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Anne Bogart and the dramaturgy of "collage" – An analytical approach to process and mise-én-scene in *Room*

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Acknowledgements

Summary

Anne Bogart og "collage" som dramaturgisk prinsipp – En analytisk tilnærming til prosess og mise-en-scène i *Room*

I denne masteroppgaven er det mitt mål å kontekstualisere den amerikanske teaterregissøren Anne Bogart og kunne konstatere hva som karakteriserer henne som regissør, ut i fra hennes tilnærming til prosess, tekst, kunstnerisk samarbeid, iscenesettelse og dramaturgi. Bogart har vært aktiv i regiyrket siden 1970-tallet og vært en viktig bidragsyter i teatermiljøet i New York, så vel som i resten av USA. Gjennom sine samarbeid med den japanske regissøren Tadashi Suzuki og hennes videreutvikling av Viewpointsmetoden, er hun også blitt lagt merke til internasjonalt. I denne oppgaven akter jeg å plassere Bogart teaterhistorisk ved å undersøke innflytelsen fra det tyske regiteateret med hovedfokus på Peter Stein, så vel som hennes arv etter neo-avant-garden på 1960 og 70-tallet. I tillegg vil jeg gjennom en forestillingsanalyse av hennes nyoppsetning av *Room* i februar 2017, forsøke å konstatere hvorvidt "collage" er hennes regjerende dramaturgiske prinsipp.

I den første delen av oppgaven gir jeg en presentasjon av regiyrkets generelle fremvekst når det mot slutten av 1800-tallet blir behov for en spesialisert person innenfor teateret til å samle de sceniske virkemidlene og sørge for en enhetlig iscenesettelse. Dette fører meg innpå Bogarts møte med tysk regiteater, som får innvirkning på hennes iscenesettelse av klassisk dramatikk. Videre går jeg nærmere inn på avant-garde bevegelsen og undersøker hvordan sentrale grupper som Judson Dance Theater har fått sinn innvirkning på Anne Bogarts i form av arbeidsmåte og henne utvikling av Viewpointsmetoden. Gjennom devisedkulturen hos gruppeteatrene i neo-avant-garden, finner Bogart sin kollektive tilnærming til den kunstneriske prosessen.

Iscenesettelsen av *Room* baserer seg på en samling av Virginia Woolfs tekster og eksemplifiserer hvordan Anne Bogart forsyner seg av utdrag fra allerede eksisterende materiale for å skape sine "collage" forestillinger. I forestillingsanalysen vil jeg se på *Room* i lys av teaterhistorie og teaterteori, som sammen forteller hvordan Anne Bogart finner sin regimessige tilnærming i skjæringspunktet mellom tyske regiteater og neo-avant-gardens gruppeteater. Gjennom iscenesettelsen av sine collager fremstår hun som en postmoderne auteur regissør.

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1.0 Introduction to a contextualization of Anne Bogart

1.1 Anne Bogart: In search of a director's identity

"It seems to me that Anne is in the front of a battle in which all American theatre artists find themselves. So what is it that she is fighting? She is fighting America. What does she hope to win from this battle? Here again the answer is America."

(Tadashi Suzuki, 1995, p. 85)

These are the words of Japanese theatre director, Tadashi Suzuki, referencing his frequent collaborator, director Anne Bogart. Bogart has been working as a theatre director since the 1970s and come to be a significant contributor to theatre in New York City and in the United States as whole. Through her collaborations with Tadashi Suzuki in Japan, as well as her furthering development of the *Viewpoints* method, she has reached international acclaim. Early in the 1980s, Bogart became a sought-after theatre director also in German-speaking countries, after her 1981 feature in German theatre magazine *Theater heaute (*Cummings, 2010, p. 44*)*. Her experiences while directing in West Berlin catalyzed an existential search for a directorial identity. With a foothold in both the American neo-avant-garde and the German director's theatre, as well as a strong commitment to the *Viewpoints*, she has continued her collaborative practice of the director profession.

In light of this, I wish to conduct a study on Anne Bogart and her artistic identity as a stage director. This identity is comprised of her approach to: Process, staging, collaboration, text as well as dramaturgy. These are the five components of Bogart's director practice that I wish to elaborate on and that will be further informed by a performance analysis of her production of *Room*. Bogart's artistic identity is intricate, covering several decades and countries. I wish to uncover the stage director *behind* the *Viewpoints* method, which might be what Bogart is the most known for. Ellen Lauren, a co-founding member of Bogart's company, Saratoga Springs International Theatre Institute (SITI), writes how "Anne is very clear about the variety of influences that helped her formulate this language (the Viewpoints). Influence is not a dirty word" (Lauren, 1995, p. 62). Indeed, Bogart is not ashamed of her influences. She frequently appropriates the work of others, not only in relation to the Viewpoints, but also to text and

staging. She is transparent in her influences, cherishing them instead of hiding them. A study of Bogart therefore also becomes a study of the artists who have influenced her. This thesis is consequently an attempt at contextualizing Bogart and her directorial work, on one side by providing a theatre historical context of relevant traditions, movements and occurrences that I consider to make up the foundation for Bogart's directorial practice. On the other side, on the background of a qualitative performance analysis of one of her productions, *Room.* In addition, I wish to examine a hypothesis on Bogart's relation to dramaturgy, articulated by Boston College Professor, Scott T. Cummings.

Based on this, the following question is what serves as this thesis' primary objective: *Which conditions lay the foundation for Anne Bogart's director practice and in what way do they shape her directorial identity?* I wish to shed light on how the European director tradition has made its mark on Bogart's work, focusing mainly on the connection between her and the German director's theatre, personified here by Peter Stein and the Bremen generation (Arntzen, 1987, p. 89). How does Bogart relate to this approach to directing and in what way does it manifest itself in her own approach? Secondly, I will focus on Bogart's own artistic environment, which is New York and the American neo-avant-garde. Bogart arrived in New York City in 1974 when the neo-avant-garde was going through a transition into what Professor Knut Ove Arntzen, echoing Franco Quadri, refers to as the post-avant-garde (Arntzen, 1990, p. 7). She therefore entered into an avant-garde at an intermediate stage. How did this influence her and what role did she end up playing in the transition from neo-avant-gard to post-avant-garde? Here many of her personified influencers will become clear as well as impactful American company platforms, like the Judson Dance Theater. Lastly, I wish, through a performance analysis of *Room,* to demonstrate whether collage, as a dramaturgical concept derived from the visual arts, is what constitutes Bogart's main dramaturgical device. And if so, in what way does collage manifest itself in the staging of *Room*? Central to the thesis is also the *Viewpoints* method. The *Viewpoints* are at the core of Bogart's process, and cannot be ignored as a pivotal tool which helps inform Bogart's directorial identity. Consequently, the performance analysis will concentrate on dramaturgy as well as the artistic process.

My presumption of the collage as a central dramaturgical principle for Bogart, stems from Scott T. Cummings' book *Remaking American Theater: Charles Mee, Anne Bogart and the SITI Company.* Here Cummings first introduces the playwright Charles Mee and makes it

clear how he approaches the profession of the playwright as a historian; appropriating and collecting texts utilized in various other places to make up a new whole, a collage, in the hands of Mee (Cummings, 2010, p. 14). When Cummings moves on to Bogart, he emphasizes how she has the mentality of a scavenger; a nesting impulse in her approach to text and staging. Like Mee, she collects and appropriates, and in this sense, does not consider herself to be an original thinker or artist. This leads Cummings to claim that "Collage is her natural form too" (Cummings, 2010, p. 39). Through my performance analysis I wish to validate or invalidate this claim, investigating whether this is true of this performance. And if so, shed light the ways in which the collage manifests itself in the staging of the performance. I acknowledge that this specific performance of *Room,* does not necessarily show how Bogart generally approaches directing, but it will serve as a sufficient supplementation to the discoveries made in the theoretical part of the thesis. Furthermore, my goal with this thesis is not to provide a broad account on the field of performance, but rather through qualitative research to able to articulate what characterizes Bogart's "directorial identity." The specific analysis will help provide material that inform these characteristics.

When looking into the previous academic dissertations done on the subject of Anne Bogart, there are several contributions produced, especially between the years 1990 and 2002. For example Nancy Smithner's 2002 thesis *Directing the acting ensemble: Meredith Monk, Elizabeth LeCompte, and Anne Bogart* where Smithner in addition to Bogart, investigates the approaches of two female artists who both can be said to move in Bogart's artistic orbit. A more recent dissertation is perhaps the one that bears the most resemblance to this one. In *Dynamic collisions: Directorial montage in the devised work of Anne Bogart,* Alesa Mcgregor examines the relationship between theatre and film based on the montage theories articulated by Sergej Eisenstein (Mcgregor, 2014, p. iii). Mcgregor states in her thesis how she cannot find satisfactory already existing research on the subject of montage techniques applied to Bogart's devised work, which is also true for this thesis (Mcgregor, 2014, p. 9). I wish to further the research on Bogart's work in relation to collage/montage theory, as well as contextualize her work in relation to director practices, because like Rebecca Daniels states, the director's profession "has been defined by and large by those who practice it …" (Daniels, 1996, p. 10). I therefore find it important to further document how directing for the stage is being approached, and especially by a female theatre director, since female contributions to the field previously have been under-represented.

To summarize, in this thesis I wish to provide a contextualization of Anne Bogart as a stage director, by offering an introduction to the German director's theatre and significant movements within the neo-avant-garde. This outline further functions as a contextualization of the performance analysis of *Room* in chapter 5.0. With this outline and performance analysis I hope to provide a thorough account of Bogart's directorial identity, which will then enable me to ascertain how she proceeds in regard to process, collaboration, text, dramaturgy and staging. My thesis serves as a supplementation of already existing research done on the subject of Bogart, but also investigating new angles to her work. Her connection to German director's theatre and Peter Stein, for example, is one that I see as under-reported. I also find it important to understand and discuss her position in relation to the avant-garde movement, as this can provide an understanding of how this phenomenon has evolved, where it stands, and where it is going. Finally, Bogart's relation to collage dramaturgy can inform how contemporary postmodern artists approach form and structure in the society of the 21st century.

1.2 Applied terminology and sources

When I in this thesis want to uncover Anne Bogart's relationship to form, structure and dramaturgy, I utilize the term "collage." In contrast to Alesa Mcgregor, who as explained in the previous chapter, utilizes the term "montage," referencing the montage theories introduced by Sergej Eisenstein. "Collage" is applied to Bogart by Scott T. Cummings when he compares her to playwright Charles Mee. Mee, for his part, derives his dramaturgy from the fine arts, he does not "write plays the way playwrights write plays. I think I write plays the way painters paint paintings" (Mee, 2002, p. 87). When I utilize the term "collage" it is therefore derived from Cummings and Mee, who utilize it in the context of the visual arts, starting with Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. Consequently, the term will in the context of this paper be used as a dramaturgy characterized by "fragmentation, rupture, contradiction and multiplicity, (…)" (Craig, 2008, p. 153) as well as appropriation like practiced in the Pop collages by Robert Rauschenberg (Craig, 2008, p. 105). Consequently, when dealing with the dramaturgy of collage, I have utilized source material retrieved from the fine arts, texts produced by or about Charles Mee on the matter, like the one written by his daughter Erin Mee *Shattered and Fucked up and Full of Wreckage: The Words and Works of Charles L.*

Mee as well as various published textbooks on dramaturgy, like *Dramatugi: Forestillinger om teater* by Svein Gladsø, Ellen K. Gjervan, Lise Hovik and Annabella Skagen.

In chapter 3.0 which concerns the avant-garde movement, I have chosen to rely heavily on publications by Richard Schechner. Having been a part of the American neo-avant-garde, his publications seem to offer an inside look into the movement all the while he remains one of the sceptics in regard to the movement's future. In his article *The Conservative Avant-garde,* he argues that the contemporary avant-garde has gone against its initial purpose of rebellion and advanced experimentations in the arts, and has become a brand as opposed to a radical movement (Schnechner, 2010, p. 899). He also mentions Anne Bogart on several occasions, as part of a group of successors of the neo-avant-garde, who, according to Schechner, are in large only repeating previous advancements, rather than advancing the field of performance further (Schechner, 1993, p. 8). Schechner's views are in part echoed by Peter Bürger in his *Theory of the Avant-garde* in that "the neo-avant-garde *institutionalizes the avant-garde as art* and thus negates genuinely avant-gardiste intentions" (Bürger, 1984, p. 58). To Bürger, the neo-avant-garde between 1950s and 70s is the lesser version of its predecessor, the historical avant-garde. Some academics are more hopeful and positive towards the advancements made during the neo-avant-garde and the future of the avant-garde movement as a whole, but Schechner still does provide many of the topics that will be discussed in chapter 3.0 of this thesis.

Also in chapter 3.0, there is a section devoted to the advancements made by the Judson Dance Theater. When it comes to these 1960s experiments made in American postmodern dance, Sally Banes appears to be the foremost author on the subject. With publications like *Democracy's body* (1993) and *Terpsichore in Sneakers* (1987), she is one of the primary scholars on the subject of neo-avant-garde dance movements. Based on this, she will be the primary source utilized to uncover the pertinent information in relation to this thesis. In regard to the Viewpoints method, no literary contribution appears more thorough than the one published by Anne Bogart herself together with fellow director, Tina Landau, *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition* (2014). There are many publications that deal with the Viewpoints and its implications, but none which handles the method in such a systemized manner. Bogart and Landau's book will therefore serve as the main source of information when dealing with the Viewpoints and its application to process. Bogart's other publications are also heavily utilized throughout the thesis. Publications like the 2014

collection of essays, *What's the Story,* are employed to create an overview of Bogart's career as well as provide more personal reflections around specific productions or directorial approaches.

2.0 The many faces of the theatre director

As a director, Anne Bogart stands on the shoulders of several practitioners who have helped form what is now known as the modern stage director. Directing as a profession is a fairly new contribution to the production of theatre, establishing itself as a specialized craft not until the end of the nineteenth century. Despite its relatively short life span, the director has made an enormous impact on the production of theatre since its inception. Today it might be considered an obvious figure to be included in the field of production, which naturally, has not always been the case. This part of the thesis is an attempt to highlight some of the practitioners who have contributed to the still very much undefined and undecided job description of the modern director. Starting with the early advances made by the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, Max Reinhardt and Erwin Piscator leading up to the director's theatre taking its hold in Germany with contributors like Peter Stein and the Bremen generation (Arntzen, 1987, p. 89), followed by a presentation of the theatre director as an auteur. In extension of this the discussion arises on the distribution of power within theatre production, as well as the director's relationship to the playwright and the dramatic text. This first part of the thesis is an attempt to reveal the connections between Bogart and the European director tradition, contextualizing the profession she herself practices.

2.1 Terminology

When discussing the development of the modern stage director, some terms become important as well as complicated. Both the concept of the director and the terms used to describe his responsibilities have developed and changed since the profession's inception at the end of the nineteenth century. The terms used when talking about directing and its history have evolved over time, having been discussed and debated through the years. Consequently, many terms have a history of their own. The German term *Regisseur* for example, refers to the profession of the director, while in France, it is in reference to the stage manager, or *régisseur.* In France, the director goes by the name of the *metteur en scene* (Cole & Chinoy,

1983, p. ix). When referencing the director, I am referring to the modern stage director that grew forth mainly at the end of the nineteenth century, with pioneers like Georg II, Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, Edward Gordon Craig and Max Reinhardt.

The tasks that the title of the director encompasses, may vary. Different directors as well as scholars, have provided several definitions to what exactly is the main functions and purpose of the modern stage director. Rebecca Daniels points to something in her book *Women Stage Directors Speak*, which I also can relate to while doing research on the subject of the director, namely that "It has been defined by and large by those who practice it …" (Daniels, 1996, p. 10). She also of course points to the fact that back when the director was developing as a profession, the people who would practice it was men. So in this regard, the assignments of the stage director as well as his purposes within the field of theatre, seem to have been defined by those who took on the profession. Still, the main factor in which most can agree on is that the director is to serve as an artistic leader in many respects, functioning as a unifying figure in the chaos that can be theatre production. The merging of the previous two separate positions of the instructor and the stage arranger, points to this fact. This mergence would eventually lead to what Morrison says about the modern director being "credited with the talents of a creative artist, and with being no mere organizer of actors and scenery but someone who puts the play through an imaginative process" (Morrison, 1978, p. 1). Consequently, the modern stage director does not merely organize a production, but the staging is filtered through him or her, unifying all the elements, creating a new conception of the play.

Another term worth mentioning is that of *Regietheater*. This term was not yet in effect when the first modern directors did their work. Marvin Carlson argues that the widespread use of the word first seemed to take hold "with the emergence of the Stein generation" (Carlson, 2009, p. x). The Stein generation is a reference to the second generation of post World War II German directors who were prominent in West Germany in the 1960s and 70s. Carlson considers Peter Stein, Peter Zadek and Claus Peymann to be the three most important contributors to this era of *Regietheater* (Carlson, 2009, p. xii). Carlson's Stein generation, is more or less the equivalent of what Knut Ove Arntzen refers to as the Bremen generation (Bremer-generasjonen), where he uses the geographical location of Bremen as the rallying point for these artistic advances (Arntzen, 1987, p. 89). The era was characterized by left leaning politics and the plays of Bertolt Brecht dominated the German stage (Carlson, 2009,

p. xii). So it was in relation to these directors that the term *Regietheater* became a much discussed term and concept. However the term was established already early on in the twentieth century, but its meaning has since then continuously changed (Gjefsen, 2012, p. 12). Today one might define *Regietheater* as descriptive of theatre which is more linked to its director and his or her advancements, rather than of the actor (Arntzen, 1991, p. 423).

Consequently, this definition is what I will be referring to when talking about *Regietheater,* or director's theatre. Director's theatre is, according to the previous citation, performances tied more so to the artistic display of the director, rather than that of the actor. The definition also implies a certain dominance with the director and a shift of power from the playwright over to the director. The term and what it means for theatre production has been debated and criticized, for instance in Germany there was criticism raised against how "the director imposed an artistic vision on a play or in more extreme cases simply used a play as raw material to make an almost totally independent dramatic creation" (Carlson, 2009, p. x). The rise of the modern director and the tradition of the director's theatre therefore provoke a discussion on the distribution of power, the hierarchy within theatre production.

2.2 Foreshadowing the modern stage director

"It is unthinkable that a play should be presented without having been first interpreted and realized by the director, (Morrison, 1978, p. 4) Hugh Morrison writes. This of course is in relation to the current state of theatre production. With this statement, Morrison emphasizes how accustomed the modern audience as well as production team have become to the presence of the theatre director. The profession has been embedded into the fabric of modern theatre production itself. Prior to the trade's establishment, however, there existed no specialized person to interpret the text and have this influence on the staging of the dramatic text. This responsibility would be spread out and handled by playwrights, stage-managers and leading actors. Even though the official emergence of the theatre director is thought to be around year 1900, the indications for *one* person to be in charge of both the arrangement as well as instruction of the production, came much earlier. Already halfway into the eighteenth century the implications of the modern stage director can be found in the growing attention to accurate sets, costumes and props as well as initiatives to perfect the rehearsal process (Cole,

T. & Chinoy, H. K., 1983: 17). In this way, the foundation for the emergence of the theatre director was 150 years in the making.

Along with the advances made within in the field of theatre production, the 1700s also sparked the conversation which would later lead to the commencement of naturalism. In *The Paradox of Acting,* first published in 1830, Denis Diderot demands an actor who is systemized and in control of his craft, always staying aware of how he or she practices the actor profession (Ulriksen, 1976, p. 7). Even though Diderot's text mainly deals with acting, he does make some demands that foreshadow the emergence of the stage director. Solveig Schult Ulriksen states in her preface to Diderot's essay, how one of his main demands, was a demand for unity. He encouraged performances where all the various elements would all support a coherent whole. This also included the actors. With a theatre characterized by star actors and their individual performance, Diderot revolts against this idea, arguing in favor of a balanced ensemble. By not accommodating these demands, the actors would disrupt the performance's unity. Like Ulriksen points out, these notions seem oddly modern and appear to be directive of developments taking place several decades later (Ulriksen, 1976, p. 8). Diderot points out David Garrick as an example of his ideal actor. According to Diderot, Garrick had an approach to acting where he appeared more natural and credible. Furthermore, Garrick managed to encompass both tragedy and comedy in his acting, which to Diderot showed range in a theatre where the two genres were still largely separate (Ulriksen, 1976, p. 9).

In addition to being an admired and well-known actor, Garrick also made advancements towards directing during his time at Drury Lane, functioning as its artistic manager. Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy note how Garrick "turned the platform for declamation into a rudimentary picture stage by dispossessing the gallants from their stage seats" (Cole, T. & Chinoy, H. K., 1983, p. 18). By doing this, Garrick furthered his wish for a more realistic staging, which was also his main objective for acting. Furthermore he accentuated the importance of the rehearsal process as well as the casting of productions. Cole and Chinoy further point to Konrad Ekhof and his demands of an initial reading of the script and analysis of the roles as well as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe' concern with rehearsal and an ensemble, as earlier hints for a need for a director (Cole, T. & Chinoy, H. K., 1983, p. 18-20). This need arises from various societal as well as theatre related conditions that made the emergence of the stage director necessary towards the end of the 1800s.

2.3 Why was a director needed?

Going back to earlier practices in theatre history, in ancient Greece, the director is of course absent in theatre production. Helen Krich Chinoy points out how theatre in Ancient Greece possessed a unifying factor, an *innere Regie.* This internal direction was provided by a sense of community through a set of common values, where theatre was perceived as a "collective social experience" (Cole & Chinoy, 1983, p. 8). Here the unifying factor did not have to be represented through an individual, the audience and theatre makers found this through a common philosophy which would have made the modern director a redundant figure. In light of this, it seems that the emergence of the stage director more than a thousand years later, would come to function as a substitute for this previous manifestation of unity. Because after all, an upholding of unity is in large what was needed from the director; an individual who would enforce a joint interpretation of all the different theatrical elements (Artnzen, 2007, p. 27).

Prior to the proper consummation of the director profession, directing was a binary practice, with one individual in charge of the arrangement (arrangementskunst) and another of the instruction of the actors. The arranger would start using a *Regiebuch,* where he would draw and note the designs of the staging. This practice had become customary in latter part of the 1800s (Arntzen, 2007, p. 27-28). The positions of the arranger and the instructor were previously held by playwrights, but gradually also by actors who then functioned as actor-managers. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, these two positions would merge into one, creating one specialized individual who would function as the *metteur en scène,* the stage director (Bradby, D. & Williams, D., 1988, p. 3). With the advancements made in stage technology, like the invention of gas lighting in the 1820s and later the electrical around 1900, the possibilities expanded extensively in terms of actor movement and scenery. And as a result, came the need for someone to ensure that all these elements worked together to tell the same, coherent story (Bradby, D. & Williams, D., 1988, p. 3).

2.4 Anne Bogart's German encounter

In 1978, living in Montreal, Anne Bogart went to see the film version of *Schaubühne*'s staging of Maxim Gorky's 1904 play, *Sommergäste.* The film, like its preceding stage

production, was directed by Peter Stein and may be considered as the starting point for Bogart's obsession with German contemporary theatre. The *Schaubühne* was Stein's base for fifteen years where he functioned as the theatre's artistic director from 1970 to 1985. (Schaubühne, n.d.). Bogart's encounter with Stein's work catalyzed a series of career altering occurrences. First, she enrolled in a German class at the Goethe Institute where she was made aware of the German theatre magazine, *Theater heute.* Here she would discover even more about Peter Stein and Schaubühne, providing her with the impetus to start applying Stein's aesthetic to her own work. She was especially attracted to their collective and democratic approach to production. When Bogart moved back to New York she would start attracting German-speaking actors and featuring them in her Downtown site-specific work. Eventually Bogart's grand interest in Germen theatre turned into a German interest in *her*, which was consummated by *Theater heute*'s six-page feature on her work (Bogart, 2014, p. 66-68).

The publicity caused by the article initiated several invitations for Bogart to come direct in German-speaking countries. She gladly accepted them, but her experiences in Europe would turn out to be challenging. Bogart recalls being possessed by *Angst,* making her artistically and directorially paralyzed. Her *angst* seemed to stem from her need to adapt to the German artistic process, diverging from her "downtown postmodern roots" (Bogart, 2014, p. 69). While directing graduates at the *Hochschule der Künste* in West Berlin, Bogart, in her loss of direction, felt she failed to bring the energy and enthusiasm that was needed to the piece. Her won criticism was echoed by the audience. This experience led Bogart to collapse. While in exile at a hotel in Italy subsequent to the premiere, she has a revelation:

> "I realized with profound conclusiveness that I was an American; I had an American sense of humour, an American sense of structure, rhythm and logic. I thought like an American. I moved like an American. And, all at once, it was clear to me that the rich American tradition of history and people exists to tap into and own. Suddenly I was free."
>
> (Bogart, 2001, p. 14).

This realization would result in her own personal investigation of her own heritage, both in concern to American history, but also in terms of American theatre. Bogart's German encounter triggered a turning point in her career, forcing her to cherish her cultural heritage. Subsequently to her experiences in Europe, a lot of Bogart's work has revolved around

American identity, and what it entails. However, the citation above does provoke the question of what it means to be an American director. If Bogart from this point on in large devoted her directorial career to explore what is means to be American, then what does it mean to be an American theatre director? The following chapter attempts to answer this question.

3.0 New York, Judson Dance Theater and the avant-garde

To further discover the shoulders that Anne Bogart stands on, this chapter will focus on her artistic surroundings. After completing her Bachelor of Arts at Bard College, Bogart traveled to New York to complete her Master's degree at New York University's Tish School of the Arts. Arriving in New York City in 1974, she would enter a city which had previously been and still was, the home base for many theatre, as well as dance and musical artists which would come to influence her and her work. New York City has remained Bogart's main location for artistic activity, even though many of her productions premiere elsewhere in the United States. She arrived there at an interesting time, theatre historically speaking. The years proceeding her arrival are considered by many as the American neo-avant-garde. However, going into the latter part of the 1970s, the avant-garde consciousness had started to diminish. Consequently, Bogart entered New York and its rich artistic environment, in a time of change. The following chapters are an attempt to uncover in what way the American neo-avant-garde movement in New York City influenced Bogart and the key figures who set their mark on her further work.

3.1 The emergence of an avant-garde consciousness

Avant-garde as a *general* term can be appointed to any artistic expression or general phenomena that is considered to be pioneering or in some way diverges from the status quo of its preceding counterpart. In this way, it can be used to describe any phenomenon that seems new at the time of its inception, and that can appear as original in some sense. However, when used in a *theatre historical* manner, it comes with various characteristics. These characteristics are what makes it a movement in the arts. For the purpose of this thesis, this distinction between avant-garde as a general term, and as a specific kind of movement throughout theatre history, needs to be made. When utilizing the term avant-garde from her on out, it will be in reference to the aesthetically, as well as politically driven movement within the arts.

Initially used as a term in the military, the term was first utilized outside its military context by Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, serving as the title of his anarchist journal, *L'Avant-*

Garde in 1878. Bakunin's followers furthered the term to later also involve the arts (Innes, 1993, p.1). Since then, avant-garde has continued to revolve around politics, also in the context of aesthetics, "where it denotes a practice of assaulting traditional authorities and cultural institutions" (Berghaus, 2010, p. 35). The avant-garde is therefore closely related to a reluctance to subordinate itself cultural and political authority. This often includes rebelling against preceding artistic expressions. So in a sense, the avant-gardists are generally in opposition to something, be it political or aesthetically. This something is often a dominating factor within society, making the avant-gardists the smaller rebellious group. Like Richard Schechner points out: "Avant-gardists were on the left because the right was in power" (Schechner, 1995, p. 6). Aesthetically, the avant-gardes crave an escape from already established artistic conventions, and seek to alter this establishment.

So avant-gardism in the theatre is not merely a pioneering idea, but also an idea which goes against the dominant culture in both politics and aesthetics; It is rebellious, innovative and politically charged. Günter Berghaus points out how, as a byproduct of its rebellious and experimental nature, the avant-garde caters to a smaller audience and therefore operates outside of the mainstream (Berghaus, 2010, p. 35). In this way the avant-garde movement functions as an alternative to the dominant artistic expressions within its cultural landscape. With the historical avant-garde, which commenced towards the end of the nineteenth century, new forms of theatrical expression and methods were explored. It was also influenced by primitivism, in the sense that theatre artists started asking themselves fundamental questions, attempting to discover the medium anew (Innes, 1993, p. 3). This process evoked a rich experimentation, creating various isms, like cubism, futurism, Dadaism, surrealism, expressionism and more. Martin Puchner also emphasizes how the historical avant-garde is heavily associated with the manifesto. No longer exclusively dealing with politics, the art manifesto was born, documenting the artistic motions of the time (Puchner, 2006, p. 351-352).

3.2 The five avant-gardes according to Richard Schechner

In the introduction to his book *The Future of Ritual: Writings on Culture and Performance,* Richard Schechner presents an overview of the different avant-gardes that have arisen the last 100 years. There is the historical avant-garde of the late 1800s and early nineteenth century,

and in addition there is "a current avant-garde (always changing), a forward-looking avant-garde, a tradition seeking avant-garde, and an intercultural avant-garde" (Schechner, 1995, p. 5). He points out how one performance can fall under several of the mentioned avant-gardes. Even though Schechner himself is skeptical towards his own systemization, it appears as a helpful system when attempting to achieve an overview of the avant-garde movement. The current avant-garde is the one which is happening in the now, therefore it is ever changing. Schechner's "now," is November 1991, and according to him, characterized by a recycling of advancements made during the historical avant-garde. He also claims that the artists who used to be experimental, now seem classical. He expresses how he has come to know what to expect from previously avant-garde theatre artists and their successors (Schechner, 1995, p. 8). One of those mentioned, is Anne Bogart. Schechner himself was once considered a part of the American neo-avant-garde, which will be touched upon in the following chapter. He later became Bogart's mentor during her time at NYU. To him, she is an example of an excellent artist, but one who has become classical in her continuance of his and other neo-avant-garde artist's aesthetic.

According to Schechner, Bogart has become part of a current avant-garde (1991) that has not yet become mainstream, but that has achieved a predictable pattern. This pattern makes the supposed avant-garde seem too established in relation to the avant-garde's original reluctance towards establishment. Schechner further relates the current avant-garde to two opposing themes: the forward-looking and the tradition-seeking. The first is closely connected to the historical avant-garde, attempting to create new expressions and methods, incorporating modern technology and generally concerning themselves with the future (Schechner, 1995, p. 10-11). This branch of the current avant-garde seems to be the most concerned with one of the two main intentions of the historical avant-garde, namely the aspiration for innovation and new pioneering ideas. This branch still believes in originality and aspires to utilize modern tools to stand out from previous advancements in the arts. The tradition-seeking part of the current avant-garde however, seeks to fulfill the other main intention of the historical avant-garde: to rediscover theatre and explore what exists at its core. This branch is concerned with the roots of theatre. Jerzy Grotowski is mentioned by Schechner as a prime example of this branch. With his focus on actor training and laboratory work, Grotowski aspired to rediscover theatre's distinctive character.

So, according to Schechner, the current avant-garde of the 1990s could be split into two branches of thought, one looking forward, the other backwards. In addition, he includes the intercultural avant-garde which extracts from various cultures around the world to make up its artistic expression. He further emphasizes how ideally this will amount to an exploration of the different cultures, instead of an attempt to unify them (Schechner, 1995, p. 17-18). In conclusion, the current avant-garde, according to Schechner, can either look to the past, the future or around the world for inspiration. Even though he does not think this division is satisfactory, it does provide an overview of the many directions the avant-garde may wander. It also functions as a categorization of a movement which includes many different expressions. In chapter 4, I will attempt to place Anne Bogart within this system, as a way of contextualizing her work. In conclusion, Schechner seems skeptical towards the future of the avant-garde. He dismisses that any advancements have been made since the neo-avant-garde of the 60s and 70s. To him, the term avant-garde exists now only as a theoretical one, without any practical examples. Lastly, he proposes that the term should be used to refer to the historical avant-garde exclusively (Schechner, 1995, p. 18). This becomes a relevant argument when it comes to the neo-avant-garde, which is the topic of the following chapter.

3.3 The Neo-avant-garde

The neo-avant-garde is a term that describes the avant-garde movement that arose in the wake of the second world war. Starting midway into the 1950s, the neo-avant-garde is regarded as a kind of revival of the historical avant-garde. It is said to have "a dialectical relation" (Hopkins, 2006, p. 1) to its predecessor, in that it shares its philosophy and "Its members are linked by a specific attitude to western society, a particular aesthetic approach, and the aim of transforming the nature of theatrical performance: all of which add up to a distinctive ideology" (Innes, 1993, p. 4). Despite their supposed connection, many have stated that the neo-avant-garde fails to live up to the historical avant-garde. Peter Bürger, author of *Theory of the Avant-Garde,* notes how the neo-avant-garde deviates from the historical avant-garde's ideology, by being characterized by institutionalization (Hopkins, 2006, p. 2). Schechner, referencing Graham Ley, supports Bürger's statement, pointing out how the neo-avant-garde received money from both the government and the private sector (Schechner, 1995, p. 8-9). In this way, the avant-gardian aspiration towards independence may appear to fall through. So in this regard, the neo-avant-garde differs from its predecessor. Yet, if one turns to Martin

Puchner, the neo-avant-garde did deliver in terms of aesthetic advancements and political commitment, in that it according to him, is "nothing less than a second wave of avant-garde activity" (Puchner, 2006, p. 353).

3.4 Judson Dance Theater

One of the many important contributors to the American neo-avant-garde was the addition of postmodern dance. In this regard, few were as important as the Judson Dance Theater. The first performance made by the group, was in 1962, when a collection of choreographers, consisting of interdisciplinary artists, were allowed a showing of their experiments at the Judson Memorial Church in New York City. Stationed at Washington Square in the heart of Greenwich Village, the church had come to house several cultural events. Like stated by Sally Banes, the dance performance of 1962 would become a milestone for the evolution of dance. Acting as the catalyst for the growth of American postmodern dance, the performance was "the first avant-garde movement in dance theater since the modern dance of the 1930s and 1940s" (Banes, 1993, p. xi).

In true avant-garde fashion, the Judson Dance Theater dismissed the already established forms of dance, like modern dance and ballet. They sought to challenge these conventions, and like other avant-gardists, wanted to rediscover dance's individuality through experimentation. Despite the group's short lived existence, only operating from 1962 to 1964, it had a significant impact on the community that gathered around it and on the art of dance itself (Banes, 1993, p. xi-xii). The first performance, *A Concert of Dance #1*, was the result of a class held by choreographer Robert Dunn. When he eventually discontinued his teaching, the group would continue working independently. The sixteen concerts held by the original collaborative group, was based on weekly workshops which could feature various choreographers (Banes, 1993, p. xiii). Banes, who has provided maybe the most extensive research on the topic of the Judson Church dancers, points to Greenwich Village as a Utopia for young artists at the time. The neighborhood was heavily influenced by Beat culture, functioning as the center for all kinds of artistic disciplines. Merce Cunningham who had become a central figure in the dance community during the 1950s, especially through his collaborations with musician John Cage, was also a very significant influence for the Judson

Dance Theater (Banes, 1993, xv-xvi). Cunningham provided the Judson dancers with the freedom to break free from established conventions. However, Cunningham may be considered to operate on "the border between modern and post-modern dance" (Banes, 1987, p. xvi) The postmodern dancers of the Judson Dance Theater, would thereby free themselves even further. James Waring, a San Francisco trained ballet dancer, taught them collage techniques.

The Judson Dance Theater consisted among others of Robert Dunn, Fred Herko and Yvonne Rainer. Rainer, who had previously danced ballet and attended classes at the Graham school, started taking classes by Merce Cunningham in 1959. This is what made her also attend Robert Dunn's classes and then become a part of the Judson Dance Theater a few years later (Banes, 1993, p.12). Rainer rebelled against the established aesthetics of dance by incorporating speech and continued to do so throughout her career (Banes, 1993, p. 13). Banes emphasizes how the Judson Dance Theater always remained diverse and versatile in terms of aesthetic. Still, some patterns took shape. The group was collectively driven, believing in a democratic approach to collaboration. The dancers would improvise and employ the principle of chance, laid out by Cunningham and Cage. Composition and collectiveness was prioritized above technique and beauty. Besides, the group consisted of both experienced and inexperienced dancers, which made for workshops where everyone contributed equally. This made sure that "the works (had) an unpolished, spontaneous, "natural" appearance" (Banes, 1993, p. xviii). Judson Dance Theater wanted to expand the limits of dance, experimenting their way into what later would be known as postmodern dance. This was the group's core objective.

4.0 Anne Bogart: The scavenger, pedagogue and enabler

In 2002, Anne Bogart was featured at the Exit Art Gallery as part of an exhibition on six influential downtown theatre directors. The exhibition was held at the gallery's SoHo residence in New York, where together with Robert Wilson, Richard Foreman, Reza Abdoh, Peter Schumann and Meredith Monk, she dived into her personal achieves to provide an account of her career thus far (Cummings, 2010, p. 35). In her installation, Bogart systemized her previous work into categories: *Classic explosions, site-specific, dance/theatre, living playwrights, music theatre and devised works*. The first category references Bogart's re-interpretative stagings of well-established texts that have come to be known as classics. The second introduces her site-specific work, where she has utilized found places as venues for performance. Furthermore, the "dance/theatre" category points to works that favor movement, while "living playwrights" features her collaborations with contemporary dramatists. "Music theatre" includes her work on major opera shows and new interpretations of Broadway musicals, and lastly there is her devised works, which can be connected to collage pieces she's produced that often revolve around a specific artist (Cummings, 2010, p. 38). This systematization of Bogart's body of work, appears helpful when attempting to discover her directorial identity. Nevertheless, Scott T. Cummings argues that these categories can be further decreased "to two basic procedures of making theater: she puts original pieces together ("Devised Works") or she takes established plays apart ("Classic Explosions")" (Cummings, 2010, p. 38). In the following section I wish to present a selection of these categories in order to inform Bogart's approach to the creative process and in what way she executes her collaborations with other artists within the field of theatre production.

4.1 Classic explosions

This category constitutes Anne Bogart's stagings of well-established dramatic literature. The inclusion of "explosions" refers to how the classical play is reworked through reinterpretation and deconstruction of the classical text. This category includes productions of Claire Booth's *The Women, Summerfolk* by Maxim Gorky and *Picnic* by William Inge among others (Dixon & Smith, 1995, p.33-43). However, while directing her *classic explosions*, Anne Bogart has been criticized for her new interpretations of classical American plays. Anne Fliotsos and Wendy Vierow write about how "Early in her career Bogart earned a reputation for ruthlessly

deconstructing beloved American classics, a technique that brought her controversy, notoriety, and ultimately acclaim" (Fliotsos & Vierow, 2008, p. 77). There are several examples of this, for example her 1982 adaptation of *A Streetcar Named Desire* where she would cast twelve Stanleys and eight Blanches. Another is her 1984 staging of *South Pacific,* created by the famous duo, Oscar Hammerstein and Richard Rodgers. The performance took place at NYU, and caught the attention of playwright Eduardo Machado who remembers it vividly. Machado was, as he says, "associated with a branch of the Oscar Hammerstein clan," at the time. After realizing that surroundings of the play had been significantly altered, the Hammersteins felt inclined to call their lawyers. The play's setting had been changed from the Pacific Islands to a mental institution where veterans were coping with the aftermath of posttraumatic stress disorder. But, like Machado writes, "the Hammersteins went to see the show… and they had to admit that it was the work of someone extremely talented" (Machado, 1995, p. 73).

When it comes to her *classic explosions,* Bogart operates in the vein of *Regietheater* in that her directorial choices come to the forefront of the piece. She creates new circumstances for the characters within the plays and contextualizes the piece, so that it appears to deal with newer themes than previously. The production is in this sense dependent on her interpretation of the text, and it comes out different when it is filtered through her imaginative mind. When browsing through Bogart's production history, quite few of her productions appear with their original titles. She has produced plays by Anton Chekov, Maxim Gorky and August Strindberg, but they are all listed as adaptations. Chekov's *The Seagull* is renamed *Out of Sync,* Gorky's *The Lower Depths* is called *At the Bottom* and a collection of Strindberg texts are given the title *Strindberg Sonata* (Dixon& Smith, 1995, p. 33-43). There is therefore an evident tendency in her body of work to rework already established texts, either by providing new interpretations or combining various texts by the same playwright to make up a new whole. This latter technique will be further discussed in chapter 4.6 where I investigate her devised works that Scott T. Cummings identify as collage pieces.

Cummings does however, also argue how "Bogart's "classic explosions" might be seen as devised in a broader sense, insofar as she often invents a new reality for the action, a new present tense, either through changing periods or adding a frame situation to the play as given" (Cummings, 2010, p. 39). This statement by Cummings is echoed by drama critic, Mel Gussow, who points to Bogart as well as Robert Wilson, Peter Stein and Peter Brook, as "re-

envisionists" of classical or well-established texts. When approaching the text, Bogart asks what makes it classic and searches for reasons and ways in which to make it pertinent to a contemporary audience (Gussow, 1995, p. 145). When it comes to her *classic explosions,* Bogart can therefore be said to take on the *Regietheater* tradition of reinventing the text and have it function as a starting point for further interpretation. She enables the text to say something new, that it has not spoken before. And then, "Depending on the point of view, she is either an innovator or a provocateur assaulting a text" (Gussow, 1994). But then, one might ask how Bogart approaches contemporary dramatic texts, where the playwright might be directly involved.

4.2 Living Playwrights: Paula Vogel and the production of *The Baltimore Waltz*

As a director, there might be a difference between how one stages a dramatic text written by a living playwright, versus one that is deceased**.** Professor and playwright Paula Vogel offers her experiences of working with Bogart in her essay *Anne Bogart and the New Play.* Vogel's play *The Baltimore Waltz,* was directed by Bogart in 1992, approximately two years after Bogart's premature departure from the Trinity Repertory Company in Providence. Bogart had been hired as its artistic director, but due to disagreements with the board at Trinity and their following decision to reduce her budget considerably, made Bogart resign after only nine months (Cummings, 2010, p. 47). Vogel's *The Baltimore Waltz* was originally intended to be a part of Bogart's repertoire while at Trinity, but ended up being produced at the Circle Repertory Company in New York City instead. Vogel first became very interested in working with Bogart after having watched *No Plays No Poetry,* Bogart's first production with the Trinity Repertory Company. Vogel describes the impression of her experience in these words: "The night of the first preview of *The Baltimore Waltz* (…) will remain a highlight of my professional life" (Vogel, 1995, p. 91). This feeling that Vogel was left with after almost completing the production of the play, was a direct result of Bogart's approach to the artistic process. Vogel states that this particular production was the first time she had felt included as a writer in the process, making her feel like a part of a fellowship. Vogel is vocal about her criticism of how "In rehearsal the director becomes dominatrix" (Vogel, 1995, p. 93). She explains how after the shift of power from the playwright to the director with the emergence of *Regietheater*, the writer has become an isolated figure in the artistic process. And that when the director has taken an auteur approach, the playwright has turned into an employee

who simply produces the product that inspires the process, in which the writer takes no part (Vogel, 1995, p. 92-93). With Bogart, Vogel was met with a different approach where she felt included and appreciated in the process of the actual staging of her script. She even states how Bogart "is an ideal collaborator of the new American play" (Vogel. 1995, p. 91). What kind of choices made by Bogart could evoke this kind of statement by Vogel?

The answer to this question seems to mainly be concerned with Bogart's approach to environment and conditions for creating theatre. But in what way do these conditions affect the *writer* involved with the production? Vogel writes how "The problem of collaboration comes from the misunderstanding of who is the author of the play" (Vogel, 1995, p. 93). This implies that Bogart is devoid of this misunderstanding, providing a solution to what she experiences as the challenge of artistic collaboration. For Vogel, this solution was found in Bogart's ability to adapt and change at each rehearsal. No interpretation was final, and she would take on a different role for herself throughout the production. Vogel summarizes this dynamic in a metaphor, saying that "what I most appreciated about my first Bogart collaboration, it is that we didn't get married" (Vogel, 1995, p. 98). What she means by this is that her and Bogart's intentions and interpretations of the piece never fully merged. They operated in a more democratic manner, where "Bogart coordinated more of a call and response dynamic of leader and chorus found in gospel music, a new leader changing from moment to moment (…) (Vogel, 1995, p. 98). So rather than taking on the role of the authoritarian auteur director that Vogel heavily criticizes, Bogart created a flatter structure of hierarchy where the dynamic of power would change continuously. It seems from Vogel's descriptions of this particular production process, that Bogart more than anything functioned as the leading orchestrator of the process, not so much the leader of interpretation and aesthetic. She is the one who creates the environment in which creativity thrives, but not necessarily the main creator of the performance in itself. The responsibility of finding the "right" way to approach the text, and how to stage this particular approach, is more evenly dispersed to everyone involved. Looking at Vogel's experience with working with Bogart, it therefore becomes evident how Bogart behaves more like a pedagogue, than as an artistic authority. She seems to have a more pedagogical approach, where every member of the production is encouraged to participate in the artistic process, where every entity is more juxtaposed than in the instance of a true auteur's theatre.

4.3 Devised Works: Site-specific

Anne Bogart first started doing devised, site-specific work after she arrived in New York City in December of 1974. She settled in a loft in SoHo, working various odd jobs next to completing a master's degree in theatre history, now Performance Studies, at NYU (Bogart, 2001, p. 10-11). Bogart initially moved to New York to form a company, so she published an ad in the newspaper *Backstage* searching for actors. Many phone calls and interviews later, she began her no budget, site-specific work in downtown New York, utilizing the spaces available to her (Bogart, 2014, p. 45-46). One of her earlier performances was called *Inhabitat* and took place in the brownstone house that she rented in Brooklyn. A truck would pick up the audience in Manhattan, and drive them to the location. Here they would follow the actors throughout the house as they spoke text appropriated from Chekov and Becket and several others. One night John Cage was in the audience and he spread the word of the performance. In this way, Bogart "became known for working in found places or what later became known as "site-specific theater" "(Bogart, 2014, p. 47-48).

In their 2015 article, *The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance,* Amy Codileone and Rachel Tuggle Whorton define "site-specific devised theatre as a framework in which the chosen location 'provides the potential structure, form, content, and participants for the piece'" (Codileone & Whorton, 2015, p. 298). In other words, the setting and location of the performance serves as the starting point for site-specific performances, and further informs the devised process that follows. With these kinds of productions, the location is brought to the foreground, functioning as a much more important factor than what it might in a production based at an established theatre. Performances that are simply devised, but not rooted in a site-specific tradition, may utilize a different starting point, like a piece of text, an image or simply a theme. With performances that include both of these approaches however, the location becomes essential and makes up the basis for all further brainstorming and production. Even though the devised site-specific approach to producing theatre would later be established, Bogart did not turn to it for artistic purposes, but out of pure necessity. As a newly graduated student lacking experience, she was not able to attain work at an established theatre in New York. She was therefore forced to enable the conditions in which she could create. Making *all* of New York her venue, Bogart found a way to jump start her career (Cummings, 2010, p. 51).

A reoccurring aspect in many site-specific performances, also with Bogart, is its environmental staging. Like in *Inhabitat,* the audience is not allowed a comfortable position in which they can quietly watch or just tilt their head slightly to be able to observe the performance. The staging is not frontal, but environmental. The term "environmental theatre" was coined by Richard Schechner in his 1968 article in The Drama Review, called *6 Axioms For Environmental Theatre.* Arnold Aronson explains how an audience member positioned in a frontal relationship to the performance, only has to move his or her head forty-five degrees in either direction to be able to indulge in the show. Both proscenium and thrust staging for example, would be considered frontal. Either way, the audience is facing forward, watching a limited and framed space in which the performance is taking place (Aronson, 1977, p. 2). This frame also constitutes the boundary between the real world and the world of the play. Aronson notes how

> "Any performance of which this is not true—in which the complete mise en scène or scenography cannot be totally apprehended by a spectator maintaining a single frontal relationship to the performance—must be considered non-frontal or environmental"

> (Aronson, 1977, p. 2-3).

Anne Bogart's site-specific productions therefore usually fall under the category of environmental staging practices. The effects of environmental staging are many. Like Professor Peter Eversmann points out in his article *The Experience of Theatrical Space,* with environmental staging, "there is no formal distinction whatsoever between acting area and audience" (Eversmann, 1992, p. 95) This fact causes the line between performers and spectators to become blurred. The audience is no longer at a comfortable distance, but has to be immerged into the performance; they become, in many ways, a part of the performance itself. Eversmann assigns the use of a "total environment," in relation to environmental staging, to the avant-gardists. (Eversmann,1992, p. 96) He uses Grotowski and The Performance Group as examples of theatre artists who come close to utilizing the "total environment," where "there is a total sharing of space between performers and onlookers; the audience is surrounded by the setting and there are no pre-ordained acting areas" (Eversmann, 1992, p. 95).

Cummings writes about site-specific theatre, that it "tends to elevate an audience's awareness of its own spectatorial role, (…)" (Cummings, 2010, p. 52) which is a significant effect of the environmental staging of site-specific performance. With the relationship between the actors and the audience being so intimate, the spectator is forced to adapt to a different way of observation. When encountering environmental theatre, the spectator is made conscious of their influence on the performance, as well as the fact that the performance actually *is* a performance. By being able to watch other spectators, the audience is always reminded of the fact that what they are seeing performed, is theatre, and not a representation of the real world, like a realistic staging would have them believe. This awareness can be traced back to Bertolt Brecht and his *Verfremdungeffekt*. So, implicit in the practice of environmental staging, is also the need for the performance to be something other than realistic. The performance would soon have to embrace its performative nature.

Inhabitat conforms to these characteristics of site-specific theatre, utilizing an untraditional space to perform theatre, and making the audience move through it without providing them with a designated seat or area. One aspect of *Inhabitat's* process might be said to differ though, in that Bogart and her actors did not in fact utilize her Brooklyn house as the starting point for the performance. The staging was supposed to take place in a prop room at the Theater for the New City, which was going to be turned into a small theatre arena (Bogart, 2014, p. 46). This however, did not go according to plan, and Bogart was forced to find a second venue. Ultimately, *Inhabitat* ended up being a site-specific performance, but it was not intended to be one. The performance was not initially inspired by its setting, but still ended up taking advantage of the final venue's qualities by utilizing several of the rooms in the house and guiding the audience through them. *Inhabitat* is therefore a fruitful example of how this specific genre of theatre, was not something Bogart intended for or necessarily wished for, but a genre that allowed her to execute her work and have it shown to an audience. Bogart continued to do site-specific work, one of the most interesting being, *Another Person is a Foreign Country,* which took place in the ruins of the Towers Nursing Home, located on the west side of Central Park. The performance ended up dealing with the concept of "other-ness" and consisted of a cast which reflected this theme by including cast members with various disabilities. *Another Person in a Foreign Country* was also the first in many close collaborations between Bogart and historian and playwright, Charles Mee (Cummings, 2010, p. 53-54).

Bogart has expressed how site-specific theatre was a constructive genre in which to launch her career as a director. It provided her with the perfect set of limitations for her to work of off, a challenge that had to be dealt with. Bogart writes: "I depend upon the given constraints of any project because the limitations require me to be creative. The limits are what define the endeavor. Without limits, there is nothing to push against. Without limitations, I can only fail" (Bogart, 2014, p. 50). This notion, of needing limitations and restrictions, can also be applied to the Viewpoints and Bogart's physical approach to theatre production. Ellen Lauren describes how actors who have yet not gotten accustomed to Bogart's methods of working, would "claim the structures are claustrophobic because their backgrounds are based on realism (Lauren, 1995, p. 68). The structures she is referring to are the physical ones made by the utilization of the Viewpoints, and the fact that the text comes after this choreographic process. The method, which will be expanded upon in chapter 4.5, sets certain limitations for the performers to work around. Bogart stresses how these limitations are necessary for there to be a structure to work against, to work around, to challenge one's creativity. She mentions that a lack of limitations was one of the contributing factors to her failure in West Berlin (Bogart, 2014, p. 49). In any instance, limits and boundaries appear to be essential to Bogart's process. Her financial limitations were one of the reasons why she became one of the first to practice the site-specific approach to production in the U.S.

4.4 Viewpoints: Echoing Mary Overlie

Anne Bogart and Tina Landau start their book *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical guide to Viewpoints and Composition* (2014), with an introduction to the Judson Dance Theater. They explain how these choreographers "wanted to liberate choreography from psychology and conventional drama" (Bogart & Landau, 2014, p. 4). Like mentioned in chapter 3.4, Bogart and Landau go on to describe a group of artists who believed in a democratic approach to collaboration, where power and responsibility is spread out evenly between the group's members. These dancers' postmodern experiments where "What made the final dance was the context of the dance. Whatever movement occurred while working on these problems *became* the art" (Bogart & Landau, 2014, p. 4), constitutes the core of the Viewpoints method.

Even though Bogart has come to be strongly associated with the Viewpoints, she did not conceive them. Together with Tina Landau, she would develop the method further, expanding on the foundation which had already been established by choreographer and dancer, Mary Overlie. In 1979, having completed her master's degree at NYU and received praise for her experimental site-specific work, Anne Bogart was hired to teach at the newly established Experimental Theater Wing at NYU (Cummings, 2010, p. 44). This is where she met Mary Overlie, who would become an essential figure to her future directorial approach to production of theatre. Overlie, influenced by the postmodern dance practiced by the Judson Dance Theater, introduced Bogart to *The Six Viewpoints*. These initial six viewpoints, served as the basis for Bogart and Landau's extension, which would result in nine. According to Overlie, "The Viewpoints process reduces performance to a code. (…) The structure we see through The Viewpoints is made in six basic windows of perception that are used to create and view theater" (Overlie, 2016). Overlie's *The Six Viewpoints*, also called the SSTEMS, consist of: *Space, shape, time, emotion, movement* and *story* (Overlie, 2016). These basic principles are thereby used as tools in which to perceive the basic elements of theatre. They help reduce theatre practice back to simplistic perspectives which lie at the core of all movement based performance. The Six Viewpoints are, according to Overlie, a method where "Instead of beginning with the idea of making theater this approach begins with taking theater apart" (Overlie, 2016). So, the method is therefore a way of reducing theatre and movement to six simple perspectives, where the goal is not necessarily to produce theatre, but to return to a place of minimalism and simplicity, and reinvestigate these basic principles in order to start fresh.

The Six Viewpoints were a way of systemizing improvisational dance for Overlie, and it relied on already existing principles used during improvisation. Even though the method had its emergence stem from dance, Overlie taught the system while teaching at NYU, hereby introducing it to the field of theatre as well (Bogart & Landau, 2014, p. 5). Bogart was inspired by Overlie's method, and started applying it to her own directorial work. Together with Tina Landau, she elaborated on the already existing six viewpoints, and expanded them to include nine, where *tempo, duration, kinesthetic response* and *repetition* are viewpoints of time, and *shape, gesture, architecture, spatial relationship* and *topography* serve as the viewpoints of space (Bogart, A. & Landau, T. 2014, p. 8-11). All of them are meant as physical viewpoints, though Bogart and Landau later also would develop five vocal

viewpoints to compliment them, which are *pitch, dynamic, acceleration/deceleration, timbre* and *silence* (Bogart & Landau, 2014, p. 106).

Firstly, Bogart and Landau emphasize how the method is not set in stone and should be reinterpreted by those who utilize it. They also remark how the Viewpoints are principles that have been around for a long time, considering them timeless. The Viewpoints "belong to the natural principles of movement, time and space. Over the years, we have simply articulated a set of names for things that already exist (…)" (Bogart & Landau, 2014, p. 7). So the method is in large, an articulation and systemization of already existing practices. According to Bogart and Landau, the main goal of the method is to function as a tool when producing movement for a performance, as well as way of training and reinforcing an ensemble (Bogart & Landau, 2014, p. 7). In this regard, the method helps create a feeling of community within a group and have them share a common way of training, which might further a feeling of fellowship. The method also provides an ensemble with a communal vocabulary which can be used to describe ideas and overall function as a basis for communication. The method can further be defined as "points of awareness that a performer or creator makes use of while working" (Bogart & Landau, 2014, p. 8). Each physical, as well as vocal viewpoint, therefore serves as a perceptive mode in which to become aware of one's movement or voice.

The Viewpoints can be executed in three different formations: Through lane work, on the grid or open viewpoints. Lane work is when the participants each stay in their lane, walking back and forth in a straight line. When the participants move on the grid, they are free to walk in any direction they like, as long as it is in 90 degrees angles with no curves to their floor patterns. Open viewpoints are simply executing the method without any predetermined rules of direction, and the participants are free to move wherever and in whatever shape they like (Bogart & Landau, 2014, p. 68-71). The participants, moving in a predestinated formation or not, utilize the various physical viewpoints simultaneously. The physical viewpoints may be described as follows:

Viewpoints of time:

Tempo: The speed in which one executes an action or movement. This viewpoint helps the participant become aware of what rate of speed he or she operates on. The movement is not central to this viewpoint, but rather the speed of its execution.

Duration: This viewpoint builds on the former, in that it is supposed to make the participant aware of the amount of time he or she spends on executing a movement or how long he or she remains in a specific *tempo.*

Kinesthetic response: This viewpoint refers to "A spontaneous reaction to motion which occurs outside" the participant (Bogart & Landau, 2014, p. 8). The viewpoint manifests itself physically as a reaction to an impulse that happens within the room, be it another participant's movement or a sound.

Repetition: To repeat. This viewpoint is two-folded and can be split into *Internal repetition,* which is a repetition of an action performed by the participant him/herself, and *External repetition,* which is a repetition of a movement that is performed by something or someone in the room.

Viewpoints of space:

Shape: With this viewpoint, the participant creates shapes using their own body. There are three different types of shapes: Lines, curves and a combination of the two. With this viewpoint, the participant's body language should be affected by either lines, curves or both. The shape could further be executed while moving, or by staying still.

Gesture: This viewpoint constitutes of creating gestures, which can be performed with the use of all the various body parts. Gesture is split into two types, first there is *Behavioral gesture* which are trivial gestures that appear in everyday life, like a wave or a wink. *Expressive gesture* on the other hand, are gestures that appear more abstract and stem from the inside. They are expressions of emotion which do not necessarily take the shape of anything recognizable.

Architecture: With this viewpoint, the participant takes inspiration from the room that surrounds him or her to create movement. The movement can be based on the room's 1) *solid mass,* which are concrete things like ceilings or windows. Or it could be based on the various types of 2) *texture,* an object's material. Or the movement can stem from 3) *lights*, 4) *color* or 5) *sound.*

Spatial relationship: This viewpoint references the amount of distance between the participants or how they relate to the room surrounding them.

Topography: Lastly, *topography* refers to the patterns and formations that the participants create through their movements. This viewpoint can also be referenced as *floor pattern.* With this viewpoint, the participants are to be made aware of in which directions they move, and what kind of formations this might lead to. For example, one might move exclusively in circles in a specific corner, or in squares all across the room.

(Bogart & Landau, 2014, p. 8-12)

The Viewpoints function as a workshop. Professor Knut Over Arntzen presents in his article *Nye tendenser i teatret: Parateater og visual performance* (1987), the three categories of workshops formulated by Ron Argelander. The first category, is are *special skills workshops.* These function as a platform for developing technical skill, while *production-oriented workshops* use the workshop situation as a way of developing material for a performance. Lastly, the *selfexploration workshops: paratheatrics,* serves as an arena for exploration of oneself in relation to others (Arntzen, 1987, p. 24). The Viewpoints seem to be a mixture of the three. They do function as a form of actor training in that the actors are taught both awareness and improvisational skills. The Viewpoints may also be physically demanding. They may also be applied to production as a preparatory workshop, where they can inspire movement and physical choreography that can be included onstage. The text of a play can also be incorporated and explored by applying the vocal viewpoints (Bogart & Landau, 2014, p. 105-106). Lastly, they can serve as a way of obtaining security within an ensemble and reinforce a sense of community. It therefore also aligns with a *selfexploration workshop.* By utilizing Argelander's three categories, it becomes evident how flexible the Viewpoints method is and how many purposes it may serve when utilized by an ensemble. It trains the participant to relate to one another and become aware of their physical as well as vocal possibilities. In this way, it also becomes a valuable tool when starting a production process.

4.5 Devised Works: Collage pieces

"Textually, everything is appropriated – and then reinvented by asking the simple question – What do you do with the meat? It's a question asked over and over again in Anne's plays"

(Lauren, 1995, p. 70). These are the words of actress and founding SITI Company member, Ellen Lauren. She also functions as the company's co-artistic director beside Anne Bogart. Lauren first met Bogart in Togamura, Japan in 1986 while she was working with Tadashi Suzuki. Since then she has appeared in numerous SITI Company productions, including *Room* which is the object of analysis in the next chapter. After all these years working with Bogart, Lauren provides some in-depth insight into Bogart's artistic process and how she approaches the dramatic text, if there is one. In the context of this chapter however, I am the most interested in her devised work, those who can be said to be structured as a collage. Lauren remarks how "Anne Bogart's work on stage refuses to be any one thing. It refuses to find one image more significant or beautiful than another" (Lauren, 1995, p. 65). This implies that Bogart is a juxta poser of ideas, where every element of a performance is just as important as the next. This approach does appear to be in line with the concept of collage.

Like mentioned in chapter 1.2, the term collage is in this context utilized in terms of the techniques found in the fine arts. This utilization has its root in Scott T. Cummings' usage of the term, where he applies the term to Bogart's work based on previous observations concerning playwright Charles Mee. Mee started out as a historian, a line of work which demanded a large amount of quotations and unedited material. When he took on playwriting again in the 1980s, he continued to apply this technique to his dramatic works. He relied on the collage principles of artist Max Ernst to structure his texts, declaring him his dramaturg (Mee, 2002, p. 87). Ernst can be seen as one of the successors of the European modernist avant-garde, taking inspiration from the first collage experiments of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in the early 1900s. Ernst would appropriate ordinary objects as a means to "revealing hidden mutations of human and animal forms, cities and forests" (Craig, 2008, p. 81). Mee mirrors this approach by appropriating already existing text and using those extracts to write narratives and characters where "culture speaks" through them. Mee believes that characters, as well as people, are formed by pop-culture and history and therefore these appropriated extracts can serve as a tool to put forward these formative notions (Mee, 2002, p. 88-89).

Similarly to the developments in theatre, the fine arts changed its direction extensively at the turn of the century, abandoning the tropes of realism in favor of new experiments, resulting in the commencement of modern art, including cubism, expressionism, surrealism and many more. This change occurred as a result of advancements in technology and science and the

overall development of modern society. The artist changed their focus in an attempt to adapt their artwork to their contemporary, modern existence. Blanche Craig, editor of *Collage: Assembling contemporary art,* summarizes this shift by noting how "The modern individual was no longer a coherent subject; identity was fragmented and multiplied, experience lost its unitary character" (Craig, 2008, p. 47). In other words, the development of movements like cubism, were a way of modern society and culture manifesting itself in the fine arts. The fragmented, incoherent surroundings of the modern world, manifested themselves in the form and structure which would be referred to as collage. Charles Mee has a similar thought pattern. Mee has been suffering from polio for large portions of his life which, for him, has triggered a need for literature that reflects that body as well as his reality, one that feels whole, but still consisting of pieces. He too, feels the collage lies closer to the way he lives his life and further notes that "If a writer's writings constitute a "body of work," then my body of work, to feel true to me, must feel fragmented" (Mee, 2008, p. 97). Accordingly, the collage structure has played a significant role in making art coincide with modern contemporary life.

Returning to Anne Bogart, Scott T. Cummings presents the category of her *devised works* as "original collage pieces, many woven out of texts taken from a single author (…) or around a single figure (…) (Cummings, 2010, p. 38). Cummings traces this practice back to Bogart's college years at Bard College. While enrolled there, Bogart originally intended to stage a play by absurdist Eugene Ionesco, but soon found that she had no single play by him that she enjoyed, but she did however like smaller sections from several of his plays. So she decided that she would make a collage of her favorite excerpts of Ionesco plays instead of staging one single piece, which resulted in her senior thesis production, *Knocks, A Collection* (Cummings, 2010, p. 39). Bogart continues to apply this formula to her devised work. Devising, also often referred to as "collaborative creation" in the U.S., can be defined, as by Deidre Heddon and Jane Milling, as a term describing "a mode of work in which *no* script – neither written play-text nor performance score – exists prior to the work's creation by the company" (Heddon & Milling, 2006, p. 3). Heddon and Milling acknowledge that a devised performance can be produced by just one individual as well and does not necessarily have to include a company of collaborators to be considered devised. They do however emphasize how devising initially did in large cater to the idea that all collaborators were equal in the creation of the devised performance, and no hierarchy would exist. However, Allison Oddey, who contributed early to the theoretical accounts on the subjects of devising, notes how the devised practice changed in the 1990s, when it started to have "less radical implications, placing greater emphasis on

skill sharing, specialization, specific roles, increasing division of responsibilities, such as the role of the director/deviser or the administrator, and more hierarchical company structures" (Oddey, 1994, p. 8). The devised approach to production has therefore undergone a shift from an even balance of power between collaborators, to one where some key members of the group exist and have specific tasks.

Kathryn Mederos Syssoyeva writes in the introduction to *Collective Creation in Contemporary Performance* how, rather than defining devised theatre, she leaves it up to those who practice it to decide what the devising process entails for them. Lacking a satisfactory definition, she instead states some basic prerequisites that often appear in devised work, like the existence of a group who wishes to approach the artistic process in a different manner than what they up until now have experienced. The devised process then becomes a rebellion against what the members have previously perceived as an "oppressive structure" (Syssoyeva, 2013, p. 6). The method of devising was heavily utilized during the neo-avant-garde in 1960s and 70s, not only as a method for theatre production, but as "an institutionalized model" (Syssoyeva, 2013, p. 2). It was central to the working methods of the Living Theatre in the States as well as for Théâtre du Soleil in France, to name a few. Even though devising has seen an uprising of more hierarchical structures in its methods, Alan Filewod emphasizes how devising "replaces the *responsibility* for the play on the shoulders of the collective; instead of a governing mind providing an artistic vision which others work to express (…)" (Filewod, 2008, p.1). So, in a devised process, in spite of there being a director/deviser, the responsibility for the creation of the performance still needs to remain with the group as a collective.

Anne Bogart has staged several of what Cummings considers to be devised collage pieces. They of course, stand in contrast to her *classic explosions,* where she relies on an established text as the artistic starting point. If the definition of devising provided by Heddon and Milling applies, this could not be the case for her devised work. The collage pieces Cummings refer to, textually, they function as collages of other people's texts or artworks. One example is *No Plays No Poetry* from 1988 which was based on the many writings by Bertolt Brecht. When the text is not fixed beforehand, but needs an artistic process of its own, the devised principle of "no script" is maintained. These artists that Bogart use to make performances, serve as the performance's thematic starting point. This reoccurring tendency to appropriate and take inspiration from other artists, can be said to be the result of Bogart's "scavenger mentality."

Bogart refers to it as a nesting impulse where she collects pieces from here and there to "make some sort of marriage of ideas" (Cummings, 2010, p. 39). Bogart acknowledges that she is not an original artist, she recycles the ideas of others and stiches them together, rather than trying to come up with something completely new. This is a reoccurring tendency within the postmodern theatre, where the notion of originality is abandoned in favor of recycling previous artworks (Gladsø, 2015, p. 143).

Like stated in chapter 4.2, Bogart seems to function more as an enabler than a director in her devised processes of staging. Through the utilization of the Viewpoints, she puts forward the conditions in which creative ideas might emerge. She is, however, credited as the director of her collage pieces in collaboration often with the SITI Company. So, she does fall into the tradition of devising where there exists some form of hierarchy in that she functions as a *deviser*. Ellen Lauren explains how if there is a text at the start of the process, Bogart will initiate table readings where the actors are asked to answer concrete questions which serve as their homework. Lauren notes how this practice, already at the earliest stage of the production process, the collective feels a responsibility towards one another and their collective creation (Lauren, 1995, p. 66). Furthermore, Lauren describes how Bogart will encourage the ensemble to together, create a "physical life unrelated to the text" (Lauren, 1995, p. 67). After studying the text together, the ensemble proceeds to choreograph the physical life of the piece. Only after this is established, is the text reintroduced.

Cummings explains how Bogart's approach when conducting her devised collages, can be organized in a formula consisting of three steps: Firstly, she formulates a guiding interest and articulates question(s) to accommodate it, secondly, she identifies an "anchor," often an artist which appears as a fitting vessel for the investigation of her questions, and lastly, she uncovers a structure which suits the guiding interest as well as the anchor of the piece (Cummings, 2010, p. 96). Bogart's "scavenger mentality" is also recognized by her collaborators in addition to being present in her process of production. Fellow SITI Company member and founder Ellen Lauren writes about what one might see in Bogart's script during rehearsal: "If you should come close and peek at the script, what you would often find instead are scattered quotes, and indecipherable numerical system, labeling bits of text, lifted dialogue, a musical reference or indeed – blank space" (Lauren, 1995, p. 59). This observation by Lauren further supports Bogart's own view of herself as someone who enjoys piecing different parts together. It also points to Bogart's almost fragmented way of

structuring her mental process, it seems to indicate a sort of associative game, where something that happens in the rehearsal hall can conjure an association in Bogart to a song, a quote or something else that can further inform the performance. Bogart is open about her appropriative approach to making theatre, and acknowledges her influences. To her, like Lauren states, "Influence is not a dirty word" (Lauren, 1995, p. 62). Mee and Bogart share this mentality. They had their first collaboration in 1991 with the production of *Another Person is a Foreign Country,* a performance made possible through *En Gard Arts,* a project concerned with finding abandoned sites in New York City which could inspire site-specific theatre. It was this project that would unite the forces of Mee and Bogart (Cummings, 2010, p. 49).

Cummings notes how Bogart "collects pieces of text drawn from various sources and, through her collaboration with actors, designers, and sometimes dramaturgs or playwrights, build them up into an assemblage (…) (Cummings, 2010, p. 38). *Another Person is a Foreign Country* falls under this categorization, being both devised as well as site-specific, in addition to being a cooperation with a playwright who indeed does collect and is inspired by text that already exists. The process of *Another Person is a Foreign Country* started when Mee contacted En Garde Arts producer Anne Hamburger stating his interest in doing a project. Hamburger and Mee would drive around in Manhattan to find a suitable location for a performance. Their initial choice were the ruins of an old hospital on Roosevelt Island which had trees growing within its structure. This location together with its history of housing infectious immigrants coming through Ellis Island, inspired Mee to write a "piece about social outcasts staged in this abandoned hospital on what he saw as "this island of the damned" " (Cummings, 2010, p. 51). When asked which director he would want for the project, he proposed Bogart. By this time, in addition to numerous other accomplishments in the field of theatre, Bogart had established herself as an experimental site-specific theatre artist working in Downtown Manhattan, she would in other words be a good fit for the project.

Not having been able to acquire the permission necessary to perform at the location in Roosevelt Island, Hamburger, Mee and Bogart instead chose a former hospital and nursing home located on the Upper West Side as the site of their performance. Like their previous preferred location, the Towers Nursing Home was in ruins, maintaining Mee's inspiration for the piece's text. In compliance with devised theatre's nature of having the space of the performance inspire the artistic product, Mee and Bogart utilized the location of the ruins as a

source of inspiration resulting in a piece about otherness in every aspect of the word, including that of disability. This theme resulted in a demanding casting process where Mee and Bogart would search for people with various disabilities to perform in the show (Cummings, 2010, p. 53-54). The cast members ultimately chosen would further define the piece, providing another source of devised inspiration for creation. The performance contained both original and appropriated text in usual Mee fashion. Cummings summarizes the performance by stating that Mee "and Bogart took a 'broken' site and a 'fragmented' cast and illuminated their rough surfaces with a spectacle of music, movement, light, and language" (Cummings, 2010, p. 58). In the case of *Another Person is a Foreign Country,* there therefore seems to be a compliance in the "scavenger mentality" of Bogart, the "collage mentality" of Mee and the themes expressed in the production.

Ultimately it becomes clear how Bogart's collage like approach to devising theatre is a reoccurring facet to her production history and can be traced all the way back to her college years. This approach stems from her mentality of a scavenger, where she collects the remains of past or present artworks to make up a new whole through devising. She has also created a habit out of creating collages of people or their work, presenting them in a carefully selected collage form. Bogart is transparent about her appropriation and influence from other artists in her devised work, embracing it rather than dismissing it. She is also a juxtaposer of ideas, like Ellen Lauren notes, she "refuses to find one image more significant or beautiful than another" (Lauren, 1995, p. 65). Looking back at Paula Vogel's experience of Bogart's artistic process as collective and democratic in chapter 3.3, these approaches also appear to include aesthetics and staging. Bogart has found a fellow collage artist in Charles Mee, collaborating with him frequently to either create devised works where he functions as the playwright of the forever developing text, or staging his already written collage texts.

5.0 Performance Analysis of *Room*

"It is thus with the utmost humility and, above all, caution that we should approach the field of performance; for it is both a minefield containing the most contradictory theories and the most insidious methodological suspicions, and a fallow field that has as yet failed to develop a satisfactory method of universal application."

(Pavis, 2003, p. 1)

It is with this statement by Professor Patrice Pavis in mind, that I now enter the field of performance analysis. Because yes, selecting a suitable method to execute the most accurate and relevant performance analysis, seems at times almost like an impossible task. Pavis goes on to say how there is no use in trying to find the right method for performance analysis, but rather utilizing several entries to the material and investigating what "each reveals about the object being analyzed (…)" (Pavis, 2003, p. 3). In preparing for this part of the thesis, I have to some extent followed Pavis' trail of thought. With the performance of Room in mind, I have delved into some of the research done on the methods of phenomenology, reception theory, semiotics and hermeneutics. Each approach to performance analysis seems to have its appliance where it can be of worth to the production in question. The challenge then, comes in the form of applying not the right method, like Pavis points out, but choosing the one or several most suitable methodologies to appropriately represent the object of the analysis. I will persuade this challenge in chapter 5.2.

5.1 Methodological discourse and applied terminology

Firstly, I would like to communicate some of the more general questions that arise while executing a performance analysis. While most scholars and theorists seem to agree on there not being one ideal methodology, there does seem to be a rich discourse on the topic of performance analysis. Starting with Patrice Pavis, he views the utilization of segmentation to be one of the prominent problems of performance analysis. He argues that the "atomization" of a performance, causes the overall macro perspective to get lost in the process (Pavis, 2003, p. 21). However, he does approve of segmentation as a tool, but rather one with the focus

directed at the pace and rhythm of the overall mise-en-scène. The argument against atomization, is echoed by Professor Tor Bastiansen Trolie in his criticism of Jytte Wiingaard's semiotic approach to performance in her book *Teatersemiologi*. Trolie points out how Wiingaard almost seems to lose herself in the details of the performance, making the final analysis not as informative as one would wish (Trolie, 1990, p. 298-299). This criticism of too much atomization when dealing with performance analysis, seems to have its root in that when one gives too much room for detail, which causes the full picture of the performance to be lost, and no real information of its nature has been made.

A different topic raised by Trolie, is the question of reconstruction. A possible reconstruction or description of the theatrical performance needs to be made relevant for the modern reader by providing a perspective on how one can understand the specific performance in the context of one's own time period (Trolie, 1990, p. 299). The analysis needs to be made relevant. What Trolie touches on here, is the matter of context being utilized in the performance analysis. Michael Eigtved is also persistent in his opinion of contextualization being necessary, pointing out that this is how the analysis becomes relevant for anyone other than the analyst himself (Eigtved, 2010, p. 143). Professor Knut Ove Arntzen also supports this argument, he thinks a performance analysis that does not make an effort to place the performance in relation to others, is incomplete (Arntzen, 1987, p. 101). Based on these statements, it becomes apparent how a performance analysis cannot be executed in a vacuum. The analysis needs to reference a world outside the object, where it can be placed in a historical context within the theatre. According to Trolie, Eigtved and Arntzen, the object of the performance analysis, cannot be treated as an isolated event.

When it comes to the question of what the performance analyst actually should be concerned with while executing the analysis, the theorists I have become familiar with, seem a little bit more divided. Jacqueline Martin and Willmar Sauter write about how there are "theories which have been concerned with the presentation behind the performance, and on the other hand, those theories concerned in the main with what the audience have perceived" (Martin, J. & Sauter, W., 1995, p. 18). The first approach mentioned here, is an example of an analysis that focuses on choices made prior to the performance being presented to an audience. This approach includes the artistic process of the production in its angle on the performance. For Martin and Sauter this method of analysis is therefore often concerned with the interpretation of the dramatic text. Both Pavis and Eigtved on the other hand, seem to strictly be concerned

with "the end product of working processes, however incomplete and disorganized it may be" (Pavis, 2003, p. 2). This result oriented perspective is echoed by Eigtved, when he writes about how the "finished" product that is presented to the audience is what is of the most interest, while the process of getting to that point - the method of working – is of less interest, it is in the past, as he writes (Eigtved, 2010, p. 15). It appears then, that Martin and Sauter do see a possible approach to performance analysis where the artistic process is incorporated and taken into consideration, while Eigtved and Pavis seem more skeptical of such an approach. They are not so much concerned with intention, but rather with what is communicated to them from the finished performance. The question remains interesting, and leads me to the last point of discourse in this introduction.

The last topic appears less controversial, but remains as one of the core problems with doing performance analysis. The topic at hand is that of reproducing a performance on the page for the reader, and doing so truthfully and vividly. All the above mentioned theorists seem to acknowledge this challenge. Trolie states that it is impossible to document a performance, (Trolie, 1987, p. 123) and his perspective does not appear to be unique to him. The problem of documentation is rooted in the inherent nature of theatre, in that it is something that is performed live, right then and there. A performance is said to never be the same, that performance is the art form of the fleeting moment, it cannot be re-lived. This fact is also what gives performance its core value, and what mainly differentiates it from other mediums like television and film. So, while this is one of the more prominent issues one faces when attempting a performance analysis, it also provides it with all the more importance. A well articulated and appropriately executed performance analysis, could possibly create a window into a particular moment, frozen in time. This of course, is challenging to achieve, but like Martin and Sauter point out: "Theatre Studies needs more accounts and analyses of all kinds of performances, as the performance lies at the heart of its discipline" (Martin, J. & Sauter, W., 1995, p. 112). The problem of reconstruction and the other points discussed above, will all be taken into account in the upcoming analysis where they will be applied to the performance of *Room*.

Further I wish to devote a small section to the upcoming usage of terminology. This seems necessary to secure and provide clarity and transparency when moving on to the performance analysis itself. I have chosen to analyze *Room* using mainly the terms performance and theatrical performance. When utilizing these terms, I will be referring to the definitions

presented by Patrice Pavis in *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis*. Pavis' definition of performance is listed under spectacle because this is the term's French counterpart. Here he defines performance as "anything that is the object of the gaze (…), especially something intended for public display" (Pavis, 1998, p. 346). He also goes on to say how the term includes other various performative activities besides theatre that can relate to the citation above as well as activities that rely on an audience (Pavis, 1998, p. 346). Consequently, when talking about performance, one could be referring to the circus, to various sporting events or as in this case, to the theatre. The fundamental premise is for the performance to be intended for a spectatorship of some sort. The latter term, theatrical performance therefore makes the specific type of performance clear, additionally it "involves both the stage (and all that has gone before to prepare the performance) and the audience (with all the receptiveness of which it is capable) (Pavis, 1998, p. 397). Because of their strong relation to each other, I will use these two terms – performance and theatrical performance – interchangeably while executing the analysis.

In relation to the topic of terminology, comes one that has been heavily developed and elaborated on as a concept by Willmar Sauter, theatrical event (Sauter, 2000, p. 1). Eigtved defines the term as encompassing the circumstances that surround the theatre being performed on stage. This includes such elements as acoustics, where one as an audience member is seated and the view that provides one with as well as the preconceptions one brings to the event. Eigtved then stresses how this term goes against the idea of the performance as an independent "item," and rather includes the circumstances that make it an event (Eigtved, 2010, p. 11-12). In the following analysis, I am choosing to utilize the term based on the definitions given by Eigtved.

5.2 Methodology

When executing a performance analysis, a method becomes essential to define a perspective with which one views the performance, and to fix the limit of this specific perspective. As expressed in chapter 5.1, it is the performance that decides the methodology. Therefore, in choosing the most suitable and most fertile method for analyzing *Room*, I have taken into consideration what that specific performance provided me with as well as what kind of lens might be the most interesting to utilize. My initial field of interest when deciding to do

research on Anne Bogart, was her use of collage as a dramaturgical principle. I am therefore deliberately choosing to put more emphasis on the form, making that my primary concern. The content will of course be in close relation to its form, and this will also be discussed, but then in regard to how it affects the dramaturgy of the performance. The relation between the two is interesting, but the content alone will not be of major concern. Based on this, it becomes apparent that the analysis will take the form of what Eigtved calls a "Delanalyse," which can be translated to mean an "analysis of the parts." This type of analysis is defined by Eigtved as one that has a narrow, more restricted focus. What this will mean for the analysis, is that one element, in this case the dramaturgy, will be isolated as the main field of interest, and the goal is to investigate how this influences the performance as a whole and the context and circumstances that surrounds it (Eigtved, 2010, p. 144-145).

What appears to me to be an essential aspect when dealing with this specific performance analysis, is the fact that I traveled to a different country to see the performance. This fact gives me a different basis for doing the analysis than what the other mostly American audience member might have. As a Norwegian and a Northern European woman, I have a different starting point, a different outlook. Furthermore it provides me with a tradition of theatre that differs from an American audience. Considering that my "baggage" could be so much different from the other spectators, I find it necessary to uncover what my hermeneutical horizon was when approaching the performance. This term derives from Hans-Georg Gadamer who emphasizes that each individual comes with their own set of preconceptions and prejudices (Krogh, 2009, p. 49). To me it appears important to establish what these are for me and investigate how they contribute to my interpretation of *Room*.

The method I am left with to approach the theatrical performance of Room is one that is pragmatic. I want to uncover my hermeneutic horizon, following Gadamer, but also perform an analysis of the parts like presented by Eigtved, where I can look more closely at the dramaturgy of the piece and how it influenced the performance and my own experience of it. In regard to the questions raised in chapter 5.1, I will attempt to position myself somewhere between Pavis and Eigtved's attitudes which say that one should be the most concerned with analyzing the "finished" performance that one is presented with, and the attitude of Martin and Sauter, which opens up for an approach that can take into account the artistic process that lead up to the finished piece. With this particular object, *Room*, it seems counterproductive to deprive the analysis of its process because it is so strongly linked to the work that Anne

Bogart and The SITI Company does. To divorce Bogart and SITI of their loyalty to the Viewpoints method for example, would be to ignore an essential part of how they end up with the performance I saw. I am therefore including the parts of the process of making Room that seem relevant, both in regard to developing the performance's aesthetic, but especially its dramaturgy and relationship to narrative. I will not however, concern myself with the intentions Bogart and the rest of the company initially had with the piece. Lastly, I will utilize the structure proposed by Eigtved in *Forestillingsanalyse: En Introduktion* (2010) to make up the basic framework of the analysis.

This pragmatic approach may also be appropriate and useful based on *Room*'s postmodern aesthetic. Knut Ove Arntzen provides in his contribution to the book *Metodefestival og øyeblikksrealisme – eksperimenterende kvalitative forskningspassasjer* (2015), a pragmatic approach to postmodern performance where there no longer are any definitive truths or master narratives to relate to. He suggests using metaphorical and allegorical terms to investigate and analyze these pieces of performance that maybe no longer rely on the text as its initial starting point (Arntzen, 2015, p. 166). *Room* does contain crucial characteristics often linked to the postmodern theatre tradition, like for example the utilization of irony, a non-linear dramaturgy as well as a more complex relationship to portraying a character. A statement made by Arntzen that the performance of *Room* can strongly relate to is: "I postmoderne teater kan en forestilling forstås som formidler av en mening eller intensjon som er flyktig og bare kan oppfattes individuelt av den enkelte tilskuer. Den snakker ikke lenger med én stemme, men med mange stemmer (…) (Arntzen, 2015, p. 167). Here Arntzen points out how many postmodern theatrical performances relate to their ideas and intentions in a fleeting manner, and how this leaves the interpretation of that intention to the individual spectator. He also notes how the performance no longer speaks with one coherent voice, but with several. To me this is one of the core aspects of what makes up the performance of *Room*. I will therefore also in part lean on Arntzen's pragmatic approach presented in this article when executing the performance analysis, as well as other postmodern theory that appears relevant.

5.3 Pre-performance preparation and horizon of understanding

Having worked on this thesis before leaving for the United States to see the performance, I of course had some expectations as to what I would get to see based on the information I had

gathered beforehand. Anne Bogart makes a brief mention of the process of making *Room* in her book *What's the Story: Essays about Art, Theater and Storytelling* (2014). She describes how she has a habit of creating works about people she admires within the arts, and she has done this on several occasions, as explored in chapter 4.5 concerning her devised collage pieces (Bogart, 2014, p. 142-143). *Room* for example, is part of a triptych that consists of three separate one-person performances. The first in this series of one-person plays about artists Bogart looked up to, was *bob*, utilizing the work of notorious director Robert Wilson as its foundation. In the same manner, the third piece, *Score*, revolved around the work done by composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein (Bogart, 2014, p. 143). *Room* is therefore the second installation in this triptych and is a direct result of Anne Bogart's personal interest in Virginia Woolf as a writer. It therefore falls in line with Bogart's many devised collage pieces. Furthermore, Bogart did have a specific question in mind going into the production of *Room*, which sounds as follows: "how can one live creatively in the face of all the difficulties, setbacks and irritations of daily life?" (Bogart, 2014, p. 143). I will not dwell too much on her attempts of answering this question in the piece, since it does concern her intentions regarding the performance, but I want to note that this was something I was aware of going into the performance.

What I also knew before seeing the performance, was that this was a stage text based on various works of Virginia Woolf, handpicked by Bogart and later sent to Jocelyn Clarke, a dramaturg, to be made into a script. One can assume that the excerpts chosen by Bogart all related to her question mentioned in the last paragraph. The excerpts were extracted mainly from Woolf's non-fictional work, with the exception of *Between the Acts* (Bogart, 2014, p. 143-144). Me not having read anything by Virginia Woolf, I chose to read *A Room of One's Own* to get familiar with the content and style of Woolf. This book seemed a logical place to start as its title is directly cited in the performance's title as well. This choice of reading paid off, as this particular book of essays was cited several times in the performance. The fact that I could point out this specific text, helped me navigate when watching the performance. When working on the text for the performance, SITI Company actress Ellen Lauren would meet Anne Bogart in a different room each day in her upstate New York house. There she would perform parts of the text to Bogart, then they would get together and discuss (Bogart, 2014, p. 144). Once Lauren had memorized the complete text, they would start to rehearse in Bogart's barn, situated beside her house. The layout of this room is in many respects what made up the foundation for the finished scenography, which only consisted of a chair and the shape of a

window made from lighting. The last part of the process that I knew of previous to watching the performance, was when Lauren and Bogart were presenting what they had created to the SITI production team. Just as Lauren was about to start, a clock chimed. This sound would make up a big part of the soundscape of the finished performance and the production team were on board (Bogart, 2014, p. 145).

So, this was some of the information I went into the performance with. I knew some key points about Bogart and Lauren's process, where their dramatic text stemmed from, and a little bit about how they had chosen which texts to utilize. This knowledge provided me with some expectations and prejudices prior to the performance, which were as follows: A dramaturgy and staging influenced by collage, a postmodern staging with no cause and effect narrative, an actress that would interact with the audience and investigate the actor-spectator relationship, a thematic examination of womanhood, and lastly, I expected a strong presence from the actress. This last expectation stems from SITI Company's loyalty to the Viewpoints method. These five expectations make up some of my horizon of understanding in that they affected the way I watched *Room*. They could lead to enjoyment when they were confirmed, or maybe disappointment when they were not. Nevertheless, they are all part of a "baggage" which I brought with me to the performance.

Based on these expectations and prejudices I did some preparations prior to seeing the performance. I intended to use a version of Patrice Pavis' questionnaire presented in Michael Eigtved's *Forestillingsanalyse: En Introduktion* (2010). I thought this list of questions to be a good place to start when trying to answer some essential questions about the theatrical event. The questionnaire functions as a way of systematically arrange one's experience and impressions after the performance. The questions posed in the questionnaire do have their basis in semiotics, which is a methodology I am not intending to focus on in the performance analysis, but I still considered the questionnaire useful to document my immediate response to *Room*. I did fill out this questionnaire the same night as I saw the theatrical performance. A different set of questions that I also intended to answer subsequently to watching the performance, were the questions posed by Mark Fortier in *Theory/Theatre: An Introduction* (2002). These questions were laid out as questions one could ask a performance or play that appeared postmodern. The choice to utilize these questions stemmed from my initial prejudice that *Room* would be influenced by postmodern aesthetics. I wrote down the answers to these questions the day after seeing the theatrical performance. In large, these are the factors that

make up my horizon of understanding. I would particularly like to emphasize that when watching *Room*, I was not only a Norwegian watching a performance made by American artists, but also a Norwegian seeing an American performance in the United States. This takes me out of my usual geographical environment and puts me into a different one. This fact may influence the interpretation of the performance as well as my experience of it to a certain extent.

5.4 *Room*: Setting and surrounding circumstances

Room was originally produced in the year 2000 as the second installation in Bogart's triptych devoted to artists she admired. It premiered in October at the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University. The performance continued to tour sporadically throughout the United States between the years 2000 and 2003. Room was not performed again until 2010 when it appeared at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY. With the exception of a performance at the Women's Project Theatre in New York in 2011, Room has not been presented for an audience since then. But in 2017 two showings of the piece would again be held, one at Connecticut College and another at Pinkerton Academy (SITI Company, n.d.). The performance that makes up the basis for this performance analysis, is the one held at the Palmer Auditorium at Connecticut College on the 3rd of February 2017.

Like stated in the previous chapter, *Room* started as an intimate artistic process between director Anne Bogart and fellow SITI Company founding member and actress Ellen Lauren. Dramaturg Jocelyn Clarke would then get involved to form the script of what later became known as *Room*. Subsequently other members of the SITI Company would watch Ellen Lauren perform the piece and then get involved in furthering the production (Bogart, 2014, p. 143-145). The performance I witnessed on February the 3rd is therefore the result of first a close collaboration between Bogart and Lauren, which then extended to include Clarke as well as other members of the SITI Company who would make up the rest of the production team. The performance started at 7:30 p.m. and lasted for 90 minutes with no intermission. After the performance there was a talkback featuring Bogart and Lauren where the audience would get the opportunity to ask them questions. In this talkback, Lauren stated how "A solo piece is not a solo piece" (Ellen Lauren, 03.02.17). This statement is referring to the fact that Lauren might be alone on stage, but the process of making and executing the performance,

involves a whole group of people. It is this effort and the result of it that is the object of this analysis.

Other circumstances that surround the performance is its location. It was held at a college institution, which is not uncommon for SITI Company productions nor for *Room* specifically. Connecticut College is located on America's East coast at the outskirts of New London, Connecticut. New London is a small city that also functions as a seaport, and the college campus as well as the surrounding area appears rural. The performance of *Room* was hosted by *onStage*, Connecticut College's performing arts series that is responsible for bringing professional artists to the campus. *Room* was shown in the Palmer Auditorium, which can seat approximately 1300 audience members (Connecticut College, n. d.). The space is equipped with a traditional proscenium stage that frames the stage area. The height of the stage caused some of the audience members who attended the performance to reconsider their positioning, since sitting at the first row might make one have to look upward and consequently lose oversight of the stage area. The arena also had a gallery above the seats on the ground floor. The seats and the space itself seemed old and showed signs of years of usage. The walls were tall and painted in a sky blue. The performance arena is also clearly architectonic in that there is a clear distinction between the area of the performers and the area designated to the audience. The audience's view and positioning is of a frontal nature, rather than environmental, where the spectators do not need to move their heads significantly to be able to follow the performance as it progresses. The room is designed for performance and is therefore architectonic rather than illusory, where the performance shapes the arena (Eigtved, 2010, p. 26-27). The room can however be adapted to suit different types of performances, but within the limits of its structure. It does not have the ability to adjust itself in the way a black box theatre might be able to. Still, the arena is very much performance friendly and is designed to serve as a space for performance specifically.

5.5 Acting, scenery, light, sound and plot: an overview

After a brief introduction to the piece, *Room* starts abruptly with Ellen Lauren suddenly on the left-hand side of the audience, a spotlight emphasizing her presence and the fact that the performance has in fact started. From the beginning Lauren is addressing the audience, talking directly to us, acknowledging our presence in the room with her. Her lines are easily

recognizable for me, as Bogart has noted down the first few lines of the performance in her book *What's the story*, which reads as follows:

> "Good evening. Before I begin, I must ask you to imagine a room. Any room. But it must be your room. A room of which you are mistress, and where you close the door to the world outside, and sit and think; perhaps even write. A retreat. A sanctuary. A refuge. Call it what you will. But it must be a room that you can call your own. Do you have such a room? I pity you if you do not. A room of one's own is not a luxury but a necessity. This is not a pretty room, is it? Some of the furniture, well, I have seen better. But it will do. It is our room now. How are your seats? Comfortable? Good."

(Bogart, 2014, p. 144)

Lauren speaks the line starting amongst the audience, and then moving up on the heightened stage area where she will reside for the remaining part of the performance. These first lines and the way Lauren performs them establishes the reoccurring actor spectator relationship. This small section of the piece indicates a whole lot about the performance as whole by immediately establishing that what the audience will see is a theatrical performance and it will in large behave and act like one without trying to hide it. Still, this open and communicative relationship between the performer and the audience, will not be maintained throughout the whole performance, at some points Lauren descends into a more introspective world where she seems to forget that the audience is present. But what this opening does, is to establish the very much intimate relationship the audience is going to have with Lauren as a performer. She sets the tone for our mutual relationship, one where feedback from the audience is not only tolerated, but encouraged.

Lauren continues to reside at center stage for a considerable amount of time while she establishes the theme of the piece through dialogue. The words spoken here are largely taken from *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf. It deals with a question and problem Woolf herself raises in the first chapter, when she is asked to speak on the topic of women and fiction. At this point Lauren utters the words as if they were her own, or as if she in fact is Woolf herself, talking in the first person. She emphasizes, just like Woolf does in the first chapter, how "One can only show how one came to hold whatever opinion one does hold. One can only give one's audience the chance of drawing their own conclusions as they

observe the limitations, the prejudices, the idiosyncrasies of the speaker" (Woolf, 2014, p. 2). Based on this it seems that in addition to encouraging reactions from the audience, Lauren also invites the audience to judge her and the upcoming statements that she will make in the performance. The communication between the spectator and the actor therefore happens in two ways: on reactionary level where they can answer questions posed by the actress etc., as well as on an intellectual level, where they are given permission to analyze and pass judgment on her intellect.

Another important element to mention in this first part of the performance is the choice of lighting. When Lauren has relocated to the center of the stage from the audience area, the light is still on where the audience is sitting. It is dim, but not completely off like it often is, to frame the theatrical world on stage. This choice is in line with Lauren's dialogue where she states that this particular room is ours now. This statement is made real by not separating the two areas with lighting. During the first part of the performance as well as on several other occasions throughout the piece, the arena feels like one room, where the actress is in the same sphere as the spectators. This of course echoes Bertolt Brecht, where leaving the light on over the audience can cause a *verfremdungeffekt*. This lighting is interrupted by the sound of a clock striking, which makes the audience hall go dark and Ellen Lauren change her focus. The sound functions as an obvious catalyst for various elements of the staging to change abruptly. This is a dynamic that continues throughout the piece, constantly creating fractures that change the direction of the text as well as the nature of Lauren's performance. When the clock strikes and the light is switched off, Lauren readjusts to a style of acting that appears more closed off and introspective. She no longer looks at the audience when she talks, but seems to speak to herself. At this particular point in the performance, she is speaking about flowers, a memory she has. The text appears more personal, not meant for the audience in the same manner as it was just seconds before. Both the lighting and the sound effects help make these fractures happen and seem incorporated into the piece in such a way that they are given the power to change the tone, atmosphere and direction of the performance.

So, the acting is very much central to *Room,* especially since it is a one-woman show. Actress Ellen Lauren, seems to vary between to modes of expression, where one can be said to be extroverted, where she is accommodating towards the audience, and the other to be introverted, where she speaks to herself. The stage is almost bare, only inhabiting a chair and a window. The performance plays with lighting to include or exclude the audience from the

world of the actress, while the soundscape is characterized by a chiming clock. Thematically, the performance relies on feminist statements made by Virginia Woolf, as well as exploring themes of what it means to be and artist and the concept of memory.

5.6 General impression

So, after a brief look at some of the main elements of interest in the performance of *Room*, I want to look into the main identifying factors that are the most suitable to elaborate on. To me, the change that happens in Ellen Lauren's performance seem to stand out because she seems to have two distinctively different approaches throughout the whole piece. These changes also appear to, a lot of the time, commence when the sound or lighting of the performance encourages her to. Sometimes it is also the other way around, Lauren functioning as the catalyst for the light and sound. This dynamic is very interesting in that there constantly seems to be one element of the performance that initiates the others to go in a different direction. Lauren's performance is also characterized by her many gestures and her physical body language overall. She is very restricted in her movements that appear thoroughly planned. At first glance the performance seems to be a postmodern staging, but maybe with an uncommonly large emphasis on the text. The performance does indeed echo a lot of postmodern theory, in that it "do(es) not contain explicit commentary or take political positions, but raise(s) uncertainties by representing our own compromises without taking a clear position" (Fortier, 2002, p. 181). *Room* deals with many of the challenges one might have to face as a woman, and as a female artist, which makes sense in that it is in part based on *A Room of One's Own*, which in retrospect in considered one of Woolf's more prominent feminist essays. *Room* does not however, take any sides, it presents these challenges and descriptions of womanhood, but does not provide the audience with any true answers.

The performance is also quite obvious in its refusal of master narratives, leaning more towards an episodic dramaturgy that utilizes micronarratives; smaller stories within the larger frame. This larger frame could be said to be the excerpt cited in chapter 5.5, with thematic references to artistry and especially the writer, and what one needs to thrive as an artist. Echoing Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Room* in many ways "posits micronarratives and language games, performability over truth, pluricity over unity, exchange over legitimation" (Fortier, 2002, p. 176). Like previously noted, *Room* does not seem concerned with conveying truth,

but rather the performer's reflections surrounding a topic. Nothing discussed seems definite, it is just one version of events. These are some of my initial thoughts when having watched the performance, but how does these observations influence the performance? What are the consequences, the effect?

5.7 Analytical question and governing interest

Eigtved writes how one should base one's analytical question, the performance analysis governing interest, on what the analyst found the most interesting about the performance initially (Eigtved, 2010, p. 142). For me, this was the dramaturgy of the collage. I was attracted to the idea of a performance where the text is constituted of various parts that necessarily are not connected. I found Bogart's attitude expressed in Scott T. Cummings' book Remaking American Theater especially interesting, where she said:

> "I am a scavenger. I am not an original thinker and I am not a true creative artist. So the notion of scavenging appeals to me. That is what I do. Like a bird that goes and pulls different things and makes a nest. I think it is more a nesting impulse, of taking this and that and weaving it together to make some sort of marriage of ideas"

(Cummings, 2010, p. 39).

A part of the appeal of this quote is the fact that I can relate to her mentality, but there are additional factors that make this statement interesting. This statement of course relates to the dramaturgy of collage, where various pieces of text, excerpts, make up the whole of stage text. I am attracted to the idea of independent pieces of text and how they together can make up a new whole. That excerpts of text that originally did not relate to each other in any way, can find new meaning when put together. I of course knew in advance that *Room* was going to be a staging of a collage text, but I was interested to see how the collage on the page translated to the stage. In what way did the collage dramaturgy of the text influence the staging? And in regard to *Room* in particular, I wondered whether the different voices of Woolf's works would appear as one unity, or whether one could notice that there are several differing voices present. I was wondering whether a staging of a collage text would lose its sense of entirety, whether it would feel as fragmented as it was conceived. It comes down to a

question of how a collage text, with the dramaturgy that it implies, is translated to the stage. And in terms of *Room*, whether it would be visible that the performance is made up of different voices put out from Woolf, whether Bogart and the SITI Company embrace the text's fragmented nature in the staging of the material, or pursue to create a whole, blurring the lines between the different excerpts of source material. I want to look into how a collage manuscript is transferred to the stage, and in what ways this dramaturgy manifests itself in the staging, whether it be acting, lighting, scenography, sound etc. In *Room,* I wanted to witness how Anne Bogart's scavenger mentality would look like in practice, what it amounts to.

To function as the focus of this performance analysis, I therefore want to pose the following analytical question: *How does the collage dramaturgy manifest itself in the staging of Room and in what way and to which extent is it visible to the spectator that it is based on a collage text?* In addition to this central question I would like to view the performance based on the assumption that *Room* is a postmodern performance. This latter part then makes up the question of how and in what way *Room* relates to postmodern characteristics. The governing interest for this particular analysis will consequently be revolving around the dramaturgy of the piece and how it functions, as well as a look at the performance through a postmodern lens of theory and aesthetics. Ultimately, the performance analysis will also serve as a validation or invalidation of the thesis' hypothesis, where Scott T. Cummings claims about Anne Bogart that "Collage is her natural form (…) (Cummings, 2010, p. 31).

5.8 The mise-en-scène of *Room*: The actor

When discussing the mise-en-scène of the performance of *Room*, I will focus on the elements of the production that appear as most significant in relation to the analytical questions raised in the previous chapter. According to Patrice Pavis the "Performance analysis should begin with the description of the actor, for the actor is at the center of mise-en-scène and tends to be a focal point drawing together the other elements of a production" (Pavis, 2006, p. 55). I will follow Pavis' advice and start with the single actor in *Room*, Ellen Lauren. Eigtved operates with four levels on how to view the actor in a performance analysis: the individual, public persona, mediator and the link (Eigtved, 2010, p. 41-42). The level of the individual deals with the performer herself, the person the audience perceives detached from the character that might be portrayed. In this case a spectator might observe that Lauren is a slender adult

woman. The level of the public persona is in reference to actors an audience might recognize from other works that may give the performance yet another dimension in that the spectator brings this knowledge into the performance as part of their horizon. This might be the case with very famous actors whose previous work is well known by the audience. With *Room* and Lauren, this might be the case for some spectators who are based in the New York area where she performs regularly. I had seen Lauren in interviews and pictures previous to seeing her in *Room*, but this did not influence my impression of her performance. I had not seen her in anything theatre related before, which made me come to the performance with a fresh gaze in terms of her performance.

As a mediator of meaning, Lauren was intense and focused, performing the piece with precision and passion. With the help of music and sound, Lauren definitely functions as the mediator of the meaning expressed in the theatrical performance, utilizing her lines as well as her body to embody the themes of the text. In fact, Lauren's performance appears to very much relate to that of a mediator. The concept of character is very fluid in *Room*, making Lauren appear more as a spokesperson for various opinions on different topics, rather than a consistent, fully fleshed out character. In many respects, she is a mediator, a conveyer of meaning without expressing that meaning through a character. I will touch more upon this dynamic later in this chapter. Lastly, Lauren functions as the link between the production team and their intentions for the piece, and the onlookers. Especially considering this was a one-woman show, she is the key link between the idea behind the piece and the audience that was there to receive it. Based on what I know about the artistic process of *Room* as well as the process utilized by Anne Bogart and SITI Company, Lauren is also very much a co-creator of the piece, an auteur actor, making her an invaluable force both in terms of process and production as well as in her performance of the finished piece.

Eigtved references Czech structuralist Otokar Zich when approaching the actor in a performance analysis (Eigtved, 2010, p. 42). Zich presents three terms that can be utilized to place the actor's approach to the performance. In *Room* Lauren's performance does differ in its approach and effect on the audience, so Zich's three terms when dealing with this discussion seem fertile. The first of the three, is presented by Eigtved as the performer (aktøren). This of course relates to the concrete person the audience sees on stage, much like the level of the individual in the first paragraph. The performer is Ellen Lauren herself as an artist. The second term, stage figure (scenfiguren), Eigtved refers to as the impression created

by the actor and the production team through technique and behavior with their conscious use of movement, voice, costume etc. (Eigtved, 2010, p. 42). So this term revolves around the theatrical aspects of the performance which provides the performer with a set of theatrical surroundings. Together these make up the actor's stage figure. Lastly there is the point of the role/character (rollen/karakteren). This of course is when the actor depicts someone other than themselves, someone who comes alive in the mind of the spectator through his or her own interpretation. This last approach is often the one an audience will encounter when watching performances based in realism or naturalism (Eigtved, 2010, p. 42-43). But which one of these three approaches are utilized by Ellen Lauren in doing Room?

The approach chosen in *Room* appears to be rather complex in that it constantly shifts from one to the other. Lauren appears in the beginning of the performance to take the fictional role of Virginia Woolf, speaking her words as if they were her own. In other words, it initially seems like Lauren is taking on the role of Virginia Woolf herself, making her into a character in the performance. But it soon becomes apparent that this character will not be permanent throughout the piece. Lauren is talking directly to the audience in the first scene, establishing a connection between her and the spectators. Even though it may seem like she is portraying Woolf in the first part of this scene, this impression is weakened by her indecisiveness. The character dissolves because of the fleeting nature of Lauren's performance where nothing is constant or reliable. She encourages the audience to remain critical of her words, calling upon them to make up their own minds about the questions posed. Even though the actress seems to talk on behalf of herself, she appears to be more of a spokesperson for the ideas she talks about. This makes sense in this part of the performance since much of the text is excerpts from *A Room of One's Own*. This collection of essays is based upon two talks that Woolf did, one at the Arts Society in Newnham and one at Odtaa in Girton (Woolf, 2014, p. 1). Lauren frames the performance in the same manner as the collection of essays by Woolf. This impression of Lauren as a spokesperson is affiliated with my pre-performance knowledge, having read some of the source material for the script. She seems to take the role of a conveyer of Woolf's works, a mouthpiece channeling Woolf. These factors point to Lauren appearing more like a stage figure, not concerning herself too much with a fictional character, but utilizing the theatrical performance as an arena to channel Woolf's words and work.

As a stage figure, Lauren utilizes a set of gestures to supplement her lines. These gestures seem detached from the dialogue, not really informing or emphasizing her words, but they

function as their own language. These gestures reinforce her presence as that of a stage figure, emphasizing the theatrical situation. Lauren seems to shift from the realm of role/character to stage figure throughout the piece. As a clock strikes well into the first scene, Lauren becomes more introspective and tells the audience about a memory. Here she stops looking at and talking in the direction of the audience, and shifts her focus towards herself. This introspective shift in her performance makes it seem like she is portraying a character, giving the audience a window into the characters psyche. Still, this does not last long. The scene is interrupted suddenly and the lights go on again in the audience area and she returns to her initial approach where she talks directly to the audience. So, these shifts from character to spokesperson, or stage figure, happen suddenly and often. They are often mimicked by the lighting or sound, emphasizing the rupture in atmosphere and approach to acting even further. For example, a little further into the performance, a single piano key can be heard, and Lauren utters the words "There it is again." The sound of the piano makes the light in the audience area go off, and Lauren to change the topic of conversation. The shifts in Lauren's performance are therefore often supplemented with other elements of production. Still, they are not consistent in their effect. Sometimes the introduction of light and/or sound, does not interfere with the approach to acting, but they always seem to function as catalysts for the focus of the dialogue to change.

To summarize, Lauren shifts from operating on the level of stage figure and character the most. The level of the performer is absent in her performance for the most part. Even though she does not portray a specific character a lot of the time, she never seems to appear as herself as an artist. The level of the stage figure seems more precise because of her theatrical and performative behavior. She is always performing as someone other than herself, the challenge is to determine as who. She does not have a name, she does not inhabit specific character traits or psychological motivations for her actions. She seems to be everyone and no one at the same time. Therefore, to me, more than anything else, Lauren's performance seems to be the human manifestation of the Woolf texts and the ideas presented in them. She moves from one to the other without too much consideration on creating a cohesive character. In many ways, her performance appears as fragmented as the dramaturgy of the piece; constantly rapturing and interrupting itself and shifting from one focus to another. One could almost say that in addition to being the human manifestation of the texts, Lauren seems to be the human manifestation of the dramaturgy as well. Her performance is so linked to the way the piece moves, to its pace, that they seem almost impossible to separate from one another.

Exploring Lauren's approach to acting in *Room* further, Eigtved proposes five styles of acting that have been utilized since modernism's breakthrough in the late 19th century. The styles listed are: naturalistic, materialistic-realistic, absurd, physical theatre and postmodern (Eigtved, 2010, p. 46). Eigtved acknowledges how the postmodern style of acting, rather than strictly a style, is more of a consistent mixing of them. *Room* can be said to utilize some of the characteristics Eigtved associates with the postmodern style (Eigtved, 2010, p. 50). One of them is the use of irony or an ironic distance. This is achieved in *Room* when Lauren comments on the theatrical performance itself, for example when she comments on her own dialogue by saying "What a topic on a night like this." She criticizes the performance itself, commenting on the choices made. By doing this Lauren emphasizes the fact that this is a well thought out theatrical performance and that it is indeed, theatre, and not an illusion to lose oneself in as a spectator. She constantly reminds the audience of this fact by commenting on the artistic product. The performance is aware of itself, it is self-referential. *Room* can also be said to mix different styles and approaches, like discussed in the previous paragraph, it shifts in different approaches to acting constantly. Lauren is very restricted in her movements, moving very consciously across the stage and utilizing gestures as a form of physical language. During what can be considered to be the climax of the performance, Lauren moves more freely than previously, letting go of her tight movement regime. This climax is a moment of great physical relief, where her freed movement speaks volumes. This could be linked to the style Eigtved lists as physical theatre. Like he writes, it is a wild, but controlled display (Eigtved, 2010, p. 50). Lauren's movement is stylized and very much technical, almost choreographed.

Room is also very much influenced by the style of what Eigtved refers to as materialistic-realistic (materialistisk-realistisk), where he includes Stanislavsky and Brecht as important contributors, but with the most emphasis on Brecht (Eigtved, 2010, s. 48). *Room* is heavily inspired by the theories developed by Brecht. Lauren, through her performance, constantly reminds the audience of the fact that they are watching theatre and emphasizes through lines like "This is not a pretty room, is it? Some of the furniture, well, I have seen better. But it will do. It is our room now," (Bogart, 2014, p. 144) that the performance is happening here and now. It does not take place in a different environment or setting, neither does it happen at a different time, it is a theatrical performance and it happened on the 3rd of February at the Palmer Auditorium at Connecticut College. The Brecht influence in *Room* can also be found

in Lauren's relationship to the audience. She acknowledges the audience's presence and communicates with them. She also seems to remain detached from her "character" in that she never seems to lose herself when she does appear introspective in her approach, she always goes back to maintaining a distance. This is all in line with Brecht's *verfremdungeffekt*, where he proposes several approaches to theatre that will secure the necessary distance for the audience to perceive a political context. In *Room* there are underlying political themes in terms of feminism especially. Like previously mentioned in chapter 5.5, Lauren gives the audience the power to judge her opinion and form their own. By doing so, she in many ways passes the responsibility of creating meaning over to the audience. *Room* and Ellen Lauren's performance therefore mainly stand in a strong relation to Brecht and his epic theatre as well as a postmodern way of mixing styles and use of irony.

Furthering the conversation on the actor, I would like to place *Room* on Eigtved's spectrum of identification. The outer points of this spectrum are based on scholars Elaine Aston and George Savona's differentiation between the character on stage and the character's function within the play. The first one is in reference to a portrayal of psychologically motivated character, while the latter is referring to how the character can function structurally or ideologically. The outer points thereby represent a character which the audience is supposed to fully relate to and the fully stylized depiction where the "character" is only a symbol of something else (Eigtved, 2010, p. 52). *Room* and Lauren's depiction are leaning more towards the latter outer point, where the depiction is meant to serve a greater purpose than depicting a specific character, but rather represent an ideology. I think the actress in *Room* serves both a structural as well as ideological function in that she, together with sound and lighting, initiates new topics of conversation, steering the direction of the performance. She also presents the audience of her attitude in relation to various topics, but never claiming for them to be the truth, she leaves room for the audience to make up their own minds about the topic. Like previously stated, it becomes more evident, how Lauren serves more as a function than a character. She does have moments of introspective acting where the audience does get the chance to relate to her in a more psychological manner, but these are always interrupted. She then changes back to her initial approach where she keeps a distance to the role and consequently reminding the audience to keep the same distance to the material. To me it does not seem like Lauren breaks character when she returns to this distanced approach, I would rather say it is the other way around. She starts the performance with this distance intact, interacting with the audience, then she interrupts this by getting introspective in her approach

for a while. To me, she does not break character, she breaks with the initial approach that is distanced and full of audience communication.

Eigtved, still echoing Aston and Savona, also emphasizes how the actor's approach is linked to the dramatic text. He lists three different types of dramatic text that can be linked to an actor or ensemble's approach to the material: the classical, the bourgeois and the postmodern (Eigtved, 2010, p. 53). Based on Eigtved's descriptions of the different types of text, it becomes apparent how *Room* would be placed in the last category. *Room* utilizes anti-illusory choices to constantly avoid too much identification with Lauren and her performance. Many of these choices are the same ones that were mentioned earlier in relation to Brecht. When the audience is just about to relate to the character Lauren is portraying in her more introspective moments, she changes her approach and starts talking directly to them. In this way, the audience is not able to fully identify with the character she creates and relate to her stories. The illusion of character is broken by Lauren herself by shifting the focus from the character to the theatrical situation they are all in. She never lets the audience ignore the performative nature of the piece, constantly reminding them that they are watching a staging, that they are watching theatre.

To summarize, Ellen Lauren's performance in *Room* is characterized by her approach as first and foremost a mediator or spokesperson for different ideas and questions posed by Virginia Woolf. She is a shape shifter in that she rapidly shifts from performing as more of a stage figure, to performing a character. Her main approach does still appear to be the former, since this is the one she starts with and establishes thoroughly to the audience. This is also the approach she ends the performance with, speaking to the audience about what she has learned from performing for them. She does not break with her character, she breaks with her stage figure. Lauren's performance is further heavily influenced by acting styles affiliated with Brecht and the postmodern. She utilizes several tools to distance herself and the audience from too much identification and illusion. Through her performance it is made clear to the spectators that it is a theatrical performance, and she is aware of that fact. Lauren's stage figure also appears to have no specific identity, but rather functions as a human manifestation of the collage of Woolf texts and the dramaturgy of the manuscript. Like Eigtved writes, she functions as a thematic symbol or as an ideological key, representing the ideas explored in the source material (Eigtved, 2010, p. 53). She deals with these ideas, making them known to the audience, and encourages them to intellectually take part in the discussion. Lauren utilizes a

mixture of acting styles, making her performance relate to a postmodern approach to acting where this mixture is embraced. Lastly, she supplements her intellectual and sometimes introspective dialogue with a set of gestures and movements, which will be the focus of the next chapter.

5.9 The mise-en-scène of *Room*: Movement

Even though I have touched upon Ellen Lauren's performance already, I would like to devote one chapter to her relation to movement. The performance of *Room* relied heavily on text, one that also was quite intellectual at times. In addition to her strong relationship and commitment to dialogue, Ellen Lauren also makes great use of her possibilities for movement. Her body language is restricted and controlled in nature, and none of her choices of movement seem redundant. They are carefully planned, one could argue that they appear more choreographed than staged. In the beginning of the performance Lauren remains in the center of the stage, not moving away from that spot for a considerable amount of time. During the talk back that was held subsequently to the performance, which I attended, Anne Bogart said that Lauren remains at this spot for 17 minutes (Anne Bogart, 03.02.17). Still, she does utilize movement limited to her upper body, this in the form of various gestures. This set of gestures is repeated throughout the performance and most of them have a very rectangular shape to them, they appear to be very sharp with no rounded edges or flowy motions. They almost seem set in stone. When I first saw the performance, I found it difficult to ascertain what the purpose and effects of these gestures were to me. They seemed very much separated from the dialogue, not having any obvious links to the themes expressed in Lauren's lines. So, they must be a separate language then I concluded. Maybe they tell a different story?

The gestures used by Lauren do not appear to me to signal any human behavior, they do not appear to reference gestures that we utilize in our daily lives. They appear to be more like images or tableaus that find their purpose in a performative setting. In other words: The gestures seem like they are invented for theatre, and this performance specifically. They do not serve a function in other contexts than the one they originate from. It seems like the way Anne Bogart and Lauren has chosen to utilize the body in this performance can be related to Dr. Victor Ramírez Ladrón de Guevara's talk of the "imagined body," but in close relation to Zarrilli's "aesthetic outer body." Guevara writes:

"For Zarrilli, this body does not centre on the construction of a character but, in a more general sense, it refers to the enactment of 'a specific performance score (shaped by) one's energy, attention, and awareness to the qualities and constraints of the aesthetic form and dramaturgy informing the score'"

(Guevara, 2011, p. 30)

Guevara argues that if the idea of the "imagined body" - the body that is performative and often concerned with creating characters – can be linked to the "aesthetic outer body" of Zarrilli, it can also include dancers and all kinds of performative bodies (Guevara, 2011, p. 30). It appears that Lauren in *Room*, is expressing herself with an "imagined body," as well as Zarrilli's "aesthetic outer body," that does not concern itself with creating movement to establish character, but a body which informs the entirety of the performance. It is shaped by the staging itself, and therefore functions more as an aesthetic body. That is the overall impression I get. She does not use her body to just build character, not even when she seems to be portraying one for a short while. Her use of her body, her gestures and restrictive movement is part of something bigger, namely the staging itself. It becomes a part of the visual presentation, making her body involved in the pacing and progression of the piece. Her gestures sometimes even serve as a dramaturgical device, functioning as the queues for sound and lighting to change. Her gestures initiate fractures in the staging, forcing them to alter and adjust to a different direction. Lauren's aesthetic body is juxtaposed with the other visual elements of the performance, and functions as one part of the visual entirety, or like Eigtved writes, becomes a part of the scenic choreography (Eigtved, 2010, p. 63). In addition it is a catalyst for the pacing of the collage dramaturgy of the piece, emphasizing its fractured structure.

I would also like to look at the movement of *Room* in relation to the artistic process that preceded it. In the talk back that was held by Lauren and Bogart subsequently to the performance, they conveyed some information about their process in regard to movement specifically. One statement that I found particularly interesting, came from Ellen Lauren, where she said that one "can only feel free in structure" (Ellen Lauren, 03.02.17). She said this in relation to her process of doing the physical work this performance required of her. She expressed that it was very demanding, being so restrictive and poignant in her movement. She had to manage the structure of the body movements, the placement of the different gestures,

to fully be able to explore and feel free to express herself. It was when she got the structure down, that she could fully commit. This approach can be linked to some other information that was shared at the talk back. The gestures that Lauren performs, are all based on photographs of Virginia Woolf. They started out with 26, but then restricted it to 11. These 11 photographs were the inspiration for 11 different gestures that would be incorporated into the performance. Every gesture would have a designated number attached to it. During the process, Bogart would shout out the numbers and Lauren would have to reciprocate with the associated gesture (Anne Bogart, 03.02.17). Based on this information, it becomes apparent how Bogart and Lauren have been working on movement for the piece separate from the text during the process, focusing solely on this element. It also supports Lauren's remarks on the demanding physicality of *Room*. It also does seem to align with my previous assumption that the movement in this performance is treated like a separate entity from the text, making it part of the visual staging rather than something that purely supplements the dialogue, enforcing its message.

Another aspect that should be considered in relation to the use of movement in this particular performance, is the fact that Bogart, Lauren and the SITI Company are notarized for utilizing the Viewpoints method. Not only when they are in the process of creating a performance, but as a part of their general actor training. Like mentioned in chapter 4.4, the method is not necessarily meant to be incorporated into a performance, it is a method, a tool to create the right conditions for a performance to erupt. Still, knowing what I knew going in to see *Room*, I felt like I could catch a glimpse of the method in the performance itself, see traces of it. Gesture in of itself is a viewpoint, and like previously stated, in *Room* it is utilized in a way that makes it an essential part of the scenic choreography and the staging itself. In the context of Lauren's movements in *Room,* she could be said to utilize *Expressive gesture*, which are gestures that cannot be found in everyday life, but take on an abstract expression of emotion. Tina Landau writes how "Anne often uses the Viewpoints as the basis for staging a piece. By using them, the actors become the individual and collective choreographers of the physical action" (Landau, 1995, p. 25). If one assumes this is the case also with the process of making *Room*, my ability to see traces of the method in piece itself is not too surprising. It seems like the Viewpoints training in many ways inspires the blueprint for the physical choreography of Bogart's pieces, and that "It's only after the choreography is refined and able to be concisely repeated that the text is laid in" (Lauren, 1995, p. 68). The movement is the starting point of the staging process, and through working with the Viewpoints, it inspires everything that

comes after it. To me, *Room* becomes a rich example of how the Viewpoints method can inspire a performance, at least physically. Lauren having utilized Viewpoints, as well as the Suzuki method for several years, is well equipped to perform a piece that relies so heavily on the physicality of the performer. This is in part why I have chosen to include some information about the artistic process that is behind the making of *Room*, because the artists who created it are so linked to their method of working that it seems impossible to ignore. It is such an essential part of the end product that is presented to an audience.

In short, the movement in Room is treated both in the process and in the finished performance as a separate entity from the text, making it seem more as part of the visual staging rather than as a means to develop and enhance character, it becomes a part of the visual dramaturgy. It also sometimes functions as a catalyst, setting in motion other scenic effects and changing the direction of the performance. The movement also helps mark the fractures in the dramaturgy of the piece, helping it seem more fragmented. The movement also has a dramaturgy of its own, a structure which Lauren had to get to know to be able to live within it and perform the movements more freely. Lauren's movements appear to relate to an *aesthetic body* and also seems to have been heavily inspired by working with the Viewpoints method, utilizing *expressive gestures* to visually showcase Virginia Woolf.

5.10 The mise-en-scène of *Room:* Visuals, sound and lighting

In addition to the aesthetic body of Ellen Lauren making up a visual component in the performance, the two other visual components that appear most interesting in relation to the question of staging the collage, is sound and lighting. I am therefore choosing to focus the most on these two elements. I will analyze the use of sound and lighting with the assumption that everything on stage has meaning, whether Bogart, Lauren and the SITI Company intended for it or not. I am particularly interested in how these visual components relate to each other, to the staging as a whole, and most importantly how it stands in relation to the collage dramaturgy of the text it is based on. How do these visual elements communicate the initial scenic text?

The scenography of *Room* is, like previously noted, quite minimalistic. The stage area is laid bare with the exception of an armed chair on the left hand side, positioned diagonally, with the back of the chair placed towards the audience. It is pale in color, its padding grey and

frame a golden beige color. It appears to be older, it is not a particularly modern chair, it has more of a vintage feel. In addition, there is a silhouette of what can be considered to be a window that is drawn on the back wall with the use of lighting. Aside from these two components, the stage is empty, only filled by Ellen Lauren's aesthetic body and performance. The chair and the window have their basis in the barn where Bogart and Lauren initially developed *Room*. So, the stage is sparingly furnished. The minimal scenography seems to support the introductory lines given by Lauren, where she states to the audience that "This is our room now" (Bogart, 2014, p. 144). The minimalist scenography helps to give the audience the impression that this could be any room, anywhere. The stage is really just decorated with the essential things that usually make up a room. The scenography does not however tell the audience anything about what kind of room it is, what it is used for or dictate any specific time period. The stage area therefore functions as any room, it can serve as anyone's room of their own so the speak. In addition, the minimalist scenography makes the performance easier to tour with.

The scenography of *Room* therefore, does not really inform the story too much, it purely functions as the setting for the story to unfold, a setting which is very much neutral. What does drive the story forward however, and informs it, is the lighting and soundscape of the performance. The light is one of the first elements one notices while watching *Room*. When Lauren starts the performance in the audience area, she is lit up with a spotlight that follows her up on stage. This initial choice of lighting seems to align with my previous observations about Lauren: that she frequently functions as the orchestrator of the performance. She often times initiates the other scenic elements. The spotlight in the beginning can also indicate that her movements determine the lighting. To help me further dictate what functions the lighting in *Room* serves, I will be using Eigtved's categorization of lighting functions. In general, the main purpose of the lighting in Room is to help guide the audience between the two layers of fiction. One being the layer of right here and now, the present moment, the other representing the past, where Laurens many stories and memories take place. This latter layer does not always point to a specific place, but functions as a more general sense of the past. Lauren, with her style of acting, further emphasizes these layers of fiction. Often the light will remain on in the audience area when Lauren is talking directly to the spectators and is present in the now. When she starts telling a story or remembering a memory, the light above the audience is dimmed down. This is not always continuous, but still appears as the general rule. It is also during these more introspective moments where Lauren appears more as a character, that

color is incorporated into the lighting. It might turn warmer in tone to underline the subjective experience of the memory, emphasizing the nostalgia the memory might evoke in Lauren's character.

In other words, the lighting choices made in *Room* emphasize the structure and fictional layers of the piece. It also has the ability to minimize or expand the room. When the lighting is on in the audience area, the world of the play also includes the audience, it is no longer just framing the stage area as a separate unity of time and space. This choice, to expand the world of the play, also expands on the thematic idea of this being a room the spectators can call their own, referencing the introductory lines given by Ellen Lauren. When the lighting is restricted to the stage area only, it further emphasizes Lauren's submission to character where this is her room only, a personal space for the character. This is not however always consistent. Sometimes the lighting is off in the audience area, and Lauren is telling a story, but she still refers to the audience, including them in her tale. But even though the lighting does sometimes deviate from what I consider to be the general rule of the performance's lighting, it does seem to overall take the function of what Eigtved calls *light as stage building* (Lys som scenebygning). Like he points out, with lighting one has the opportunity to create spaces within the space itself, informing the architecture of the piece (Eigtved, 2010, p. 68). This is very much the way the lighting functions in *Room*, acting as a tool to emphasize the two spaces utilized – the excluding and including room – as well as informing the audience of what these different rooms might mean. To me they symbolize the two layers of fiction and acting style within the piece, and these elements often operate in accordance with each other. I remember thinking during the performance that the shifting acting style together with the lighting gave the performance a feeling of zooming in and out. When the light was including, illuminating the spectators, it provided a feeling of zooming out, looking at the bigger picture. Then, when the audience sat in darkness and the light took on a warmer tone in color, and Lauren became more introspective, it gave the feeling of zooming in on her and the smaller stories that are told within the bigger frame. In this way, the lighting functions as a telescope guiding the audience.

On the topic of different functions of lighting, Eigtved also mentions *interpretive lighting* (fortolkende lys). This is in reference to lighting that helps tell the story and can help inform the spectators' interpretation of the performance (Eigtved, 2010, p. 68). In *Room*, the light definitely helps telling the stories and themes expressed in the piece, but more so in relation to

form and structure than content. The light emphasizes the fragmented structure of the performance, enforcing the collage text it originates from. To me, the light helps to distinguish the separate scenes from each other. When watching the performance, one can see, through both the lighting, sound and acting style of Lauren, where one scene ends and another begins. It is almost like one can see the script on stage. There does not seem to have been made any effort to create smooth transitions in the lighting to make the piece feel flowy and coherent. Instead, the lighting is used to make fractures in the staging, embracing the fragmented form of the dramatic text. In this regard, the lighting does help the audience's interpretation of the structure of the piece which further could influence their interpretation of the performance as whole. The lighting also performs in an interpretive way in that it helps set moods and establishes atmosphere. This is in large explored in the excluding room where Lauren gets into character. In this fictional layer, the performance experiments more with color. For example, at one point Lauren gets introspective about the topic of family. During this scene, the stage is floodlighted in a warmer light. This makes the scene seem more like a flashback and like something out of a dream. The scene is a retelling of the past and is therefore wrapped in Lauren's character's nostalgia. The warm light might give the audience the association of summer and happiness attached to the story, in this way helping them in their interpretation of the scene.

To summarize the lighting in *Room* is used both in regard to *light as stage building*, and as *interpretive light*. The light helps limit or expand the room or performance space to suit the layer of fiction where Lauren resides. In this way the light functions in an architectural manner, helping to create the space the dramatic text asks for. In addition, it informs the audience's interpretation of the piece by creating certain associations in the spectator's mind for example, by the use of specific colors. It also helps the audience to capture the fragmented structure of the piece, constantly shifting from including them in the world of the play, and then excluding them. While the lighting in the performance does imply a form of interpretation, it does not however provide the audience with any definitive interpretation. The performance still has the postmodern trait of opening up to the gaze of the spectator, giving the power of interpretation over to the audience members. The lighting does not imply a certain interpretation that would condition the audience's impression too much. The main function of the lighting, to me, is to guide the spectator through the fragmented structure of the performance. It functions more as a dramaturgical guide, than as an enhancer of intention

or meaning. The light emphasizes the fragmented dramaturgy, and is juxtaposed with Lauren's aesthetic body which many times initiates change in the lighting.

Another part of the mise-en-scène that coincides with the lighting of *Room*, is the soundscape. *Room* mainly makes use of simple piano keys as its musical component, while there also are various sound effects incorporated into the piece. The audience does not at any point in the performance see the source of these sounds, where they stem from. One might therefore conclude that the totality of the constructed soundscape is pre-recorded and not performed live. In relation to this, Eigtved describes the differentiation between diegetic and non-diegetic sound. This differentiation, Eigtved explains, stems from Christian Metz's notion that people understand sound based on its cause, or its source. Eigtved further notes how people will describe sound based on their identification of the sound's source (Eigtved, 2010, p. 78). In other words, it is the source that causes the noise that influences one's interpretation of the specific sound. Diegetic sound has its source of sound in the play's world. Diegetic sound has a logical source which the audience can connect to something within the world of the play, it belongs to the story being told. A diegetic sound can according to Eigtved, be attributed to a cause within the performance's own universe (Eigtved, 2010, p. 79). In contrast to diegetic, non-diegetic sound is not necessarily linked to something specific within the performance's universe, these sounds are created for the performance specifically, but do not stem from the story directly. These often therefore take the form of sound effects that are not directly linked to the plot or story of the piece. Said differently, does the non-diegetic sounds not stem from a logical source within the performance, they are a separate unity that comes alive in encounter between theatre artists and audience (Eigtved, 2010, p. 79-80). Like previously stated, *Room* utilizes a soundscape that is non-detectable, the object causing the sound is not visible to the spectator. *Room* therefore heavily relies on a non-diegetic soundscape, where the sound usually does not stem from a natural source within the play, but rather appears as a separate entity of the mise-en-scène.

Even though the soundscape is mostly non-diegetic, it does affect the storytelling and dramaturgy of the performance. Like the lighting, the sound also often functions as a fracturing element, emphasizing the fragmented structure. Based on this observation, the timing of the sound becomes especially interesting. Not too long into the performance, a single piano key is heard and this sound makes Lauren utter the words: "And there it is again" (*Room,* 03.02.17). This also triggers the shift in Lauren's acting style from character to scenic

figure, addressing the audience directly again. This shift further initiates the light to dim down. This specific sound therefore catalyzes a whole range of elements, forcing them to change. Most often, this sound is the sound of clock chiming. Sometimes it can also be heard as piano keys, but these never form a melody, but rather sound like they are incidental. Both the clock chiming and the piano keys have this catalytic function where they initiate change in Lauren's character or stage figure. Besides these two non-diegetic sound effects, there are also moments of ambience that helps create atmosphere. These are mostly used when Lauren functions as a character and when she relives her memories of childhood, family or disturbing occurrences from her past. These more ambient sounds include the sound of waves, which is used when Lauren is in the process of retelling a memory that revolves around waves and the sea. This can be interpreted as a reference to Virginia Woolf's novel, *The Waves.* There are no textual abstracts used from *The Waves* in *Room,* but an audience member who is familiar with Woolf's bibliography might make a connection to this book. In this way, the use of waves as sound, might be considered to evoke pictures in an audience's mind and create an atmosphere which suites the action on stage. It does not, however, provide the spectator with any more information about the performance's setting, neither in concern to time nor location. It therefore serves mostly as an element of expression which conjures images and associations with the audience, as well as create an abstract kind of atmosphere on stage.

5.11 The mise-en-scène of *Room:* Storytelling

Room does not present the audience with a linear narrative. Neither does it tell one singular storyline. It almost seems to tell its story like a stream of consciousness, where associations made by Lauren's character or stage figure are what constitutes the next subject of conversation. These changes from one subject to another, are either dictated by sound, lighting, Lauren's performance, or all of them at once. The new direction of the story is consistently emphasized through a change in the mise-en-scène, be it light, sound or acting. *Room* consists of several small narratives that take the shape of memories or proclamations of Lauren's character and stage figure. These do not necessarily belong to the same person, but appear as fragments gathered from the life of an artist, the life of a woman, the life of a female artist.

When the various elements of expression that make up the mise-en-scène consistently interfere and change the direction of the performance, they all help move the various stories along, functioning as dramaturgical catalysts. In this way, all the elements of production seem to be juxtaposed, existing in a dynamic relation to one another. Lauren's movements is further amplifies by the soundscape and lighting of the piece, making them relate to each other in a way that is very evident and visible to the audience. The transitions between scenes are not fluid and smooth, but abrupt and sudden. This makes the story appear fragmented and associative, telling several stories in one performance from different perspectives, rather than telling one single story from the stand point of one coherent character. The whole mise-en-scène – acting, movement, soundscape and lighting – therefore all help tell the same fragmented story. And one point, they all individually help initiate a change from one narrative to another, all serving the same function. Based on this, it becomes apparent how Anne Bogart as a director, in this case has fulfilled the demands of the modern stage director by unifying all the elements that make up the mise-en-scene.

5.12 Conclusion

In conclusion, the performance of *Room* does appear to be a collage both in terms of dramatic text and staging. Anne Bogart's staging of the collage text maintains the text's fragmented structure by not glossing over the transitions that appear abrupt and sudden in the text. These changes from one thought, from one storyline, to another, are embraced and rather than hidden, they are amplified. This amplification is achieved through a consistent utilization of sound, lighting and movement as amplifiers of the staging's dramaturgy. The sound of a clock, catalyzes a domino effect where the other parts of the mise-en-scène change and adapt to a new story, a new direction, a new thematic focus. *Room* is influenced by a juxtaposed dramaturgy, where all the elements of expression are aligned and equal in importance. Even though *Room* contains a large amount of text, it complements this text with other scenic elements which inform the dramaturgy of the text. Ellen Lauren's movements and gestures form a story of their own, and therefore appears as another separate part of the mise-en-scène. This is in line with Lauren's statements in chapter 4.5, where she suggests that Anne Bogart is a juxta poser of idea, giving every entity of the staging equal importance. To me, it also appears to be evident how in *Room* Bogart has utilized the Viewpoints in establishing the

physical life of the performance. The most apparent sign of this is Lauren's quite clear utilization of *expressive gesture.*

Room's separate physical expression seems to confirm Lauren's assertion in chapter 4.5, that Bogart's process starts by creating an independent physical life for the performance, asking for a "choreography with perhaps ten stops or moments that in and of themselves speak of a relationship. Not relationship as in lovers on enemies, rather a relationship to time, the surrounding architecture, physical shape (…)" (Lauren, 1995, p. 67). One can assume that this has been a part of the artistic process also in the making of *Room.* That after receiving the collage manuscript from Jocelyn Clarke, Bogart and Lauren would go on to create the physical choreography of the piece. Even what can be said to be the performance's climax, is a physical climax where Ellen Lauren exhausts herself in order to free herself from her previously restrictive body language and gestures. The physical life of *Room* therefore appears as a separate entity within the entirety of the piece, and aligns with Lauren description of Bogart's directorial approach to process, where the physical choreography of the text is essential and a natural starting point for further exploration.

The performance is also strongly linked to the postmodern, which is especially noticeable in Ellen Lauren's playful relationship to character and representation. She is not static or consistent in her portrayal, varying between functioning as a stage figure, who maintains a distance to the material and relying on a materialistic-realistic approach to acting. This approach is sometimes interrupted by a portrayal of character, but this character is not consistent either, and appears to have a fleeting personality and we never really get to know a coherent character with a name and a backstory. She also frequently utilizes irony with an alienating effect that establishes the performance as a theatrical occurrence, and not a representation of reality. The performance in addition relies on micro-narratives in that it does not have a governing plot or story. It deals with situation rather than a concrete plotline, and presents several small narratives within a larger frame. This frame is established at the very beginning when Lauren introduces the room, that for the following 90 minutes, will be the common room she shares with the audience in order to explore themes of memory and what it means and what is needed to be an artist. She returns to this framework in the end, when she shares with the audience how much of an enlightening experience the performance has been, and ends the performance with a "Thank you" (*Room,* 03.02.17). In turn it is "den umiddelbare tilstedeværelse som preger publikums opplevelse" (Arntzen, 2015, p. 169). It is

Lauren's presence on stage that colors the audience's reception. This is the performance's ultimate feat, providing a space, a room in which the audience can take part and explore the many stories that are displayed. Presence is also a key factor in the Viewpoints method, and this trait seems to also manifest itself in the staging of *Room*.

Ultimately, *Room* is a devised collage performance where both text and staging is influenced by this fact. The fragmented dramaturgy of the collage manifests itself all throughout the mise-en-scène, reinforcing its initial textual starting point as a collection of appropriated, incoherent extracts of text. The performance appears to be a result of Anne Bogart's dedication to using the Viewpoints as a method which can help create the right conditions in which to create theatre. The Viewpoints' concern with movement and presence are both factors that are essential to the final performance where these elements are juxtaposed with the rest of the mise-en-scène. In the case of *Room* and Bogart's directorial approach, collage does indeed appear to be her natural form.

6.0 Discovering the directorial identity of Anne Bogart

With this thesis, I have attempted to uncover Anne Bogart's directorial identity. This identity has been explored and investigated by looking at her European influence from *Regietheater* exemplified by Peter Stein and *Shaubühne,* her American roots in the avant-garde movement, including the Judson Dance Theater which in turn has given way to her furthering of Mary Overlie's development of the Viewpoints. A performance analysis of the February 3rd, 2017 revival of *Room* has shed new light on how Bogart's process influences the final performance, as well as validates this thesis' initial hypothesis that "Collage is her natural form (…)" (Cummings, 2010, 39). I have investigated how the Viewpoints function as a part of Bogart's artistic process and in what way they manifest themselves in the staging of a performance.

Anne Bogart's discovery of Peter Stein and *Shaubühne* through the film adaptation of the theatre production of *Sommergäste*, ushered Bogart in the direction of a directorial approach in the spirit of German *Regietheater*. Implicit in this approach, is often a reinterpretation of classical texts. Because the classics often are considered classic because of their timelessness, they appear as fertile dramatic texts for director's who wish to revision the already established (Gjefsen, 2012, p. 12). Stein's legacy is therefore expressed through Bogart's *classic explosions* where she re-envisions plays by Gorky, Strindberg, Chekov and several others. Similar to Stein before her, Bogart was criticized for this practice, but ultimately, they brought her acclaim. In addition, Bogart has, like the Bremen generation, found herself producing theatre within institutions, but with an approach that resembles group theatre (gruppeteater) in that the production is a collaboration between everyone involved. The process is a collective effort, where the power is more evenly spread out between the actors, the director and the rest of the production team (Arntzen, 1987, p. 92).

Group theatre was also a central development of the neo-avant-garde in the 1960s (Arntzen, 1984, p. 24), with companies like the Living Theatre and the Wooster group. When Bogart arrived in New York in December of 1974, the neo-avant-garde was in decline, but her director's practice still remains influenced by the advancements made by the avant-garde movement. Her collective approach to production can also be found with the Judson Dance Theater dancers and choreographers who in turn inspired Mary Overlie's development of *The Six Viewpoints.* Bogart's embracement of Overlie's method and later her and Tina Landau's extension of it, can therefore be traced back to American postmodern dance practices. I

expressed in chapter 3.2 how Richard Schechner places Bogart in a group of current avant-garde directors who he has come to know what to expect from and that she is part of a group who only further the work of their predecessors (Schechner, 1993, p. 8). In other words, Bogart has taken possession of many of the advancements made during the neo-avant-garde, like devising, collective collaboration and the period's aesthetic experiments. Furthermore, she has established herself as a part of the current avant-garde that is *tradition-seeking.* After her bad experience in West Berlin in the 1980s, Bogart reinvented herself as an American director, embracing her artistic heritage. Even though she might not involve herself as much with "shamanic" aesthetics like that of Jerzy Grotowski, she does attempt to discover a theatre of "roots" in the sense that is interested in what lies at the core of the theatrical medium and recycles both texts and theatrical advancements of her past. She does not indulge in the *forward-looking* avant-garde's inclusions of modern technology and belief in originality (Schechner, 1993, p. 11). She proclaims herself that she is not an original artist, she prefers weaving together appropriated ideas. Through her collaboration with SITI Company co-founder, Tadashi Suzuki, Bogart is also in touch with Schechner's *intercultural* avant-garde, participating in "international cultural exchange and collaboration" (SITI Company, n. d.).

What Bogart *does* have in common with Grotowski, is his concern with training the actor. Through the SITI Company and their strong dedication to the Viewpoints, Bogart provides "a gymnasium-for-the-soul" (SITI Company, n. d.) As a combination of a workshop that promotes the development of *special skills,* functions as *production-oriented* and provides *selfexploration,* (Arntzen, 1984, p.24), the Viewpoints method may be considered as a laboratory practice that educates versatile, well-trained actors. Bogart's devotion to the Viewpoints method supports her collaborative devised approaches to directing, leaving her with an ensemble who feels connected and a sense of belonging to the final performance. Having her ensemble get acquainted with the Viewpoints, Bogart also transfers important aspects of the method, like presence, improvisation and physicality, into her productions. In *Room,* this could be observed through the separate physical life of the performance, as well as the direct insertion of *expressive gesture.*

Through the performance analysis of *Room,* I found that collage *is* Anne Bogart's natural form. The dramaturgy of the collage also seems to be in close relation to devising, where the text is the result of a collaborative process, in the case of *Room,* as an intimate collaboration between Bogart, Ellen Lauren and dramaturg Jocelyn Clarke. Bogart's devised collages are

part of a postmodern way of staging where micro-narratives, recycling, irony and a playful relationship to the actor's function in the staging are central. *Room* confirms Bogart's scavenger mentality, which points to her tendency to collect separate pieces of text and inspiration from various sources and combining them to make up a fragmented new whole. I also found *Room* to be a fruitful example of Bogart as a juxta poser of ideas, where each element of the mise-en-scène is juxtaposed and equally important.

In conclusion, Anne Bogart' directorial identity consists of a director's approach to classical texts which mimics that of the German *Regietheater* and a collaborative and devised approach to process influenced by the group theatres of the neo-avant-garde. Her relationship to dramaturgy has its basis in the visual arts where she appropriates already existing material to make up her own collage. Her textual material is either reinterpreted like in her *classic explosions,* or appropriated like in her devised collages. Bogart's utilization of the Viewpoints is an essential part of her artistic process where there is an equal distribution of power. The Viewpoints influence her final staging, particularly in terms of physical choreography. She does however take on the role of the deviser of the artistic process, in that she is in charge of enabling it. Richard Schechner refers to Bogart as predictable, and describes how this is a divergence from the initial purpose of the avant-garde. However, her predictability, or rather her ability to be recognized for a certain set of characteristics, does imply that she has become an *auteur*. The *auteur* director, though initially attributed the film director, references a director who is recognized for his or her personal artistic vision (Arntzen, 1991, p. 35). Through her usage of the Viewpoints method, her re-envisioning of the classics and her distinctive devised collages, Bogart has found a directorial identity which is recognized as hers, which in turn can attribute her as the author of her performances.

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