grabs her and the music stops. JASON then tries the shoe on MEDEA's foot. It fits.*

*JASON kneels, and the ARGONAUTS also kneel.  
He asks MEDEA to marry him.*

JASON: I'm asking for your forgiveness. Marry me.

CAPTAIN: [*Translates.*]

*MEDEA steps towards him, seemingly lovingly.*

MEDEA: Nao Jason. Nunca.

*JASON is angry and humiliated and is aggressive. He looks at the CAPTAIN.*

CAPTAIN: Never mind Jason – I am sorry but you have to leave now.

## **EROS AND THE ARROW**

*The CAPTAIN approaches JASON and tells him he has to leave.*

CAPTAIN: Sorry my friend it's time to go.

JASON: I'm not going anywhere.

CAPTAIN: Come, trust me. With this arrow I can get any wife you want. (*To audience*)

What about this one? Nice bum, nice smile.

JASON: No. I want her (*points to MEDEA*).

CAPTAIN: And this one? Pretty hair, smells nice?

JASON: I want the princess.

CAPTAIN: But she is very expensive.

JASON: I'll pay.

CAPTAIN: No return and no refund policy.

JASON: I don't care.

*They shake hands. (During this exchange Flavio gives MEDEA an arrow to put into her costume.)*

CAPTAIN: Desculpe Medea, mas o cara ta pagando.

MEDEA: [*Protests.*]

*The CAPTAIN fires at MEDEA. Taking some space to go back for the arrow to have a distance.*

*MEDEA 'Isadora' action.*

*MEDEA is torn between not wanting to fall in love with JASON and desperately desiring him. She orders people to pull the arrow out, slaps the CAPTAIN.*

MEDEA: Nao Capita nao. Aaaaieee. Ah que forte. Por favor protege o torzao. Voces nao podem confia em me agora. Tira isso coisa. Por favor me ajuda por favor. Tira . . . tira . . . eu sou princesa

*She calls out to people to protect the fleece telling them they will not be able to trust her any more. She allows JASON to approach her and then attacks him and pushes him away. When the shot fully takes hold JASON drags her out of sight where they consummate their love.*

*Whilst they are gone (MEDEA takes her skirts/beads/knickers off) and the CAPTAIN plays with audience. He starts by asking 'anyone else looking for a wifey?' and then he approaches audience trying to sell his magic love arrow.*

*JASON enters followed by MEDEA, dishevelled and panting as if recovering from wild sex. AGUILEAS enters. They stand staring at each other in a triangle. It is a spaghetti western moment referenced in the music.*

*AGILEUS goes towards MEDEA and sniffs around the crotch area of her dress, then returns to his point of the triangle. They share looks. MEDEA makes a movement, first in the direction of AGILEUS then over to JASON who holds her hand and protects her.*



*AGILEUS goes towards them, he reaches for something, is it a knife? No it is his bottle. He thrusts the bottle into JASON's chest.*

*JASON, MEDEA and AGILEUS swig from the bottle.*  
*The CAPTAIN announces the next act.*

CAPTAIN: Act four . . .  
AGILEUS: Casamento!

*JASON speaks to the audience boasting about the fact that he has won MEDEA.*

JASON: See what I've pulled. Look at the result I got, I've scored and she is a princess!!!

#### **ACT 4: WEDDING**

*The ARGONAUTS and the CLAN start to reorganize the space.*  
*As JASON comes towards MEDEA eagerly as if wanting to kiss her they are separated.*

*The wedding preparation curtain is pulled, to separate the male audience and the female audience and divides the space in two. The men are guided by the female actors into JASON's side and the women into MEDEA's side by the male actors. The audience are encouraged to form a circle around either JASON or MEDEA. They are welcomed to partake in the song and movement of the ritual preparations.*

*Actors prepare themselves and the space. The ARGONAUTS put down their weapons and pull up their tops. A mat is laid out and bowls are prepared with towels, water, make-up, paints and jewellery. The following action happens whilst the ARGONAUTS and the CLAN lead the audience in singing **Oxum**:*

Oro mi ma  
Oro mi maho  
Oro mi maho  
Ya ba do ora  
Ye Ye O

*The song is led by AGILEUS, and accompanies a Mina movement for the rodas around JASON and MEDEA.*

*JASON stands on the mat. And the ARGONAUTS invite the audience to participate in:*

- 1. Undressing*
- 2. Washing with wetted cloths (this in a specific, vigorous style demonstrated by the actors)*
- 3. Drying*
- 4. Putting on clothes*
- 5. Adorning the body with jewellery*
- 6. Tying of blindfold*

*MEDEA stands on the mat and the CLAN invite the audience to participate in:*

- 1. Undressing*
- 2. Washing with water and cloths*
- 3. Drying*
- 4. Oil the body*
- 5. Rubbing herbs over her hair*
- 6. Putting on clothes*
- 7. Putting on make-up*
- 8. Adorning the body with jewellery*
- 9. Putting on the veil*
- 10. Tying of blindfold*

*When both parties are ready the curtain is removed.*

*JASON and MEDEA are led to face each other.*

*JASON and MEDEA meet the CAPTAIN.*

## **BLINDFOLD CATCHING**

CAPTAIN: Jason do you love this women, do you want to marry her and . . .

JASON: 'Course I do, now get on with it.

CAPTAIN: Medea do you . . .

MEDEA: Sim.

CAPTAIN: OK, you can marry each other if you can find each other, ten steps backwards . . .

*MEDEA and JASON are blindfolded, spun around and sent into the audience to find each other. Rhythm: **Mina Corrida**. They approach and kiss/touch the audience in this search for one another. The audience are able to mingle and are not separated any more they are part of the game. The MAID passes around popcorn for audience to hold. When they find each other they remove the blindfolds and the popcorn is thrown by all like confetti.*

## **DESAFIO**

*The CAPTAIN announces the Desafio.*

*The CAPTAIN stations himself at one end of the space with JASON, MEDEA and AGILEUS.*

*A corridor is created in the space by the CLAN, the ARGONAUTS and audience splitting into two long lines, leading up to MEDEA, JASON, the LIEUTENANT and the CAPTAIN.*

*Instruments are distributed to audience along the line. A series of rhyming 'repentes' follows first from AGILEUS which is then opened up to anyone else. Either cast or public. Rhythm: **Coco**. There is an element of the fleece in some of the repente.*

*First phase of the repente: They start by describing why either JASON or MEDEA is the better catch. AGILEUS repente is always first.*

*JASON has his first repente in this phase:*

I'm beginning to understand the games you're playing

I see it's all about making the rhyme.

Medea there's no need for you to worry,

I'll take care of you because I'm in my prime.

*Eventually the LIEUTENANT also says his verse:*

I didn't prepare a speech

And I don't have a lot to say

Jason think of the Fleece  
Let's take it and be on our way.

*He is forced to dance by the CAPTAIN.*

JASON: Just do the dance and we'll go.

*The MAID's repente marks the turning point for the second phase of the Desafio in which the repentes turn on either JASON or MEDEA.*

Two bodies hang from a dead tree  
A vulture pecks their eyes,  
I see A wounded wolf turns on her kin  
I hear screams, taste blood. smell burning skin.

*Third phase of the repente: dark predictions and warnings of the future.  
These should be referring to the impending massacre, NOT to the eventual killing of the children. (This is because Zero Hour Market can stand alone as an independent piece.)*

*JASON ends the Desafio:*

This party is beginning to turn and I don't like your attitudes,  
In fact I think some of you are being far too rude,  
But, thank you for the party and the celebrations,  
And now my wife and I and the Golden Fleece are leaving for another destination.

### **JASON AND MEDEA TRY TO LEAVE**

*JASON and MEDEA try to leave but are stopped by the CAPTAIN.*

CAPTAIN: So por cima do meu cadaver! The fleece stays here! Don't let them out. It belongs here in East London!

### **ACT 5: MASSACRE**

## *JONGO DANCE RODA*

*As JASON and MEDEA try to leave a roda is formed by all other cast and audience and they establish the steps of the **Jongo**.*

*During the Jongo, AGILEUS swings at JASON with the Golden Fleece, and then breaks through the roda, with JASON pursuing him.*

*{Lighting note: AGILEUS turns on light inside the Golden Fleece off stage.}*

*MEDEA is left inside the roda still trying to leave – the actors stop her by bringing her back to the centre of the roda in the **Jongo** step, until MEDEA pulls in two actors who then collect two others. The actors then expand the **Jongo** to include bringing the audience into the roda. Everyone is eventually included, so disintegrating the roda and creating more of a party dance-floor formation.*

## **PARTY**

*The music fades and mixes into a pre-recorded party track.*

*The audience are encouraged to join in this party. In this moment the actors dance with the audience reflecting/mirroring their movements of the audience and taking them to extremes.*

*The CLAN and the ARGONAUTS aim to break the roda formation, and focus the audience on dancing. To do this they concentrate on dancing at the edges of the space, and maintain distance from each other. The dancing has a dark, frenetic, clubby quality.*

*JASON, the LIEUTENANT, MEDEA and AGILEUS weave through the audience, searching, trying to get the Golden Fleece. The audience see fragments of action – escapes, confrontation, etc.*

*The CAPTAIN lights fragments with a big torch.*

*{During the party MEDEA also exits to put blood capsules in her mouth and the knife in her dress.}*

## THE FINAL MASSACRE

*Once the party is established, the Massacre begins, happening simultaneously within The Party. MEDEA hunts down the CLAN through the dancing and gives them each a poisoned kiss. During this kiss blood is transferred from her mouth to their' [mouth]. She is lit by a strong single beam from the CAPTAIN's torch. After being kissed, the CLAN begin their dying scores, with jerky movements and choking, ending up in a pile of bodies in the centre of the dance floor. Their limbs are at awkward angles, and their bodies twitching. This is the cue for a music and lighting change, and the Party ends. Up until this point, the ARGONAUTS should still be engaging the audience in the 'social dancing'.*

*AGILEUS staggers in, having seen the CLAN already killed by their kisses with MEDEA. MEDEA gives him a final kiss and after staggering round the CLAN, he drops dead in position for MEDEA's exit.*

*MEDEA tries to take the fleece from his hand but he does not relinquish it. AGILEUS holds the fleece with the top handle up. When he does not let go she cuts off his hand.*

*MEDEA looks at what she has done.*

JASON: Pass it here, quickly!

*MEDEA turns to face JASON, the LIEUTENANT and the MAID who are at an exit.*

*MEDEA passes the Golden Fleece to JASON, who opens it, and the golden/orange warm light shines on his face, he looks in the fleece, looks to MEDEA, shuts the fleece and takes MEDEA's hand as if to go, MEDEA turns to the ARGONAUTS.*

MEDEA: Leva ele. Leva ele.

*MEDEA, JASON and the MAID leave. The LIEUTENANT stands by the exit. The ARGONAUTS place AGILEUS into a trunk and wheel the trunk out of the space in the same direction as MEDEA, JASON and the MAID. The LIEUTENANT is the last to leave and shuts the door.*

CAPTAIN: DE END . . . Thank you for coming. There are refreshments in the corner, those who will stay with us please collect tickets, bathrooms to your right etc.

**THE END**

**15 min interval with refreshments.**

**PART II and PART III to follow.**

\* \* \*

## **A1.2.2 Part II: Drylands**

### **CAST**

MEDEA

JASON

THE MAID

[ALL] MAIDS (all in white, with scarves)

MUSIC OPERATOR/ MUSICIAN/ MAID

CAMPAIGN MANAGER

MALE CHORUS (CAMPAIGN TEAM/ FILM CREW/ INTERNATIONAL PRESS)

### **SET (4 spaces)**

#### **Space 1:**

*Also known as MEDEA's bedroom.*

*A room with a large bed/stage and 12 bunk-beds in a horse-shoe shape around the room (which will be later rearranged for Feast of Dawn), chairs/stools, piano, a projection screen/wall behind MEDEA's bed/stage, several CCTV cameras to observe the main space, which also serves for Feast of Dawn (including Club Exile and Shrine). The floor is strewn with teddies. MEDEA's bed is against the longest wall in the middle, the guests are around MEDEA's bed. The MAID's chair is distinct and directly faces MEDEA.*

#### **Space 2 (within Space 1):**

*Also known as the children's bedroom.*

*The children's bunk-beds are around the guests in a semi-circle. Children lying down on their bunk-beds are facing inwards. Each MAID is sitting between a pair of bunk-beds with two or four 'audience as children' each.*

#### **Space 3:**

*JASON's campaigning area in three parts.*

*Campaign room with chairs, TV screens, laptops, printers, projectors, headphones, questionnaires and pens, wall with newspaper articles about different subjects as education, immigration, etc., JASON's campaign room/offices, the MALE CHORUS stay in this space except for entering as INTERNATIONAL PRESS. The audience are*



*ostensibly the campaigners for JASON and they watch the action through the TV screens and projections during Drylands.*

#### **Space 4:**

*Corridor where audience line up to meet JASON, which leads up to photo-shoot room where audience have their photo taken with JASON in front of the banner of 'Vote Jason'.*

*{The turnaround in between rotations needs to be accounted for.}*

### **1. COLLECTION OF THE AUDIENCE DIVIDED INTO THREE (HAPPENS ONCE)**

*(Interacting with up to  $20 \cdot 3 = 60$  audience members.)*

*The MAID's audience – guests of MEDEA's bedroom.*

*[ALL] MAIDS' audience – the children.*

*The MALE CHORUS' audience – the campaigners.*

*[ALL] MAIDS enter and take two or four children each to Space 1 to their bunks. [ALL] MAIDS should enter with attention to keeping the energy and rhythm of [ALL] MAIDS from training.*

*The MALE CHORUS enters and creates a line of half the remaining audience.*

*The MAID enters and takes the selected line away. They follow her to Space 1 where she seats them on the stools around MEDEA's bed.*

*The audience that remain follow the MC to the corridor.*

*The following is repeated three times:*

### **2. BEDTIME**

*[1] CHILDREN:*

*The audience are taken to their bunk-beds and they put pyjamas over their clothes. They are put to bed and their feet and half their torso tucked under the blanket. They are*

*given their teddies, and offered a cup of hot chocolate. The hot chocolate is kept in the flask and mugs set on the high stool. The comic book is presented as a bedtime story.*

### ***The Bedtime Story:***

*The comic book shows MEDEA and JASON's journey across various territories, they see a king and offer him the Golden Fleece in exchange for his kingdom, he refuses, but MEDEA convinces his daughters to kill him saying she can bring him back to life younger and stronger than before – she demonstrates this ability on a goat, the sisters kill their father but he remains dead and JASON and MEDEA flee. We see MEDEA practicing her sorcery. MEDEA and JASON have a family. They go to JASON's land where he becomes a popular political figure gaining power, MEDEA is shown alone watching him on the TV. The final page shows MEDEA as she is now in Drylands, facing the clock turning the hands backwards.*

*Once the story is finished the audience must go to sleep – They are encouraged to sleep by stroking foreheads/hair and placing hands on shoulders/hands. [ALL] MAIDS are intuitive with each child and respond in a generous and kindly way whilst being quite firm about the fact that it's time to sleep. [ALL] MAIDS imagine their hands as big, warm and generous. Audience may want to look at the action on MEDEA's bed, however they should be encouraged to close their eyes and go back to sleep, so they receive the next scene only from listening in a sleepy state.*

*[2] The MAID brings in and seats witness/guest audience section around MEDEA's bed. She welcomes them. She asks questions and makes comments in order to make them think about their own experience of love, relationships, troubles that alludes to JASON's betrayal of MEDEA.*

### ***Structure of improvisation:***

- 1. Comments on appearance. Actions: rubbing in hand cream, combing hair.*
- 2. Asking for details of relationship: e.g. How did an old relationship end? What happened to him/her? Have you kissed someone you shouldn't have?*
- 3. Questions about being with someone, being married. Questions to find out how they think of love, e.g. How long does love last? What is true love? (MEDEA stands up.)*
- 4. A final deeper and more provocative questioning that leads MEDEA to shout 'Maid'*

*{Notes for the MAID: In the improvisation, keep all audience in mind and listen for what is happening – e.g. attention, inattention, talk and work to bring it all back into scene. Don't wait for answers. The questions and comments are more important. Go for specific details in follow-up questions. Keep body square to audience member and always maintain alignment of the body. Make clear definite changes of direction.}*

*[3] MALE CHORUS:*

*Audience are lined up in the corridor or holding room getting ready to meet JASON.*

CAMPAIGN MANAGER: Good evening everyone. The moment you have been waiting for is just around the corner. You will shortly be meeting Jason in the flesh. I know some of you maybe a little nervous, so we are going to do our best to relax. If everyone could close their eyes, take a deep breath in together, out, and relax, relax.

OK you can open.

You will be fortunate enough to shake Jason by the hand. Jason is a man who shakes hundreds of hands every week. Shake too firm, and you will be taking energy away from Jason. Too loose, and Jason will have to give extra energy in order to make the shake. Repeat that a few hundred times and you can imagine the unbalance that takes place. My colleagues are here to go through this with you. Simultaneously I will be moving along the line to check your appearance. You will be having your picture taken with Jason and it is important to get the right look. Please don't feel nervous, it's all for the good of the campaign.

*MALE CHORUS shake hands as CAMPAIGN MANAGER checks appearances. Once completed, the audience are lead into the photo-shoot room.*

*Photo session. Audience are lined up across the space where they will be called up either singly, in pairs or as a group as time dictates.*

CAMPAIGN MANAGER: Without further ado I would like to welcome your future leader, Jason! (*Applause and whoops.*)

*Enter JASON. (Possible photos: handshake and warm smile, old friends, funny remark, profound speech, JASON's thumbs up gesture, victory moment and power stance.)*

*Audience are led to campaign room.*

*They are seated and headphones are placed on them.*

- 1. Sweets are given to each audience member.*
- 2. Each audience member are given a 'Vote Jason' badge and pin it onto their clothes.*
- 3. Questionnaires are given out:*

*Vote Jason!*

*Name:*

*Age:*

*Occupation:*

*Email:*

- 1. What qualities do you think a politician should have?*
- 2. Do men and women vote differently? If yes, please say why.*
- 3. What does it mean to be a real man?*

*Become Jason's friend on Facebook, so write your Facebook name here or look for Jason Chiron.*

*Ten TV screens where the audience can see the action through several live-feed cameras – also camera on JASON getting ready before political public speeches and CCTV cameras attached to the beds of the children. As the audience arrive in the campaign room and put on headphones they hear the following discussions and view the campaign manager through the JasonCam.*

*The points below are potential areas of discussion between JASON and his CAMPAIGN MANAGER following the photo session. (This is improvised and JASON and the CAMPAIGN MANAGER relate directly to events and people they met in the photo session keeping the interaction specific to this time and place.)*

- 1. The success of the photo session.*

2. *The state of the current focus group: mix of ethnicities, ages, intelligence, class, style. Anyone considered dangerous who Security may have to keep watch over.*
3. *The state of the campaign. The healthy chance of victory, the nerves, and the change that will take place after we are elected.*
4. *Reassuring JASON on the importance of not worrying, taking rest and getting ready to give a strong performance tomorrow. We have top people taking care of everything to ensure victory.*

***The following text is a transitional text between the campaign on the outside as they come into MEDEA's room for the INTERNATIONAL PRESS scene (Space 1).***

CAMPAIGN MANAGER: 'J, did you get the email? This is you at home. Your family image is still a little uncertain, so home is last area we need to target. Our emphasis is on family. Relax, be open and casual. I know it's late but could we get some of the kids up and talking for the cameras? It's important to get Medea in the shot but please don't allow her to talk too much. We don't want her to say the wrong thing. I have told the team to start lightly and build, as they fire more questions at you there should be an escalation to a point where you forcefully send the cameras away. We want footage of you defending your home from the eyes of the press. *(Notices and removes blond hair on JASON's shoulder, whispers to JASON)* What the fuck is this J? You have got to be more careful. Remember what the acting coach said, breath, sense the floor and relax. Smile. And try and squeeze something in about immigration if you can.  
*(To the camera team)* OK Jason is ready.

***Home interview.*** *(It is possible to use any of the material from the above brief at the beginning of the scene.)*  
*(After the scene is rolling . . .)*

CAMPAIGN MANAGER: Hello Paul could you get editing on the line please? Thank you. Good evening, we've just started filming so the live stream should be coming through to you. Leandro has just taken some good shots of the children, let's keep those. And that's lovely stuff from Jason on immigration, keep it. OK camera is on Medea, some of that might be OK, but eliminate the speech . . . Paul could you have a word with security please . . . We have had a couple of

interruptions from the people at Jason's house. After tomorrow can we have them individually checked and remove any difficult ones. Especially the old girl . . . Flavio this is taking a little too long could you get Carlos to speed things along please? Yes, a little more, yes, yes . . . OK CUT!

JASON: Was that OK?

CAMPAIGN MANAGER: Good work everyone, let's move out. J, well done, perfect, we should be able to use that. If you need anything give me a call, otherwise I'll see you first thing. Try and get some rest. Ciao. (*Shakes JASON's hand.*)

***Post-interview talk with Flavio.***

CAMPAIGN MANAGER: Good work, tell Carlos well done we should be able to use that. Bring me the questions ASAP, I have to speak to the speech-writers later and any fresh information would be most useful. And Flavio keep an close eye on the cameras. There's only one day left and I don't want any slip ups.

*Preparation for tomorrow, the election results. Here again we move into improvised areas for the CAMPAIGN MANAGER to discuss as he is heard through the headphones in the campaign room.*

*Liaising with Paul, the CAMPAIGN MANAGER's personal assistant, go through tomorrow's schedule and be put in touch with the following departments:*

- 1. Catering: to arrange meals for JASON and giving advice on a local ethnic eatery for a lunchtime photo session.*
- 2. Camera Team: to ensure we have the right people and equipment for each shoot.*
- 3. Inner City Contact: to give advice on location of football match shoot with inner city kids.*
- 4. Wardrobe: to arrange swimwear for the pool, casual clothes for lunch, fatherly sportswear for the park, and smart suits for acceptance speech and party.*
- 5. Hair and Make-Up: to give hairstyle and facial.*
- 6. Entertainment: to finalize arrangements for the party, including surprise gift, music, chocolate fountains, women.*
- 7. Speech-Writers: to record and work on 'victory speech'. Including current slogan, 'New Leader, New Land'. The audience questionnaire responses can be used at this point to bring elements/phrases/emphasis to the tone and feel of the speech.*

8. *Marketing: to record any ideas from the questionnaires which could be used to publicize and develop JASON's image.*

*Schedule to be discussed with the above departments:*

1. *Morning:*

*Late rise, lie in is important as JASON is looking tired.*

*Morning swim, and steam room at hired out hotel swimming pool.*

*High-energy breakfast.*

*Barbers, for cut, colouring, facial and manicure if time allows.*

2. *Afternoon:*

*Photo session at ethnic eatery. Make a big show, JASON cooking, talking to the staff. (Ensure packed lunch also prepared for JASON if he doesn't like the food.)*

*Photo and video session in inner city area with local kids. Lots of different colours.*

*Suggestion of JASON being in goal letting in a penalty. See if we can hire some local professionals to give JASON a bit of kudos with sports fans. Important they pretend to be JASON's friend, pat him on the back etc.*

3. *Evening:*

*Victory party, including delivery of speech which needs to be prepared. Unveiling of surprise gift, a 10-foot stainless steel sculpture of JASON placed in the centre of the floor.*

### **3. MEDEA + THE MAID**

*MEDEA and the MAID in bedroom.*

*The MAID's chair is positioned towards the centre of MEDEA's bed and in between the guests half-circle of chairs.*

*MEDEA is sitting/kneeling on the bed turning back a projected clock on the wall. She has a towel on her head to dry her wet hair.*

*The MAID is still gossiping with the audience and massaging their hands.*

*{Notes for the MAID: important is to keep the rhythm, always do one thing at a time, e.g. don't move and brush hair at the same time.}*

*{Notes for [ALL] MAIDS: no knitting, listen to MEDEA and the MAID. Important is to comfort the children as much as possible. Connect to them. Make them feel like children. They are just listening to the scene. [ALL] MAIDS communicate with touch and breath what is going on in the scene between the MAID and MEDEA.}*

**MUSIC:** *Ay Sow played in a loop on piano.*

*The cue for stopping the projection of the clock is 'as MEDEA turns around'.*

MEDEA: Maid! (*Abruptly.*)

*The first in a series of impulses, from MEDEA's bed space to which the [ALL] MAIDS react to as a group. This calls attention to the action between the MAID and MEDEA and is a moment of suspense from what they are doing with the children.*

*The MAID comes over to her with a bottle of pills.*

THE MAID: Another one of your headaches?

*MEDEA violently knocks the pills out of her left hand.*

*Attention is held as the last of the pills stops rolling.*

*[ALL] MAIDS mirror the main MAID's action by suspending what they are doing, and they also watch for the pills to come to a stop. Following the MAID's rhythm they pick up the pills that are set under the beds.*

*As the MAID picks the pills up, she pauses in her action as each question is asked as if caught out.*

MEDEA: Where is my husband?

THE MAID: (*Silent.*)

MEDEA: Where is my husband?

THE MAID: (*Silent.*)

MEDEA: Maid.

THE MAID: My lady . . .

MEDEA: Where is my husband?



*The [main] MAID silently returns backwards to her chair with [ALL] MAIDS mirroring her walk and they sit down at the same time. Immediately the MAID and [ALL] MAIDS raise a hand in front of their face to disguise laughter/crying.*

MEDEA: Are you crying or are you laughing woman?

*[ALL] MAIDS release their hand and tend again to the children while the scene with MEDEA and the MAID continues.*

THE MAID: My lady, I'm older than my crying or my laughter.

MEDEA: How do you endure a life inside the ruins that are your body with the ghosts of your youth?

THE MAID: How do you endure a life inside the ruins that are your body with the ghosts of your youth?

*MEDEA stands up and shakes her towel out so it stays on her head but is hanging loose.*

*The MAID comes back to MEDEA who is now kneeling. The MAID starts to dry her hair violently (first on the left, then middle, then right) and she takes the towel like a matador cape bringing it back to her chair.*

*Then she takes out a comb and pointing the sharp end towards MEDEA goes towards her. She goes towards MEDEA menacingly as if considering stabbing her. MEDEA starts and suddenly on a sharp impulse looks at the MAID. The MAID softens and smiles and turns the comb to point the right way round.*

*The MAID starts to comb her hair until MEDEA puts her right hand up with her palm open. The MAID gives her some hair clips and looks around for more spilt pills.*

*After putting the hair clips, MEDEA puts lipstick on. (Hidden under mattress.)*

*The MAID notices that and goes back to MEDEA's bed.*

THE MAID: What's this?

MEDEA: (Silent.)

THE MAID: (Taking the lipstick) What's this?

*She puts the lipstick in her pocket.*

*She takes off the lipstick from MEDEA's lips with her hand and shows her palm to MEDEA.*

THE MAID: This is not Medea.

*The MAID turns to leave.*

MEDEA: Cow.

THE MAID: Whore.

MEDEA: Bitch.

THE MAID: Cunt.

*MEDEA puts her hands up and waits for the MAID to come back with hand cream and together they rub it into her hands.*

*As the MAID begins to move away from MEDEA [ALL] MAIDS rub hands together as the MAID does, and stop when the MAID stops.*

THE MAID: Come now my little wolf, come now my little vulture.

*The MAID goes back to her chair and sits down while they both keep creaming their hands keeping a strong contact. [ALL] MAIDS begin the knitting but still with attention on the children and tending and responding to them.*

MEDEA AND THE MAID: Come now my little wolf, come now my little vulture.

#### **4. INTERNATIONAL PRESS SCENE**

*The INTERNATIONAL PRESS (MALE CHORUS) enters followed by JASON. The international FILM CREW speaks Portuguese. They make sure everything is ready for the shooting. Preparing, checking lights etc.*

*[ALL] MAIDS start knitting furiously.*

*JASON enters and turns to crew.*

*CAMPAIGN MANAGER is speaking the transitional text (page . . .) that the audience in the campaign room can hear.*

CARLOS: (R)hoyal or royal?

FLAVIO: Royal.

CARLOS: (*Repeating*) Royal.

FLAVIO: Five – four – three . . .

JASON: (*Clears throat*) Me. Me me me. Me at home.

FLAVIO: Cut. Problems with sound. Do it again.

CAMPAIGN MANAGER: God! Every time!

*The FILM CREW is checking again that everything is ready for the filming.*

FLAVIO: Five – four – three . . .

JASON: Me. Me me me. Me at home. Looking good?

*FLAVIO and CAMPAIGN MANAGER both nod in agreement*

JASON: Looking good. Me looking like a winner.

*JASON turns to MEDEA who is sitting on her bed.*

JASON: Wife – sit properly.

*MEDEA straightens up and closes her legs.*

JASON: Wife. Children.

*He indicates towards the children and gives the cameraman a sign to follow him. They follow him towards some children to film them in their beds.*

*CARLOS steps onto MEDEA's bed and tries to clean the bed sheet afterwards.*

JASON: Children. Me. Wife. Ratings up. (*To MEDEA*) Ratings up.

*The MAID and [ALL] MAIDS jump up to protect the children.*

THE MAID: The children are already asleep!

JASON: Thank you Maid.

*THE MAID and [ALL] MAIDS sit, tutting loudly as they sit, and begin to knit angrily, clacking their needles and glaring at JASON and the TV CREW.*

JASON: My children.

MEDEA: Our children, Jasao.

JASON: Jason.

MEDEA: Jason.

CARLOS: Can we talk with you Medea?

JASON: No no no. Me me.

CARLOS: What are your views on the current immigration problems?

JASON: Immigration. Subject close to my heart. My wife is an immigrant. Children citizens of this country. As am I. Family. Together.

CARLOS: How do you balance your busy political life with your family?

JASON: Good question. Who is this for again?

FLAVIO: International press. Please look at the camera.

CARLOS: Can I take a photo of you and your family? Happy multicultural family. Together.

JASON: Photo of the family. Family photo. Why not?

*JASON puts his arm around MEDEA. They start to pose for the camera.*

THE MAID: (*Standing up*) You can't disturb the children now, they're already asleep.

JASON: No time. I'm really sorry. Family time.

CARLOS: Do you think you're going to win the elections tomorrow?

JASON: Let's hope so. If all you voters do the right thing out there. (*Does the thumbs up pose for the cameras.*)

CARLOS: It's rumoured you've become increasingly close with a member of the royal family. Is there any truth in this allegation?

JASON: I really don't have time to answer scandal. You really will have to leave now.

CARLOS: How about the royal wedding tomorrow? Affair with the princess . . .

JASON: (*Louder*) For god's sake my children are asleep. That's enough. Cut there.

*CAMPAIGN MANAGER signals to FLAVIO.*

FLAVIO: OK cut.

JASON: Have you got everything you need?

CAMPAIGN MANAGER: Well done J, I'm on the mobile if you need me. Try and get some rest and I'll see you tomorrow first thing. Ciao.

*They shake hands over the audience.*

*The CAMPAIGN TEAM/ FILM CREW leaves.*

### **Campaign room (this runs parallel action in the bedroom)**

*The TV CREW/CAMPAIGN TEAM go back to the campaign room and collect the questionnaires – CAMPAIGN MANAGER leaves and continues his text (refer to page . . .). The photos of the members of the audience with JASON are downloaded and shown to the audience in the campaign room.*

*Once JASON has left and MEDEA answers JASON's phone that has been left behind, the CAMPAIGN MANAGER stops reading out the comments. Once the photos have been downloaded and are being shown, a set of questionnaires are prepared out of sight for the next rotation of audience.*

### **Bedroom (this runs parallel action in the campaign room)**

*JASON goes to the trunk which is positioned beside his side of the bed.*

*He un-handcuffs the Golden Fleece from his wrist and secures it to the trunk. He goes to MEDEA and sits next to her on the bed.*

*They sigh and fall back together, lying on the bed facing upwards.*

*A camera is positioned above the bed and projected onto the back wall – zooming in on their faces.*

JASON: What a day! A thousand and one meetings. Tomorrow is the big one. (*He glances towards MEDEA to see if she has a reaction. She barely responds.*) And a wife that doesn't give a shit!

*They giggle together. A game of grandmother's footsteps begins just with their heads – JASON looking towards her as if he will give her a kiss and when she looks he freezes, this happens twice, the third time he plants a kiss on her lips. He kisses more passionately. He slowly begins to move downwards in the bed caressing MEDEA. He places his head under her dress and kisses the inside of her leg and actions as if he begins to go further to action oral sex. His phone rings. He answers it from underneath her dress.*

JASON: Yes, what is it? What? Now? (*MEDEA kicks his leg.*) No I can't I'm busy. (*She kicks again.*) Look I'll call you tomorrow. Ciao.

*He hangs the phone up and places it back in the inside pocket of his suit. Looks at MEDEA, then goes under her dress once more to resume the oral sex action. His second phone rings from his trouser pocket. He answers aggressively coming out from under the dress.*

JASON: Look . . . WHAT NOW? Which channel? (*Wiping his mouth and sitting on the foot of the bed*) Two channels. . . . Hang on. . . . (*standing*) . . . Maid, pass me the remote.

*The MAID looks to MEDEA She takes the remote and gives it to MEDEA who hands it over to JASON who then turns the TV on (all four projection screens).*

JASON: Bad choice of tie. Bad choice. Where is all the stuff about education and economy? That was some of my best work.

*On the projection is a film of a TV version of JASON giving a political speech about immigration.*

JASON: Hang on . . . Maid, where are the children? They should see this. Daddy on telly.

THE MAID: You can't disturb them now!

JASON: (*Finishing his phone call*) OK, listen, we'll speak tomorrow. Ciao.

*JASON turns the TV (projections) off using the remote control, places [it] on the bed, also puts his second mobile on the bed.*

JASON: (*To MEDEA*) I'm going to bed. (*JASON goes to his side of the bed and takes his suit jacket off.*)

## **5. JASON + HELICOPTER**

*As MEDEA sings goodnight to the children, JASON is sitting at the left side of the bed says goodnight to his children via text (Text message – Goodnight children, love, Daddy. xxx) and then begins to play with his helicopter.*

JASON: Argo 1. Argo! Do you copy? Over.

*As the soon-to-be president elect makes his way to his own personal helicopter to give his inauguration speech he stops to give a wave to the thousands of fans and voters who have come to wish him well . . . and in he goes and he is now in the air. What a special day this is.*

*Smash. JASON tries to fix the helicopter.*

JASON: Maid! Who's been playing with this? It's not a toy, it's mine.

*Eventually tires of playing with the helicopter and puts it away.*

## **6. SHORT SLEEP**

*Meanwhile MEDEA sings a lullaby to the children, and visits each one of them, tucking them into bed and giving them a goodnight kiss. [ALL] MAIDS are joining MEDEA's singing. They stop knitting.*

*Lullaby. [ALL] MAIDS show the text message received from JASON to the children. JASON undresses and goes to bed.*

*[ALL] MAIDS switch the bed lights off after MEDEA has sung to the children. MEDEA gets into bed with JASON. She's laying next to him. They sleep. The MAID picks up her knitting. His phone rings. JASON gets up and answers the phone. It's Glauce, the princess, his new bride. [ALL] MAIDS start knitting with a loud clacking sound throughout the conversation.*

JASON: Hello? What are you calling me now for? Yes. She's right here. Sleeping. The big day tomorrow, I know. Your father? OK, no problem. I'll be there as soon as I can. I love you too.

*[ALL] MAIDS respond to this by suddenly stopping the knitting and a gasp.*

JASON: Ciao.

*JASON goes back to the bed and trunk to partially dress and pick his clothes up, the helmet and the Golden Fleece. He throws his phone on the bed. He dresses and leaves in silence being attentive to not wake MEDEA up. In his haste he forgets his mobile on the bed.*

*His exit is interrupted by the MAID who stands up in front of him.*

*Her impulse is the cue for [ALL] MAIDS to stand up.*

THE MAID: Where are you going?

JASON: Go back to sleep.

*The MAID doesn't move. JASON leaves. The MAID picks up the mobile he forgot. [ALL] MAIDS follow the impulse of the MAID as she walks over to the bed, so that they end up close behind the witness seats. The MAID and [ALL] MAIDS turn to look after*



*JASON. Then the MAID places JASON's mobile next to MEDEA on the bed as she sleeps. [ALL] MAIDS sit down when the MAID sits down.*

## **7. HEART FULL OF HOLES**

*While MEDEA is sleeping JASON's phone rings. MEDEA is waking up.  
The phone rings again until MEDEA picks it up. She answers.*

MEDEA: Hello. Jasao er, Jason's phone. Who is this? Hello? Helloooo? Who is this?

*But the phone hangs up [sic]. MEDEA throws it down but then has a thought – she sits up, considers for a moment looking at the MAID, looks through JASON's phone. She finds a video clip of him filmed by GLAUCE.*

### ***Betrayal Phone Video Clip Text:***

GLAUCE: Hello (giggle) I'm filming.

JASON: Is that my phone? You better erase that.

GLAUCE: I will, I will.

JASON: Stop messing around (*as the video phone comes in closer*).

GLAUCE: I'm not messing around. You're so beautiful. (*Close-up of JASON's face.*)

*'Heart Full of Holes' is shortened to a few seconds in the first time round, then slightly longer in the second time and finally the whole scene in the end.*

- 1. An image of a paused film taken on a mobile phone of JASON with no sound.*
- 2. The film runs with no sound.*
- 3. The whole film plays with sound (slowly the sound cross-fades into the music).*

*MEDEA gets up and leans her face on the wall behind her bed. Her left hand is touching the wall above her head.*

*She then slumps down on the bed, crying desperately. In the final repetition MEDEA takes the arrow out of her heart. A laptop is brought to her bed where she writes a message to JASON.*

Love comes and goes. In forgetting that I was not wise. Give me one more day and I will withdraw into my own wasteland.

*MEDEA is filmed live from very close, the footage is projected on all screens.*

**MUSIC:** *A Silver Mt. Zion: Stumble Then Rise on Some Awkward Morning.*

*[ALL] MAIDS keep a connection to their own work through this sequence by pressing into the floor with their feet and working on their own personal scores.*

THE MAID: *(At end of each repetition, to MEDEA's guests) We must leave Medea now. (She ushers them out.)*

*[ALL] MAIDS then wake up the children and take off their pyjamas. They take them to their new seats as guest witnesses They then go to the campaign room to get two more children/audience for the next repetition round.*

*We return to Scene 3 after rotating the three audiences to see the scenes from a new perspective.*

*The audience will rotate as follows:*

- 1. The children will move to the guest audience seats.*
- 2. Guest audience will move to JASON's campaign room.*
- 3. And campaign workers will move to children's beds.*

**[THE END]**

**15 min interval.**

**PART III to follow.**

\* \* \*

### **A1.2.3 Part III: *Feast of Dawn***

#### **CAST**

MEDEA

JASON

THE MAID

10 MAIDS (all in white) + 1 MAID shadowing Nwando

MALE CHORUS (FILM CREW, PRIESTS, SOLDIERS, PAPARAZZI)

AGILEUS (MEDEA's dead brother)

#### **7 min – Large Space 3 into Spaces 1 and 2**

##### **1. PEOPLE ARE INVITED BACK (INTERACTION WITH AUDIENCE)**

*MEDEA is still lying in her bed (where she was at the end of Drylands) but MAIDS only let women in. Together they start to set up Club Exile by pushing hammocks away and using small tables and chairs/stools facing the bed which is now the band's stage.*

*Male audience are not allowed into MEDEA's room and are collected by the MALE CHORUS and taken to the campaign room. They are given 'Vote Jason' badges.*

#### **HERE BEGINS THE NEW VERSION DRAFT**

*Suggested scene breakdown (Women Audience and Male Audience divided):*

##### **<1> SHARING BETRAYAL EXPERIENCES**

*1a – (Women) Set up Club Exile/ Cover cameras/ Broken-hearted/ Share experiences/*

*1b – (Men) Banned from Club Exile/ Share experiences/ Fear/ How to get into Club Exile/*

##### **<2> MEDEA'S BAND – part 1**

*(Audiences watch together with men dressed as women)*

*The Lament/ the pain/ the blame/ the oracle/*

##### **<<Summary>>**

*Women come back into the women-only Club Exile.*

*MEDEA is featuring with 'Medea and The Maids' a band set up to lament the 'Cause of Medea'. The band start a song that goes through grief, anger, bitterness and finally revenge. Starts with the LAMENT.*

*The song carries us all the way through to the resurrection of AGILEUS but is broken in the middle by the invasions of PRIESTS and SOLDIERS.*  
*It is then returned to.*

*Men go with the MALE CHORUS into the **campaign room**. They are a think tank that needs to plan the next tactic in the strategy to get JASON elected. They are having an emergency meeting about the potentially disastrous effects of an angry MEDEA.*

***Subtext:** MEDEA is treated as a terrorist and the language and the male posturing is similar to the Americanized hatred of the supposed threat of any country that is in the Axis of Evil.*

*The action turns to the audience who are asked to contribute to the discussions.*

*In **Club Exile** audience can tell their stories of betrayal over the microphone, can sympathize with one another, console MEDEA etc. and help her decide what action she should take next. Thoughts of vengeance and revenge should emerge.*

*In the **campaign room** the men are asked to share solutions regarding what actions they think MEDEA will take. They are invited to share experiences of when they too betrayed a partner and asked to consider all JASON's motivations i.e. that the position of alliance with the King will provide better for their children.*

*In **Club Exile** the moment to reveal AGILEUS comes and the women cover the cameras to stop from being watched.*

*The men decide to infiltrate as spies. To do this they have to dress up as women. In this way 'what does a woman look like?' can be posed as a question thus raising issues regarding gender divisions etc. Speak in a high voice etc.*

*The men enter as women – they should be briefly checked at the door (Are you a woman?) and seated within the women as quickly as possible.*

*In **Club Exile** the song has begun to shift pace and the start of the resurrection begins, using*

- 1. the idea of an oracle – some kind of reading of the future*
- 2. the dogs*
- 3. a certain wildness starts to descend.*

*The MALE CHORUS jump up to reveal themselves as PRIESTS.\**

*\*This has not been set up with male audience.*

*They do the 'priest action' and MEDEA is too strong.*

*They reveal the fake woman and all men leave.*

*In **Club Exile** the song continues, using*

- 1. lament*
- 2. the women's revenge actions i.e. taking a hair from everybody)*
- 3. MEDEA in closer contact with the audience*
- 4. Internet revolution ideas*
- 5. more resurrecting of AGILEUS*
- 6. the Medea-material text.*

*Meanwhile in the **campaign room** the men watch through the CCTVs.*

*They are watching a piece of theatre as audience and they are also watching the mechanics of surveillance. Equipment they have will be gadgety and FBI-ish like hidden cameras and voice-bugging equipment. But importantly it should be confusing because some of the material that is shown will be pre-recorded.*

*The MALE CHORUS decide to invade Club Exile as SOLDIERS.*

*They show Creon's command of [Club] Exile.*

*They break up the song and music.*

*The male audience watch on the cameras.*

*The SOLDIERS leave **Club Exile** and return to the **campaign room**.*

*\*What happens here in Club Exile?*

*They take the male audience back in for a fake reconciliation as the Documentary team.*

*They get MEDEA to sign a contract and she pretends to go along with it.*

*Again it runs alongside the idea that MEDEA is a Taliban and the government have to show that they are in control – that they are winning and they have caught the terrorists and now there is nothing to worry about. JASON leaves triumphant. The male audience stays there and JASON can leave saying how there is nothing to worry about now. It's all been resolved. MEDEA has seen sense.*

*MEDEA prepares to stage her own version – the MAIDS start with the extreme makeover preparation and they call in the PAPARAZZI who are the MALE CHORUS for the end result.*

*MEDEA gets up and performs for the PAPARAZZI the final stage of the ritual in which AGILEUS is finally resurrected.*

*Then we have the ritual of:*

- 1. the poisoning using the hair from the woman earlier*
- 2. AGILEUS taking a dress to be a gift to the Princess*
- 3. In the same style of dress – it is put on MEDEA and MEDEA performs the burning.*

*\*There will be 3 versions of the wedding dress.*

*After this MEDEA turns her attention to the children. She is frightening and clearly through the actions of worrying and ‘care taking’ by the other actors it becomes clear that the audience are the children. They put on their pyjamas (yes we will need 60 pyjamas).*

*The MALE CHORUS are like bodyguards together with the MAIDS they run for safety and hide. Perhaps in makeshift blow-up tents.*

*We change space back to the big space.*

*The actors will leave their children to wander and perhaps AGILEUS runs round rounding everyone up for food.*

*\*Point about the food and poisoning. If audiences are given food that was previously used to cook a poisoned dress it may prove difficult to swallow!*

*\*Is AGILEUS going to cook at all? If so what?*

*Audience arrive back in the big space.*

*JASON has found out about the Princess and enters carrying a burnt version of the wedding dress.*

*We perform a new Jongo this time the triangulation is MEDEA and AGILEUS against JASON.*

*MEDEA and AGILEUS take the fleece back from JASON.*

*\*Does JASON stay or go? Get forced to stay?*

*From here we move to the ritual of the poisoned kiss.*

*Although all audience are children either we kiss only two or we have to kiss the entire  
60. So two audience members are selected for the kiss and the shrine.*

*Bedtime story as the shrine is interacted with by the audience – two beds must be set up  
in the big space for the shrine.*

*MAID and MEDEA and breakfast table.*

*MEDEA leaves JASON is crowned.*

**[THE END]**

**Breakfast**

*HERE ENDS THE NEW VERSION DRAFT*

*FROM HERE ALL SCENES (THE OLD VERSION) WILL NEED UPDATING*

**2 min – Spaces 1 and 2**

**2. JASON CALLS MEDEA (SCENE)**

*JASON is calling MEDEA. She allows him to come back.*

*MEDEA is lying on her bed. Only the duvet is left. The phone rings, eventually MEDEA answers. It is JASON. He stands in front of the metal shutter holding the Golden Fleece.*

JASON: Medea?

Medea, I know you're there.

Can you hear me?

Medea are the children alright?

Medea, I'm coming home.

Do you want me to come home?

MEDEA: Yes.

*The MAIDS look at MEDEA and encourage her to say 'yes'.*

**3 min – STUDIO 3**

**3. PRETEND RECONCILIATION – JASON RETURNS + TRIES TO EXPLAIN THE BETRAYAL (SCENE)**

*The FILM CREW documents JASON as he tries to convince MEDEA he is doing the right thing. MEDEA doesn't co-operate. The crew stops filming and they have a more intimate conversation where they 'pretend' [to] make up. Then MEDEA tells the crew to film again as she 'pretends' she understands and forgives him. The crew leaves as they appear to start having sex.*

*PROJECTIONS on all four screens.*

FLAVIO: (*Films MEDEA.*)

LEANDRO: (*Films JASON.*)

*JASON enters with TV documentary crew.*



JASON: Are you filming?

WILL: Five – four – three . . .

*ROBSON is holding cardboards with the script written on which JASON reads aloud to MEDEA whilst the crew is filming.*

JASON: (*Clears throat. To MEDEA*) Medea, whilst I understand your fury and fully realize that today is not a day for political speeches, I feel I must defend myself to all the voters and . . . campaigners out there who maybe confused about our position.

Allow me to point out that your gratitude to this country obviously has no . . . end. After all you left a barbarous land to become a resident here, a country that is developed, just and civilized.

I shall show my action was not swayed . . . by passion but directed towards the good of this country. With a unified state and monarchy I can give this country a leadership that will take it . . .

*She [MEDEA] interrupts. Forward to be a world player.*

MEDEA: Jasao.

JASON: Cut there.

WILL: Cut.

MEDEA: Your phone.

*MEDEA gives the phone back to JASON.*

JASON: I'm doing this for your sake.

MEDEA: For my sake?

JASON: To secure your future. And the children's.

MEDEA: (*Silent.*)

JASON: Your pride is your misfortune.

MEDEA: And your pride Jasao . . . is your good fortune. But you are betraying your own children.

JASON: I've thought about them.

MEDEA: Have you?

JASON: Medea, women are not the only ones to think about their children.

*JASON sits on the corner of the bed facing the male audience. He puts his head in his hands and appears to cry. He still has his helmet on and the Golden Fleece is put next to him.*

WILL: Move in . . .

*The FILM CREW continues filming. ROBSON is holding the cardboards with the script. MEDEA and JASON are reading the text written on the boards.*

MEDEA: Forgive my words spoken in bitterness. I see now it was I who was hard and relentless.

JASON: So you have seen sense?

MEDEA: Yes – between us there is no grudge. By marrying her you gain even more power, more popularity, more security for our children. It is only wisdom.

JASON: Ah yes – exactly my point.

MEDEA: How stupid of me not to have helped you realize your plans! But we . . . women can be stupid sometimes.

WILL: OK. Cut. Let's leave it there.

*FILM CREW leaves. The pretend seduction starts. MEDEA's taking off JASON's helmet and puts it between his legs. She takes his shoes off. After seducing him, MEDEA hits JASON with a bat as he expected to be forgiven and them to make up. JASON is rolling off the bed to the floor.*

MEDEA: WHORE!

*MEDEA stays on the bed with the Golden Fleece. The MAID takes his helmet and gives it to one of the MAIDS.*

**7 min – STUDIO 3**

**4. TYING JASON UP (SCENE)**

*The MAIDS pull JASON to the wheelchair and tie him up as the MAID picks up his mobile and sends his new bride a text message saying it's JASON.*

*The MAID texts the Princess with a rapid rhythm, broken by sharp pauses of thought.*

*PROJECTION on all four walls: 'Darling Princess, my beauty. The bitch is keeping me longer than . . .'*

*Whilst the tying up is happening the other MAIDS cut the buttons from the pyjamas of the children. They were all collected.*

*After tying him up in the wheelchair RAQUEL brings JASON back to the centre of the stage between the wall and MEDEA's bed. He's sitting in the wheelchair and wearing his helmet.*

**MUSIC?**

**7 min – STUDIO 3**

**5. MINI-RITUAL WITH MEDEA STARTS (SCENE/INSTALLATION)**

*MEDEA and some of the MAIDS (LISA, BECCA, ANTIGONI, NWANDO) play out a mini-ritual to see what the future brings.*

*PROJECTION on all four walls.*

*Camera from the top of MEDEA's bed.*

**MUSIC:** *Heartbeat.*

*MEDEA is standing on the bed facing JASON. She speaks to him.*

MEDEA: And now Jasao, I will know my future. And you will know yours.

*The MAIDS come to MEDEA's bed and step onto it. MEDEA begins to shake the 'runes'/pyjama buttons. The MAIDS are gathered around her in a semi-circle. They begin to blow on the 'runes' using the breath prep. The emphasis is on the out breath as they breathe into 'runes'.*

*MEDEA throws the 'runes' onto the bed and the breath and any movement stops. After a moment the breath starts again but inwardly and quietly. MEDEA moves slightly as she discerns what she has cast, and the MAIDS follow her movements very slightly. MEDEA gives impulses and the MAIDS follow the impulses changing positions. MEDEA's movements are small and the MAIDS ones are slightly bigger. MEDEA begins to recoil and with each movement backwards, the MAIDS also recoil, changing position each time. The MAIDS do large, exaggerated positions of panic. These are explosive and the sound is also exaggerated and panicky.*

**7 min – STUDIO 3**

#### **6. PRIESTS ENTER (SCENE/INSTALLATION)**

*MEDEA to metamorphose into a dog. The PRIESTS enter the room to try to exorcize MEDEA as a dog.*

**MUSIC:** Church bells.

**BLACKOUT:** It's important to cover the emergency lights as they are really bright.

*MEDEA's metamorphosis into a dog starts. The sound of a dog panting can be heard. The MAIDS are by their beds next to the children. They start a low hum.*

*MEDEA is panting in the dark as the PRIESTS enter. They move silently like ghosts around the children's beds, covering as much space as possible and always careful to avoid crossing each other's paths. They never get stuck anywhere, always carefully choosing routes that they can be free to pass through so they never turn around. Intermittently, and one at a time, they strike a match close to their face so we catch a quick glimpse of their face and they quickly put the match out. After about six or seven strikes they move towards the right-hand side corner of MEDEA's bed. MEDEA is panting and prowling her bed like a dog. She has metamorphosed into a wild animal in response to the entrance of the PRIESTS and as a result of the mini-ritual.*

*One by one and overlapping each other the PRIESTS come closer to MEDEA to try to exorcize her. They use objects like an incense sawyer, a book etc. She attacks all of them and they retreat, frightened.*

*After about three of these attempts they all go to the allotted position.*

*The PRIESTS form a diamond shape with WILL at the front in the final position.*

WILL: Medea you alone are a stranger here, with your . . . Have you cursed the King?

MEDEA: Yes.

*The PRIESTS have a small impulse absolutely together.*

WILL: Have you cursed the Princess?

MEDEA: Yes.

*The PRIESTS have a small impulse absolutely together.*

WILL: Tell quickly what curses you have uttered? TELL QUICKLY!

MEDEA: *(Speaks a prayer in archaic language.)*

WILL: Go back to your land. . . .

*They all step forward on the same impulse.*

*As MEDEA begins to repeat the curses and then as she speaks the PRIESTS begin to experience one of three various curses in a physical form. The changes are led by people in the group. They keep their stooped low walk and have very rapid upper body movements.*

*They back out using these movements to move, sliding but backwards to their chairs in the male audience.*

### **5 min – STUDIO 3**

#### **7. MINI-RITUAL WITH MEDEA ENDS (SCENE)**

*With some of the MAIDS only.*

**MUSIC** [Nwando]

*PRIESTS have left and all MAIDS are back by their beds by now.*

*LISA brings the tray with the reading onto MEDEA's bed.*

MAIDS: *(Chant)* MEDEA POOR MEDEA, MEDEA POOR MEDEA.

*At the same time MAIDS take the objects for poisoning the dress which are underneath the children's beds. There is a moment where they're looking at the object they're holding and looking at the children. There is tension in the MAIDS' body because there are still doubts about what they are about to do.*

*The MAID brings the veil/dress to MEDEA. Once the MAIDS see the MAID moving towards the bed, all MAIDS get up and move towards and onto MEDEA's bed staying down in a circle. Each MAID walks towards the bed in an indirect route.*

*One after the other the MAIDS place their object directly onto the hand of MEDEA.*

*All objects need to go through her hands and find different ways of giving her your object.*

*After they have placed their object into MEDEA's hand, they move towards their standing position onto MEDEA's bed again moving through an indirect route.*

*MAIDS remain standing on the bed until all MAIDS have placed their object into MEDEA's hand.*

*When all MAIDS arrive on the bed, they all go down together.*

*MEDEA passes the pot with the poison from MAID to MAID and each one fills in some liquid.*

***Important: Don't think of getting the pot; rather think of receiving the pot. Always have an awareness of where the pot is and make eye contact.***

*MEDEA then will put the last drop inside the pot with all our products. She will have a small vial and it is that that she adds that creates the poison. This action will be done in the centre so the camera pointing to the bed from above captures it.*

*Putting on the gloves. This action needs to be done elegantly, and visible to the audience e.g. above your head, to the side of your body, towards the back.*

*All MAIDS take the veil/dress into their hands. It is very important to be moving always from the centre. The action doesn't start from your hands. Also one doesn't always need to be touching the dress, but it is important to use the back to show the intention and action. Create a variety of actions for placing the poison onto the dress e.g. rubbing it in, sprinkling it etc.*

*When MEDEA turns to face JASON and speak the text to him, the MAIDS come off MEDEA's bed and place the dress back down onto the bed.*

*WHEN?*

*When MEDEA tells us to with hand movement we chant the following:  
'How wild with dread and danger is the sea where the gods have set your course.'*

**11 min – STUDIO 3**

**8. MEDEA-MATERIAL TO JASON (SCENE/VIDEO)**

*MEDEA is standing on the bed in front of JASON in his wheelchair, she picks up several books and throws them down. One of it is Heiner Muller's book and she reads out her text to him.*

MEDEA: Do you see these books Jasao?

They're all written about Medea. Look at this one.

Written by a man, a man from East Germany.

How could he know so much more than you?

Page 50 . . .

*She reads the text to JASON.*

*MAIDS express in arm movements what MEDEA is feeling with this text.*

**7 min – STUDIO 3**

**9. SOLDIERS ENTER + TURN EVERYTHING UPSIDE DOWN  
(SCENE/VIDEO)**

*SOLDIERS enter and create a mess of the space, and act violently against the MAID as they show CREON on video sending MEDEA and her children on exile.*

**MUSIC?**

*CUE: Two violently done knocks on the metal shutter.*

*The SOLDIERS enter, using the horse stance. Wearing masks with attached ear-torches as the only lighting source in this scene to be used. They go to the children's bed and scream and shout.*

SOLDIERS: Get down.

Stay down.

Move.

Where's the fleece?

Where's Jason?

WILL: You there Medea, scowling rage at your husband

We order you out.

Take your sons and go into exile.

Waste no time.

We are here to see this order enforced and we are not going back until we've put you safe outside our boundaries.

*The MAID tries to intervene and goes to block the SOLDIERS to protect MEDEA.*

THE MAID: No. A queen is used to giving orders not to taking them.

*The SOLDIERS turn the MAID upside down and hold this position.*

SOLDIERS: Do you love this woman? We can take her and have her flogged to death  
and then you will have nothing.

MEDEA: Take her.

SOLDIERS: We can take her you know.

MEDEA: I said take her, she is nothing but a burden around my neck

*SOLDIERS put the MAID back to the floor and move out.*

*PROJECTION: Creon video*

*Creon speaks to MEDEA.*

MEDEA: Give me one more day. I need to prepare my children.

WILL: Move out. The King's orders have been given.



*MAIDS protect children and cover them and encourage them to sleep again.*  
*MUSIC for next scene EXTREME MAKEOVER starts.*

**15 min – STUDIO 3**

**10. EXTREME MAKEOVER (SCENE/INSTALLATION)**

*As the SOLDIERS leave, MEDEA and the MAIDS set up a pretend rape scene. Trolley on the bed and lots of rubbish around it.*

*PROJECTION: Two cameras filming the scene (LEANDRO, FLAVIO) + PROJECTIONS of newspaper headlines:*

*Medea in shock, in pain.*

*To date no comment from the King.*

*Harrowing, shocking story.*

*Medea, wife of Jason, raped!*

*Soldiers sent by Creon force their way into the home of Medea and abuse her, says her maid.*

*Medea found in wasteland.*

*Stripped, tortured, raped.*

**MUSIC:** *Gaelic chanting.*

*The MAIDS go to MEDEA and help her into position on her bed. BECCA and RAQUEL bring the trolley on the bed. They bring with them the clothes for the extreme makeover and all their relevant equipment.*

*The MAIDS carry out the following:*

*Take off nightdress*

*Put on top*

*Put on skirt*

*Pull down black thong*

*Put on tights*

*Turn MEDEA around into draped position*

*Step back and reveal, turning the trolley around*

*Open MEDEA's legs*  
*Rip top and skirt*  
*Rip tights*  
*Paint on black eye*  
*Put blood on MEDEA: nose, mouth, head, thigh*  
*Boot print*  
*Attach a dangling shoe to MEDEA's ankle*  
*Put pearls on*  
*Reposition*  
*Break pearls*

*Two MAIDS shine a light around the scene and two other MAIDS carry two mirrors around the scene. The mirrors are used to clearly indicate that the MAIDS were trying to make sure all details of the fake rape were being attended to.*

*The MAIDS allow the PAPARAZZI in. Before they do so JASON in the wheelchair gets hidden under a blanket.*

### **3 min – STUDIO 3 INTO CUPBOARDS**

#### **11. PAPARAZZI COME IN + CHASE CHILDREN TO CUPBOARDS (AUDIENCE INTERACTION)**

*The PAPARAZZI invade the space forcing the MAIDS with their CHILDREN out into the café area.*

*PAPARAZZI in 'monkey style' come in.*

*MAIDS encourage them to come in and show them MEDEA's bed.*

*MEDEA is turned around by a MAID and re-positioned in order that the PAPARAZZI can get better shots.*

*The PAPARAZZI see the children and begin to swarm around them, asking invasive questions to the children and MAIDS and taking pictures.*

*The MAIDS take them by the hand and exit the main room.*

*The MAIDS make their way through the building and eventually take their audience to their cupboard spaces in the cafe area, chased by the PAPARAZZI who keep on knocking on the doors saying 'One photo please' etc.*

#### **10 min – CAFE AREA**

#### **12. CUPBOARDS SCENE (AUDIENCE INTERACTION)**

*The MAIDS have taken the children to their cupboards, the remaining audience stays in the space and is then left to go to the cafe.*

*The cafe area is used as a big cupboard for all MAIDS. They come into the cafe area to escape the PAPARAZZI and each MAID with her children hides under a table and uses blankets to create a world for her children but still existing with all the other MAIDS in the same space. Once the remaining audience starts to arrive the MAIDS can then leave their children already in the cafe while a surprised audience sees 16 people in pyjamas emerging from underneath the tables.*

*Inside the cupboards, MAIDS and children hide from the PAPARAZZI. Together they find objects and slowly invent a game. The emphasis is on creating a game the children play together so that the MAID can be aware of the danger outside.*

*This is an improvisation. The atmosphere is intimate, quiet, with a sense that anything or nothing could happen.*

*This lasts approx. 8 minutes at which point the MAID leaves. They each make their excuses and exit, saying they will call soon/return soon.*

*The MAIDS ask the older children to look after the younger [ones]. They may ask the children to hold hands.*

#### **13. THIRD INTERVAL AND INSTALLATIONS AROUND THE BUILDING**

*\*At this point STUDIO 3 is being changed one last time to accommodate the set arrangement for Ritual/Children's death/The Shrine/Breakfast.*

#### **7 min – STUDIO 3**

#### **14. RITUAL (INSTALLATION/SCENE)**

*The ritual starts and MEDEA wakes AGILEUS up to take the poisoned dress to the bride. MEDEA dances the burning of the bride as the MAID reads out the description of the event.*

*MAIDS do the Mina within the ritual space in a small circle while witnessing audience is coming in and is being placed in two rows on the side of the breakfast table.*

*ANNA and the MAID are assisting the MALE CHORUS placing the audience within the space. Once 16 people have been placed on the side of the breakfast table, then RAQUEL leads the MAIDS with the Mina step (in a serpent formation) out of the CCTV double door which is held by ANNA and the MAIDS then go to take their children and the witnessing audience will hear the fading sound of the Mina rhythm.*

*The audience that were children in the cupboards are still in their pyjamas and will be children again now.*

**MUSIC** [Nwando]

*MEDEA resurrects AGILEUS, she smashes blood filled eggs on both their foreheads, and upon instruction he takes MEDEA's poisoned wedding dress to GLAUCE. AGILEUS is holding the wedding dress and dances in the ritual space in front of the bed. He then exits the space.*

THE MAID: TEXT . . .

DO THE MATH SCORE

MUSIC

LIGHTS

PROJECTIONS

*MEDEA collapses.*

**15 min**

## **15. CHILDREN'S DEATH (INTERACTIVE INSTALLATION)**

*Poisoned kiss for all children from MEDEA. Installation around children's beds which the audience helps compose with objects and lighting.*

**MUSIC** [Nwando] Radiohead: *Kid A 'Motion Picture Soundtrack'*

*MEDEA beckons MAIDS one by one to bring children to her so she can kiss them. It's a poisoned kiss.*

*MAIDS need to be aware of not standing up together to take the children to MEDEA to be kissed.*

*MAIDS then take children to the side and pull off their pyjamas. Two children are left for the last two hammocks which are the centre of the shrines.*

*MAIDS:*

*First lit candles up and put veils on heads.*

*Second begin shrines and take everything what's needed for them from under the beds.*

*Encourage the audience to help with building the shrines.*

*Third start humming and lamenting.*

*Then MEDEA reads the children's story which details the infanticide.*

**MEDEA'S BEDTIME STORY**

*That night the children had stayed up very late.*

*Hearing things they shouldn't have been hearing*

*Seeing things they shouldn't have been seeing.*

*Their mother was very tired and a little sad.*

*She had been betrayed by their father, badly betrayed.*

*She had given up her past for him, followed him wherever he had to go, bore him children and now he was leaving her for another, younger Princess.*

*It had been a very long day and it was not over quite yet. [Reaction.]*

*Already she had given him quite a lot pain, wisely concentrating on spoiling his future.*

*She spoiled his relationship with the King with abominable behaviour and she managed to have his wedding with the new Princess called off by making her a gift of a poisoned wedding dress and planting a forest of knives in her flesh.*

*It had taken all her strength to wreak revenge, but there was still something she had to do. [Reaction.]*

*At first, how could she deny it, she had wanted to kill him but not anymore.*

*When she looked into the eyes of her children she could see him there.*

*And She would always see him there whenever she looked at them.*

*No, she wanted to let him feel pain, a lot of pain, to feel pain the way she had, the worst pain.*

*And he couldn't feel pain, if he were dead.*

*That's when she knew for sure what her last task had to be. [Reaction.]*

*Sleeping time now, my beautiful boys, my boys, she said to them.*

*She tucked them in, looked at them one last time and kissed them good night.*

**7 min**

## **16. MEDEA AND MAID – OLD FEAST OF DAWN (SCENE)**

*MEDEA faces the MAID who sits on a chair opposite her.*

*JASON is sitting in the wheelchair still tied up.*

*After the bedtime story is finished all audience has to move to the Feast of Dawn table where MEDEA, JASON and the MAID are sitting. The two remaining children need assistance from the MAIDS to get up from the shrine installations around their beds. There are a few benches for the audience to sit on, the rest has to stand behind them.*

MEDEA: Was it too much do you think a poisoned kiss? Would you have me punished?

THE MAID: Do you want me to forgive you?

MEDEA: Can you forgive me?

Did you ever love me?

Who did you love more? Me or them?

Did I play my role?

Did you play yours?

*(To JASON And yours?)*

THE MAID: What is there left to say?

MEDEA: Can I go now?

THE MAID: Is this the end?

*MEDEA stands up, takes the Golden Fleece and turns around to exit.*

## **17. BREAKFAST (AUDIENCE EATS BREAKFAST WITH THE ARTISTS)**

*The MAID points to the fruits etc. on the table and invites the audience to have breakfast. Cast and audience eat breakfast together.*

THE MAID: There is food. . . .

*MAIDS come in and serve breakfast to the audience. Once people have come in, then MAIDS can step back and let people help themselves.*

**END**