WORK IN PROGRESS:

ENGLISH PLAY DEVELOPMENT UNDER NEOLIBERALISM, 2000-2019

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Declaration

I, Lucy Tyler, confirm that the work submitted is my own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others. This thesis has been supplied on the understanding that it is the one upon which I expect to be examined.



Lucy Tyler, December 2019

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Abstract

Work in Progress: English Play Development under Neoliberalism, 2000-2019 explores how play development practices in state-subsidised English theatres functioned between 2000-2019, under conditions of neoliberal governance. By attending to both institutional and individual strategies and structures of play development, I analyse their economic rationality and co-constitution with the neoliberal statecraft of New Labour (1997-2010), the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition (2010-2015), and the current Conservative government (2015-) in advance of the general election in December 2019. Drawing on Marx's *Capital Volume One* (1990 [1867]), this thesis engages a materialist mode of analysis, exposing ideological structures that contribute to making theatre what Ric Knowles calls a 'culturally affirmative' product (2009: 56). Taking up the cultural materialisms of Williams (1977) and Dollimore and Sinfield (1985), and the bureaucratic analyses of Weber (1978 [1922]) and Graeber (2016 [2015]), I show how New Labour's neoliberal higher education and arts policies shaped English playwriting guides and dramaturgy in English theatres. The writings of Gramsci (1999 [1926]), Hall (1988), Brown (2015) and Foucault (2008 [1978-9]) further support an analysis of how play development in English theatres was shaped as a post-Fordist enterprise that encouraged artists to enact forms of neoliberal subjectivity. Furthermore, via the Marxist-feminist standpoint theories of Haraway (1988) and Hartsock (1983), I argue that the coalition furnished play development with a neoliberal 'new diversity' (Hargrave 2015: 109). Finally, using the 'commodity chain analysis' of Cook (2004) and Coles and Crang (2011), I contend that 'performances of development' represent new ways in which artists are attempting to resist neoliberal rationality. The thesis concludes that, over this period, neoliberal capitalist hegemony has fundamentally shaped English play development. By generating a mode of production that conflates the usually distinct

categories of development and performance, however, artists have begun to challenge the existent play development paradigms and their ideological underpinnings.

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INTRODUCTION

I. The Culture of English Play Development

In 2014, in the foyer of the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre, I encountered a banner that said, 'we think art is not a commodity'. The slogan was the third principle of the Secret Theatre Company's six-part manifesto and referred to their principles of practice. It was also an approach to marketing; six performances made in succession were programmed and would tour without the usual copy. The plays' blurbs had been replaced by a series of questions and titles had been replaced with tags – 'Show 1' through to 'Show 6'. When I noticed the banner, however, I had just purchased tickets to the shows for £75. It wasn't just the irony of the commodity exchange that made this encounter memorable; it was the way in which the banner encouraged me to reflect on my professional life.

My career has been in what Steve Waters and Lyn Gardner refer to as the 'culture of play development' (in Luckhurst 2006: 213; 2006). In the mid-2000s, as an undergraduate Creative Writing and English Literature student, a few theatres with new writing repertoires took interest in my playwriting. Later, I commenced an MPhil in Playwriting Studies at the University of Birmingham and received a handful of engagements and commissions from English and American theatres and companies, including Hampstead Theatre, Soho Theatre and Paines Plough Theatre Company in London, Origin Theater in New York and the Georgetown Theater Company. Later, I undertook reading roles at theatres and script services including Script in Birmingham and the Tobacco Factory in Bristol. I set up a theatre company and, in 2010,

commenced a full-time post teaching playwriting at the University of Gloucestershire. There, I introduced students to the culture of play development, facilitating live briefs and commissions myself. In 2016, I took up a new role at the University of Reading, where my title 'Lecturer in Performance Practices and Industries' refers to the work I undertake to create an interface between play development practices and the academy. For example, I facilitate projects that seed-fund and assist the play development of artists and companies.

Initially, I had assumed that the term 'play development' referred simply to the theatrical phase in which the playmaker generates raw material and early strategies for text or performance. When I entered the industry, however, I saw that play development was not an isolated preliminary activity of the individual maker or company. I started to see play development as what Pierre Bordieu describes as a 'field of cultural production' (1993). This field comprises a space of '*relational* thinking' within arts and literary production (ibid.: 29 [original emphasis]). Play development is thus a field that relationally connects and organises the essential theatrical work of generating new ideas and performative strategies in the English context.

By the 1990s, for example, English play development had become a field of institutionalised theatrical practices, undertaken at first by what Aleks Sierz calls 'the big six' new writing theatres: the Traverse in Edinburgh, Live Theatre in Newcastle and the Royal Court, the Bush, Hampstead and Soho in London (2011: 29). During the 1990s, play development practices expanded until, as Jacqueline Bolton finds, 'in addition to the proliferation of companies who regarded new writing as a core activity, very few producing houses could now exclude it' (2012: 219). In the 2000s, as Catherine Love puts it, there was 'a surge of interest and investment in the developing of new plays by British theatres and companies' (2015: 319-20). A network of twenty-nine theatres across the United Kingdom emerged that commenced play development practices (Sierz

2011: 32-37). In the twenty-first century, play development became a set of tacit methods, pedagogies and vocabularies used across the industry.

As a new playwright, though, I had no sense of the field in which I was now invested. I had understood almost immediately, however, that play development operated on an economic rationality. For example, I noticed that I was encouraged to adopt business behaviours. I attended meetings and writers' groups, received staged readings and residencies without remuneration to sell my plays. I interpreted feedback on my scripts as closely as possible to align my playwriting with public taste. I felt that there was only a short window in which my scripts and status as a playwright would be viable. It seemed to me that the culture of play development, therefore, was a field that valorises not only plays, but also participants; that it intends to generate new playwrights, playmakers, new writing and work as commodity forms. When I saw the Secret Theatre Company's banner, 'we think art is not a commodity', therefore, a series of questions about English play development and its connection to capitalism started to emerge.

'Capitalism' remains the dominant economic social relation that governs our lives. Its operation was first substantially critiqued by nineteenth-century German philosopher Karl Marx in works including *Capital Volume One* (1990 [1867]) – a central resource for this thesis's methodology introduced below. According to Dan Rebellato in *Theatre and Globalization*: '[capitalist] *development* involves seeking out use values, turning them into exchange values, turning the fabric of ourselves into commodities and those commodities into money' (2009: 26 [my emphasis]). In what ways, however, is capitalist development connected to English play development?

I started to engage more closely with the scholarship on English play development. As I detail below, the field had thus far offered exegesis on the structures and operations of individual literary departments at key new writing theatres and, in

addition, a handful of overviews looking across play development practices, focused particularly on the 1990s and early 2000s. Across this literature, I noticed, scholars including Mary Luckhurst (2006), Cathy Turner and Synne K. Behrndt (2008) and Jacqueline Bolton (2011) had already been gradually constructing the idea that English play development was connected to capitalism between the 1970s and 2000s. This reading, as I go on to show, however, was partial, built between works and increasingly outmoded. What was needed was a contemporary study of English play development that would extend and update existing economic analyses; in other words, I agreed with Michael Shane Boyle that 'what is needed, therefore, is an economic analysis of how "art corresponds to the capitalist mode of production". The same goes for theatre and performance' (2017: 7). I wanted to know in detail the ways in which the culture of English play development has been structured by capitalism in the twenty-first century and, furthermore, by what individual and institutional strategies these structures were reinforced.

In order to provide an up to date analysis, this thesis examines the connection between English play development and the current iteration of capitalism, 'neoliberalism'. Neoliberalism is a stage in capitalist development widely observed to have commenced in the administrations of Euro-Atlantic governments' management of global capital in the 1970s and 1980s. According to William Davies' *The Limits of Neoliberalism*, it 'is not a unified doctrine' (2017: 5). Furthermore, it does not include a clearly defined set of features; rather, as Alfredo Saad-Filho and Deborah Johnston argue, neoliberalism 'straddles a wide range of social, political and economic phenomena at different levels of complexity' (2004: 1). That is to say that neoliberalism is not simply an economic system; it is an iteration of late capitalism that engulfs all aspects of life including the political, civic, social and cultural aspects.

In the last forty years, scholars have studied neoliberalism's features in detail. For example, in the introduction to *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism* (2018: 1-26), Quinn Slobodian argues that, in particular, '[i]n the last decade, extraordinary efforts have been made to historicize neoliberalism' (3). This thesis thus benefits from the abundant existing literature on neoliberalism (e.g., Foucault 2008 [1978-9]; Chomsky 1998; Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Saad-Filho and Johnston 2004; Harvey 2005; Mirowski 2013; Brown 2015; 2019; Davies 2017). Indeed, I dedicate a further section below to exploring existing thinking on neoliberalism in detail. It is worth noting here, however, that much scholarship on neoliberalism is concerned with unravelling its effect on economic and political spheres. There is, though, a branch that observes its effects on global cultural production including works such as *Neoliberal Culture* (2016), edited by Jeremy Gilbert. This work explores what Gilbert describes as 'the genesis, persistence and poly-valency of neoliberalism across a range of cultural sites and genres' (7). My work here is similarly engaged, to borrow Gilbert's words, in exploring the genesis, persistence and poly-valency of neoliberalism across the culture of English play development in the twenty-first century.

This thesis, then, is an original contribution to the field of Theatre Studies that necessarily builds on existing scholarship to advance an innovative analysis of English play development and its relationship with neoliberal capitalism between 2000-2019. This work uniquely explores whether the culture of English play development, between 2000-2019, operated on – and indeed resisted – neoliberalism's terms and in what ways. Furthermore, in order to achieve this, I advance a set of six 'Marxist materialist' reading practices borrowed, developed and brought forward into the field of Theatre Studies introduced below. Across six chapters, I argue that key practices in the field of English play development during the twenty-first century comprised a labour process and set of social relations determined by the political economic structures of capital and,

furthermore, the social and ideological projects of neoliberalism. I argue that, between 2000-2019, neoliberalism's features, including marketisation and bureaucracy, its emphasis on transformation and restructuring and, also, its reconstituting of subjectivity as human capital fundamentally transformed English play development practices into a neoliberal culture of play development. Moving chronologically between 2000-2019, I analyse the marketisation of English play development guides published in the 2000s (Chapter One), the bureaucratisation of literary management in the 2000s (Chapter Two), the structuring and re-structuring of play development systems in key English new writing theatres in the 2010s (Chapter Three), the reconstituting of the artist as human capital in the 2010s (Chapter Four), the integrating of neoliberal diversity discourses in play development (Chapter Five) and, finally, the ways in which artists are using performance to increasingly challenge neoliberal reason in English play development in the late 2010s (Chapter Six). Throughout, I also offer a counter-narrative arguing that, in the twenty-first century, the features of play development critiqued here have been associated with certain benefits for artists and theatres. Possible benefits include enhanced equity of opportunity, increased transparency and greater democratic accountability – ideas I return to below.

This study necessitates a mode of analysis that momentarily sets aside conventional methodologies in theatre and performance. As Ric Knowles notes, 'traditional ways of analysing drama and theatre have tended to focus on what happens on stage or in the script […]' (2004: 57). As a set of material practices that occur in advance of, and around, the production of text or performance, however, English play development cannot be analysed via dramatic or performance methodologies. To explore English play development, and its relationship to neoliberalism, then, this thesis adopts a specific approach. As noted, I take up a Marxist materialist methodology for studying

English play development which I introduce fully in section III below. It is, however, worth introducing the guiding principles here.

A Marxist materialist approach takes up ideas from Marx's work, crucially, Marx's concept known as 'historical materialism'. Historical materialism refers to Marx's study of the 'means of production', the way in which humans reproduce themselves, and their social relations, in different time periods. In *Capital Volume One*, Marx is most interested in exploring the means of production under an economic system he calls capitalism. Marx is concerned with demonstrating that the historical moment within which he is writing is directly shaped by the economic ordering of society under capitalism. In other words, life is profoundly responsive to the organisation of economically productive forces, structures and processes which, in this period, are shaped by capitalism.[1]

Subsequent Marxist materialist theorising, therefore, is concerned with producing analyses that similarly demonstrate the significance of the material base of capitalism on diverse objects of study. This thesis thus takes up a Marxist materialist approach for the study of English play development and its connection to neoliberalism. Here, I develop a form of Marxist materialism that draws significantly on Marx's *Capital Volume One*. As

[1] The first ten chapters of Marx's *Capital Volume One* describe the operation of capitalism as follows. By exploring the commodity form and how value is produced in capital's modes of production, in Chapter One, Marx argues that value is the social (abstract) labour – the 'socially necessary labour time' of workers (the concrete work of private individuals) – congealed in commodities (129). The commodity's value can only exist when commodity exchange has become a normative social act, enabling abstract value to become relational across the market (Chapter Two). Marx continues to assert that value cannot exist without representation and, thus, money is the material representation of abstracted value (Chapter Three). In Chapters Four to Six, Marx argues that it is only in a system where the aim is commodity production that exchange becomes a necessary social act. The circulation of money into commodity production consolidates the overall aim of capitalist production as a system focused on the extraction of surplus value (Chapter Five). The circulation of capital requires the prior existence of the commodity of labour power that can be bought or sold; the capitalist then organises the working day (Chapter Ten) in ways that extract the optimum relational surplus value from the worker. This process benefits all capitalists by downgrading the value of workers' socially necessary labour time and thus creating competition which ensures continued growth and accumulation.

an analytical framework developed in relation to industrial manufacturing in England over one-hundred-and-fifty years ago, however, *Capital Volume One* cannot be applied directly to the study of English play development. For this reason, the Marxist materialist method I use extends – and in some cases departs from – Marx's own work.

Some Marxist analyses of cultural spheres and cultural artefacts do use *Capital Volume One's* description of the capitalist mode of production as a methodology and, often, these accounts rest upon the binary antagonisms of the worker and capitalist in order to locate the principles of capitalist accumulation. In the sphere of English play development, however, an orthodox Marxist analysis that directly applied *Capital Volume One* in a doctrinaire way might be in danger of casting playmakers and theatre managers respectively as workers and capitalists, taking theatres to be factories and reading their leaders, by extension, as exploitative employers pursuing surplus value. Such a reading may accurately identify certain antagonisms that occur between theatres and playmakers, but would overstate them and, more problematically, overlook the significant contextual, temporal and workplace differences between Marx's factory case studies during the Industrial Revolution and English play development in theatres and arts venues today.

Scholars have already noted this methodological problem. Boyle argues that introducing Marx's political economy directly into the field of Theatre Studies is difficult since art is not

> produced in a capitalist fashion. The social relations under which artists work – when producing art, at least – tend to depart from those that determine the capitalist production process described by Marx. Artists do not earn a wage for the productive activity they perform, but typically they sell their products themselves or through someone working on their behalf. Moreover, artists when producing art do not usually exploit workers, at least for the purposes of generating surplus value. As such, artists occupy the position of neither labor nor capital. Their product is not a standard commodity, since the price set for it

> rarely accords to anything like an average socially necessary labor time. (2017: 7-8)

Boyle's reading here usefully confirms that, while Marx's ideas are central to a materialist analysis that looks at *how* capitalism is incorporated into English play development, too rigid an application would misapply the conceit of *Capital Volume One* and thus fail to properly attend to the operation of neoliberal capitalism in this sphere.

Therefore, in order to engage Marx's historical materialist principles in a study of twenty-first century English play development, I develop a Marxist materialist methodology that is rooted in but departs from Marx's theorising. I require a method that expands and elaborates on Marx's reading of capital and, furthermore, brings Marx's ideas into contact with cultural forms of production. This thesis thus diverges from historical Marxism and draws from a wide range of works that might be included in a Marxian trajectory, including those from the 'post-Marxist', 'neo-Marxist' and 'cultural materialist' theoretical traditions – as well as the aforementioned scholarship on neoliberalism from the field of Political Economy. In the section below entitled 'Towards a Marxist Materialist Methodology', therefore, I further introduce the various Marxian, but not all historically Marxist, frames identified here for the purposes of studying English play development. Before discussing this methodology, however, it is important to now introduce the existing scholarship on English play development, including examining how scholars construct an idea of English play development in relation to the capitalist mode of production, often deploying materialist principles of analysis.

II. Existing Scholarship on English Play Development

In the existing scholarship on English state-subsidised play development practices, there is no study that clearly articulates play development's relationship with capitalism. By extension, there is no study that attends to play development as a neoliberal culture. Moreover, there is no study that engages with English play development practices comprehensively across the twenty-first century. There is, however, a range of contemporary scholarship exploring play development practices in English theatres focused on the 1990s and early 2000s. There is also a set of studies on play development undertaken independently, or commissioned by Arts Council England. The existing analyses often share two central aims: first, to find out how play development operates; second, to explore how this process pertains to institutional play development within state-subsidised theatres. As a result, certain theatres have been subject to repeated scrutiny. Bolton's 'Looking Back, Looking Forward: Literary Management at the Royal Court' (2008) and 'Capitalizing on new writing: new play development in the 1990s' (2012), Love's 'A Culture of Development: The Royal Court and the Young Writers' (2015) and Nicholas Holden's 'Making New Theatre Together: The First Writers' Group at the Royal Court Theatre and Its Legacy within the Young Writers' Programme' (2017) all explore play development practices at the Royal Court.

Other scholars have taken the approach of looking across play development practices and the ideas informing the sector. For example, in *Voice and New Writing, 1997-2007: Articulating the Demos* (2015), Maggie Inchley attends to the construction of voice in the sphere of English theatrical production during the New Labour government. Of particular significance to this thesis is Inchley's exploration of the politics of 'self-help writing guides' (38-41). In Chapter One, I return to explore the role of playwriting guides

published in the 2000s, including Inchley's reading, in an analysis I explain in further detail below. In *Dramaturgy: A Revolution in Theatre* (2006), Luckhurst takes a 'case-study' approach to explore the historical and contemporary practices of play development in England. The final chapter of Luckhurst's work, 'Dramaturgy and Literary Management Today' (200–262), is an exploration of play development practices at the National Theatre, the Royal Court, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, the Liverpool Everyman Theatre and Playhouse, the Royal Exchange Theatre and the Stephen Joseph Theatre. By interviewing theatre professionals, Luckhurst collates information about play development and finds, at these theatres, that it comprises pre-production work (with playwrights) on scripts. Moreover, Luckhurst notes that a cultural cynicism towards these practices was increasingly palpable, a reading supported by Harry Derbyshire's short journal article, 'The culture of new writing' (Luckhurst 2006: 213–214; 2008). Luckhurst contends that play development has been operating in English theatres since the nineteenth century. For example, in the chapter entitled 'Dramaturgy in nineteenth-century England' (45-78), Luckhurst argues that '[a]ccounts of the functions of Readers and Literary Advisers […] lie accidentally embedded in dominant narratives about […] particular institutions', including the Drury Lane Theatre and Covent Garden Theatre (49). Literary management and its burgeoning play development practices are seen to be a key feature in conceptualising a new English National Theatre in the early twentieth century; for example, as Luckhurst notes, the 'construction of the Literary Manager is at the centre of the artistic politics of the Archer-Barker national theatre project' (81).

The culture of play development in the 2000s is the subject of Turner and Behrndt's *Dramaturgy and Performance* (2008). In 'The Dramaturg and the Theatre Institution' (97–120), the authors assess the formalisation of 'the dramaturg's' role as a central innovation of play development practices in English theatres in the 2000s. These

accounts of the inception of 'dramaturgy' into English play development practice, in relation to its effect on literary management, have also been developed in more recent work (e.g. Turner 2009; Turner and Behrndt 2010; Luckhurst 2010; Bolton 2011). Subsequent research on the practice of English dramaturgy has been undertaken by Radosavljević (2013a), MacDonald (2010), Trencsényi and Cochrane (2014) and Trencsényi (2015) and will be introduced in Chapter Two.

Existing empirical data collections of play development can be found in the work of Fin Kennedy and Helen Campbell Pickford. In 2014, Kennedy and Campbell Pickford produced a 'Delphi study' as a follow up to their report 'In Battalions' (2013). 'In Battalions' offered a 'snap-shot of play development at the start of 2013' (ibid.: 1) and the follow-up Delphi study intended to continue the research by assessing the effects of Arts Council England cuts on those practices. These qualitative studies of play development confirmed that interviews with theatre-makers would be an appropriate approach to engage in my own studies – an area of the methodology I introduce more fully below.

Arts Council England have produced a range of studies relating to play development at subsidised theatres in England. Emma Dunton, Roger Nelson and Hetty Shand's *New Writing in Theatre 2003–08: An assessment of new writing within smaller scale theatre in England* (2009c), for example, explores a sample of organisations engaged in play development. *Writ Large: New Writing on the British Stage 2003–2009* (2009b) offers a data-set on the most statistically significant producers of new writing between 2003 and 2008. According to the report, these theatres were West Yorkshire Playhouse (5.6%); Plymouth Drum (7.7%); the Birmingham Repertory Theatre (8.5%); the Mercury Theatre (4.2%); the Liverpool Everyman (5.1%); the Royal Exchange Theatre (5.2%); the Royal Shakespeare Company (3.1%); the Royal Court (4.9%); and the National Theatre (5.1%). Other theatres (51%) made up the rest of the new writing produced

during this period (55). While the statistics here refer to 2003-2008, I investigate practices of play development at these theatres in the mid-2010s which I discuss in detail below when introducing Chapters Three and Four.

Two additional Arts Council England reports shed more light on English play development practices. In 2000, Arts Council England published two reports arguing that new writing was in decline. *The Boyden Report* (Peter Boyden Associates 2000a) argued that text-based theatre was failing to attract audiences and advocated a shift of policy that promoted new, collaborative methods of play development (*Writ Large* 2009b: 4). The following Arts Council England report of the same year, *The Next Stage: Towards a National Policy for Theatre in England* (2000b), accepted *The Boyden Report*'s argument, and the three subsequent reports (*National Policy for Theatre in England* (2000c), *National Policy for Theatre in England* (2002a), and *Theatre Policy* (2007)) all encouraged the production of 'new work': 'new ways of working', 'experimental' and 'interdisciplinary practice' (*Writ Large* 2009b: 35–36).

'New work' refers to theatrical approaches that do not centre around the playwright and dramatic play-text, including performance-based, devised, ensemble and Live Art approaches as discussed in Chapter Six. As Rosalind Haslett defines it, '"new work" tends to occur in non-traditional forms and spaces' whereas '"new writing" is seen to refer to a literary process which takes place in a conventional theatre building' (2011: 358). This definition, as I show below, is suggestive of the significance of Arts Council England's stipulation that theatre organisations should embrace new work and, by consequence, diversify their play development structures. The shifts in mainstream play development to accommodate new work occurred throughout the 2010s, but, as we see below, have posed some challenges. Furthermore, despite Arts Council England's emphasis on the mainstream development of new work during the 2000s, the *Writ Large Report* noted that 'the Art Council's 2003 *Theatre Writing Strategy* promoted initiatives that

presumed a traditional relationship between individual freelance writers and producing companies' (*Writ Large* 2009b: 36). In other words, play development practices would continue throughout the 2000s to be undertaken on the established terms at new writing theatres, as Love evidences in her examination at the Royal Court (2015).

In 2017, a project led by Liz Tomlin entitled *Incubate: Propagate: Networked Ecologies of New Performance-Making* brought together scholars, theatre producers and Arts Council England in discussions on play development. *Incubate: Propagate* comprised a series of four consultation workshops held at the University of Birmingham, the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, the University of Leeds and the University of Glasgow in May and June 2017. Subsequently, Tomlin wrote a report that summarised 'the most frequently recurring pre-occupations of the sector' (1). This included a section on 'Emerging Artist Development Structures' that outlined what structures and support networks contributors thought artists required to bring new theatrical practice to fruition (2). A special issue journal article on 'Artist Development: Class, Diversity and Exclusion' in *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, guest edited by Tomlin, Joslin McKinney, Jessica Bowles and Paul Geary, will follow (2020). The pioneering approach of *Incubate: Propagate* continues to be a key model of practice for the Arts Council England funded projects on play development that I lead at the University of Reading, entitled 'Diversity in Development' (2017-2019) and now 'Work in Process' (2019-2022). My work on these projects informs the approaches used in Chapters Five and Six of this thesis, an overview of which I provide below.

Locating Play Development's Capitalist Underpinning in Existing Scholarship

A partial examination of the capitalist underpinnings of play development – the central idea of this thesis – is already evident in the existing scholarship. Previous research has

identified, from the 1970s onwards, processes of marketisation and commodification that increasingly come to characterise play development. Scholars have noted that play development became increasingly vulnerable to being enacted as a capitalistic mode of production. Bolton, for example, argues that in the 1970s 'play development' emerged as a term to describe a self-organised method that playwrights used reflexively to encourage and support playwriting: 'playwrights organised themselves at national and regional levels to voice their concerns for new writing, support the development of emerging writers and advocate the production of new plays' (2012: 211). This grassroots expansion of play development practice began proper in 1975 and continued throughout the Thatcher era (ibid.: 211-213).

David Edgar defines play development in the 1970s as 'playwriterly self-help and education' (1999: 454). Features began to emerge including peer-review script-reading, playwriting workshops and script-in-hand productions (ibid.). According to Sara Freeman, however, 'by the late 1970s, signs of expansion of new writing programs were underway, with all sorts of institutions commissioning playwrights and exploring how to activate new writing' (2017: 121). The 1970s, then, saw the commencement of an economic relationship between the grass-roots practices of play development and building-based theatres and funding and commissioning models within them. In 'boom' cycles, play development would be funded and, in bust cycles, play development would be neglected. Sierz, Freeman and Edgar all read the 1970s as a boom period in which play development was perceived as a new artistic method for supporting new playwriting, but its economics were already being established (Sierz 2011; 26; Freeman 2017: 121; Edgar 2013: 99-100).

Regarding the 1980s, scholars have noted that Tory cultural policy introduced market conditions into English playmaking, encouraging privatisation and commercial viability in ways that effectively arrested nascent institutional play development practices.

Stephen Lacey, for example, argues that 'from the early 1980s the government (and then the Arts Council) made it clear that it expected its clients to look to the private sector for support' (2004: 432). The new emphasis on fiscal success created risk aversion. Duška Radosavljević notes that '[t]he 1980s theatre scene was largely dominated by commercially viable work: classics, musicals and adaptations' (2013a: 85). As Edgar puts it, '[u]nder pressure from funding bodies, theatres […] convinced themselves that there was a thing called "the market-place" in which they had to operate, which was possessed of strange rules and protocols which if learnt would bring about nirvana' (1999: 453).

The 'strange rules and protocols' amounted to renouncing the approach known as the 'right to fail' (ibid: 454). Associated with the Royal Court in the 1950s, 'the right to fail', according to Sierz, meant adopting a position of 'financial security which allowed some artistic risk-taking' (23). The result of moving away from 'the right to fail', according to Lacey, was to 'drive new plays off mainstream stages, particularly in the regions' (434). Edgar shows in real terms a downturn in new work in the early 1980s, with new writing's box office share remaining 'stubbornly below 50 per cent' (1999: 452). Summarising this process, John Bull argues that, 'in its insularity and in its ruthless pursuit of commercial product, [English theatre] is doing no more than echoing the demands of the ideology of the market-place' (1994: 217). Referencing the economic rationality he locates in English theatre during this moment, Bull calls for an end to the 'present parade of bland product uniformity' (ibid.).

Play development practices re-emerged in state-subsidised theatres in the 1990s. According to Jen Harvie, '[John] Major stepped up Conservative attention to the arts in 1992 by establishing a Department for National Heritage' (2005: 24). As Lacey notes, 'by most indicators, the level of subsidy rose in the early 1990s […]' and 'the decline in new writing was subsequently reversed […]. Between 1993 and 1997 new plays

represented over 15 per cent of the repertoire […] contributing to an overall increase in box office takings (rising from below 50 per cent of revenue in the late 1980s to 57 per cent in 1996-7)' (429; 434). Both Bolton and Sierz describe how new writing was now making a 'remarkable' comeback with renewed industry focus on plays and playwrights (2012: 210; 2011: 21).

The turnaround in new writing is seen to be rooted in the instating of the culture of play development as a field inspired by capitalist logic. Freeman describes this turn as one in which 'encouraging new writing for theatre becomes a mainstreaming proposition that depends on institutional apparatus and not just aesthetic innovation' (118). The features of the institutional apparatus that emerged included the generating of a supply and demand structure around new writing, shifting the conception of playwriting to a craft that could be taught and replicating its teaching in a production process that conformed to economies of scale. As Sierz argues, the supply would be reliant on a 'critical mass of new writers' and the demand would be predicated on 'audiences for new writing hav[ing] to be created, cultivated and sustained' (16; 29). New writers and new audiences would both become consumers of play development practice with, as Edgar puts it, 'the perceived wants of the audience [becoming] paramount' (2013: 106). Fuelled by the labour of new writers and the tide of new plays they were producing, play development thus became a mode of production generating the now valorised new writing.

There were stages to the evolution of play development on these terms; for example, at the Royal Court, the first theatre understood to be 'capitalising' on play development, Bolton notes that there needed to be 'a burgeoning acceptance of play-writing as a craft that may be learned, rather than a gift, divinely bestowed' (2012: 213). With a pedagogy in place, Sierz notes that new writing could become 'a specialist activity that requires specialised theatres' (28). According to Edgar, a series of 'imaginative programmes'

delivering play development services started to become visible (1999: 455). At first, these services were largely associated with 'the big six' as noted above. Bolton contends, however, that 'since the mid-1990s, subsidized theatres and companies have routinely run writers' groups and/or development programmes […] with writers' groups in the capital initially proliferating' (2012: 220). The methods of play development during this period were established as a two-part programme of (unsolicited) script reading and feedback services and writers' groups. Moreover, according to Sierz, 'there were approximately 25,000 plays in circulation at any one time during the mid-1990s' (236). Sierz continues to note that the usually invitation-only writers' group methods included 'experimenting with writing exercises, studying canonical plays and producing original work [including] a short play that might, depending on a company's resources, receive a script-in-hand performance at the end of the programme' (ibid.).

Scholars suggest that, by the mid-1990s, play development was now functioning according to 'Fordist' logic; in other words, it was becoming increasingly formalised according to economies of scale (an idea I define and explore further in Chapter Three). Moreover, playwrights and playwriting were becoming increasingly standardised in a valorising process predicated on meeting the consumer demand for new writing's continued exchange value. Play development had become a regulated process, or, to use Marx's term from *Capital Volume One*, development now had 'a socially necessary labour time' (129). As Bolton notes, new writing programmes advocated 'conventional principles of drama' that resulted in 'a raft of new plays [that] proved indicative of characteristics that would become familiar as the decade progressed' (2012: 217). Moreover, play development had also selected its ideal labour power: young and often first-time playwrights. According to Bolton, this was observable most in 'the Royal Court's "strategic and purposeful" targeting of commercially unknown playwrights' (ibid.). The ideal labour power of play development 'encouraged, moreover, a

widespread shift in theatres' priorities from new *writing* to new *writers*' (ibid.). At the end of the 1990s, play development practices could be said to have revealed their potential as a commodifying process that could effectively valorise plays *and* playwrights. The economies of scale generated in play development structures translated effectively to subsequent stages of production. As Bolton notes, 'the sheer number of new plays, produced in shorter runs of only two weeks, itself indicated revised attitudes towards the debut play as a cultural event' (ibid.). As Literary Manager Jack Bradley attested, '[t]he policy was "stack 'em high, sell 'em cheap"' (ibid.).

In the 2000s, play development practices could be said to have accelerated into, to use David Harvey's term, an 'uneven geographical development' across England (2006). As already noted, the number of theatres engaging with development practices had expanded into a network of nearly thirty building-based theatres. As Sierz notes, this 'meant new buildings, new staffing levels and new regulations' (30). Encouraged by Arts Council England in the reports mentioned above (and in the Traverse's case, the now devolved Creative Scotland), producing theatres and companies started to deploy a set of artistic and literary management methods, pioneered at 'the big six', for engaging new playwrights and their work. These working methods, according to the Writers' Guild, a trade union representing professional writers since 1959, comprised script reports and feedback, building and maintaining creative relationships, mentoring, attachments, seed commissions, workshops, rehearsed readings, scratch nights, treatments, pitch sessions and collaborative development relationships (2012). The economies of play development during the early 2000s were productive; as *Writ Large* noted '[i]n 2001-2, productions of new commissions and other new work represented 67% of the repertoire […], in 2002-3 66%, in 2003-4 and 2004-5 71%, in 2005-6 70% and in 2006-7 75%' (2009b: 40).

The final evolution of play development on capital's terms in the 2000s as noted by existing scholarship is the field's inducting of 'new work' and playmakers into the commodifying structures of mainstream play development, which, previously, had been focused on valorising text-based plays and playwrights. Partly spurred on by Arts Council England's aforementioned interventionist decision to remove new writing from its funding priorities, and to advance the cause of new work in *The Boyden Report* (2000a), theatres started to diversify their play development models and, in some cases, organise parallel development structures for new work. In the introduction to *Acts and Apparitions: Discourses of the Real in Performance Practice and Theory, 1990-2010* (2013c: 1-18), Tomlin offers a key example of how the division between new work and new writing had been manifest in English play development up until this point:

> [t]he text-based/non-text-based binary revealed itself in the UK theatre industry in the choice that emerging theatre-makers were constrained to make between the development of opportunities offered by the 'traditional' new writing flagship theatres such as the Traverse, the Bush Theatre and the Royal Court and those offered by the growing proliferation of art centres such as Bristol's Arnolfini, London's Battersea Arts Centre and Manchester's Green Room. (9-10)

Tomlin articulates how artists often had to choose between two highly stratified play development models that would artificially disaggregate their practice and pressure artists to define (and thus commodify) their projects according to these terms. In the mid-2010s, however, changes occurred in mainstream play development structures. For example, in 2015, the National Theatre combined its studio, which dealt with writers and devisers, with its Literary Department, which dealt exclusively with writers. Furthermore, a range of regional theatres, such as the West Yorkshire Playhouse (now Leeds Playhouse), became more engaged in pre-production work with companies and ensembles as noted in Chapter Three of this thesis. Such changes in English play

development have had the effect of diversifying the methodologies of traditional new writing theatres, but they have not always been well received. As Radosavljević and Love both note, the British Theatre Consortium and Arts Council England found that writers – the traditional consumers of play development – felt threatened by the diversification (2013a: 86; 2015: 122-3). As Radosavljević argues, however, 'the gap between new writing and devising was potentially being perpetrated by political and economic rather than aesthetic and methodological factors' (ibid.) – an idea explored across this thesis. Despite the critiques, however, in 2019, the culture of play development across theatres remains highly active. For example, play development continues to be advertised as a central activity at the majority of the twenty-nine theatres Sierz noted as engaging in play development practices in 2011 (32-37; see appendix A p.306).

How might the existing scholarship on English play development be summarised overall? From the above, we can see that there exists a comprehensive examination of English play development practices in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, especially in mainstream theatres. In addition, this scholarship has made a subtle, but suggestive commentary of English play development's relationship with capitalism. Furthermore, in order to make these connections, researchers often use a materialist lens. For example, as Freeman notes, there has been a 'nuanced materialist reading of different strands of philosophy driving the assumptions and procedures of the British new writing sector since the 1990s' (117). In the scholarship of play development practices, the materialist lens, as Bolton puts it, 'temporarily displaces individual plays, playwrights and premieres from the centre of the narrative in order to advance a critique of the accepted aims, methods and ethos of new play development since the mid-1990s' (2012: 210-11). Bolton goes on to argue that a materialist approach to play development enables us to 'examine some of the ways in which the material and discursive practices

of contemporary [play development] management cultures have functioned […]' (ibid.: 201). The materialist method is, therefore, crucial to the examination of English play development practices; however, there is no existing clearly articulated materialist approach. Furthermore, there is no existing materialist analysis that substantially interrogates English play development's connection to neoliberalism as I seek to do here. What is needed here, therefore, is a method that can support this aim.

III. Towards a Marxist Materialist Methodology

The Marxist materialist methodology I deploy here involves, in the first instance, collating information on the material approaches to play development in the twenty-first century and, in the second, generating a Marxian reading practice that examines its relationship with neoliberalism. Above, I introduced the ways in which this thesis builds on historical Marxism; here, I outline the materialist approach for observing play development and the Marxian frames involved in its analysis.

A Materialist Approach to Play Development

Building on existing scholarship on English play development, I advance four central means for its study in the twenty-first century. These comprise the following: resource and record analysis (Chapters One and Two); open-ended interviews with participants (Chapters Three and Four); the facilitation of projects on play development (Chapters Five and Six) and performance analysis (Chapter Six). These methods are materialist in the sense that they are engaged in reading theatre through its means of production and, therefore, see artists as productive entities within an economic system. In Chapters One and Two, I study play development under New Labour (1997-2010), drawing on the

work of scholars including Inchley (2015), Tomlin (2013a; 2014), Bolton (2012), Turner (2013) and Turner and Behrndt (2008), Love (2015) and Luckhurst (2006). I develop an approach for examining play development that focuses on resource and record analysis. By analysing the pedagogical resources and records of play development including English playwriting guides and Arts Council England documents such as *The Writ Large Report* (2009b) and *The Dunton Report* (2009c), I deploy existing approaches for studying the historiography of English play development in the 2000s. Below, in the final section of this introduction, 'Chapter Overview', I outline the contents of these chapters in further detail. It is worth noting here, however, how this first approach positions me in relation to the work under investigation. Studying play development retrospectively means that the researcher is, of course, removed both from the actual practice of play development and the historical moment in which it took place. As a result, there are gaps in knowledge around the actual experience of theatrical work during this period. At the same time, however, the process of looking back allows for crucial critical distance in which the ideologies of neoliberalism can be clearly located.

In Chapters Three and Four, by contrast, I take up a different methodological approach for exploring play development practices in England during the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition (2010-2015). Drawing on the empirical approaches of Bolton (2011) and Kennedy and Campbell Pickford (2014), I conducted open-ended interviews with Directors, Dramaturgs, Literary Managers and commissioned artists on the processes of play development at nine key English theatres between 2014-2015.[2] In

[2] *The Writ Large Report* (2009b), as noted above, shows that the largest producers of new writing (between 2003 and 2008) were West Yorkshire Playhouse (5.6%); Plymouth Drum (7.7%); the Birmingham Repertory Theatre (8.5%); the Mercury Theatre (4.2%); the Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse (5.1%); the Royal Exchange Theatre (5.2%); Royal Shakespeare Company (3.1%); the Royal Court (4.9%); and the National Theatre (5.1%). Because of their engagement with play development practices in the preceding time period, I selected these theatres as a sample. Since my aim was to interview practitioners on the practices of play development, I consulted ethnographic

order to collate testimonies, I designed a questionnaire that met with ethical approval through Central's processes for Research Ethics and Integrity, and, more broadly, the qualitative data collection method outlined in Patricia Leavy's *Method Meets Arts: Arts-Based Research Practice* (2009).[3] The central question was 'how are plays developed' and 'what is the development process for [a current project]'? The semi-structured approach provided a strong level of comparability that allowed for analysis. The interviews, however, also shifted my own positionality. Because I wasn't directly involved in the development processes, the information I received was second-hand and, as a result, subjective and experiential. When working with these accounts, then, in Chapters Three and Four, in ways I come to below, I was aware that, as with any data collated through interview, there was a need to reproduce a reading with a sense of reflexivity. In other words, it was important to acknowledge that any reading of play development practices here was, in effect, a reading of practitioners' presentation of their own experiences of play development practices.

In Chapters Five and Six, in order to continue to study play development under the coalition and then the current Conservative government (2015-), I deploy another mode of analysis. Drawing on projects including Tomlin's aforementioned *Incubate: Propagate: Networked Ecologies of New Performance-Making*, I have led, as noted above, two projects on

examinations of dramaturgies of process. In *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre* (1999), Gay McAuley spent ten years 'observing and documenting rehearsal processes' (10–11). Although this work differed from mine, in the years preceding my study, it is clear that qualitative data methods have been systematically developed by several theatre scholars. For example, other ethnographic studies include Susan Letzler Cole's *Playwrights in Rehearsal: The Seduction of Company* (2001), Josephine Machon's *Immersive Theatres* (2013) and Duŝka Radosavljević's *The Contemporary Ensemble: Interviews with Theatre-Makers* (2013b).

[3] Leavy confirms that the most effective way to conduct a broad examination of an arts practice (in my case, play development) is to collect participatory data, where interviewees discuss their own practices and perceptions (147). I compiled, as suggested, a standard open-ended interview format that would provide behaviour and opinion-based responses on play development.

play development: 'Diversity through Development' (2016-2019) and 'Work in Progress' (2019-2022). Run in partnership with South Street Arts Centre, Reading, these projects facilitate and seed-fund the development of twelve new performance works and, in so doing, generate new knowledge of play development. In this context, I facilitate and observe artists working, some whose practice became a series of case studies in the final two chapters (as discussed in further detail below). This approach enables observation of play development in a sustained way, offering the potential to generate first-hand accounts and to produce a range of comparative readings. Direct integration into artists' processes enables me to engage with the affective relations of play production: to participate in the hidden social relations of different acts of play development. Such an experience is not always analytically focused, but has the unique effect of producing detailed, embedded knowledge of artists' practices and strategies. Of course, it is, however, a labour-intensive means of studying play development. It also requires care and considered impartiality in writing up these accounts.

It is my suggestion that, together, these three approaches produce a robust and dynamic suite of materialist methods for studying play development across the twenty-first century in line with, but further developing, previous materialist methods in the field. However, in order to fully explore English play development, it is important to engage one final method: performance analysis. In the final chapter of this thesis, Chapter Six, I engage performance analysis in order to generate a reading of how performance works in relation to play development. Together, these approaches provide an array of primary and secondary sources on play development that trace the practice across the twenty-first century. With this raw data on play development in place, then, this thesis could commence the work of examining English play development's relationship to neoliberal capitalism. I have already outlined the ways in which Marx's *Capital Volume One* supports this aim. In the sections below, I introduce the other

Marxian frames in which I can situate and study English play development across this thesis.

Post-Marxism

As a field of contemporary artistic production, I have noted that English play development cannot be fully analysed within historical Marxism. Drawing from the school of post-Marxist thought, however, exposes how key aspects of this culture, including artistic subjectivity and the nature of play development's work, are shaped by neoliberalism in the twenty-first century. The post-Marxist tradition comprises a broad endeavour to deconstruct, develop or rearticulate Marx's writings and ideas. As a term, it first appeared in Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Toward a Radical Democratic Politics* (2014 [1985]). Post-Marxism is defined as a necessary development in Marxist thought at the end of the twentieth century in which a course of economic, social and political shifts had occurred:

> [a]t this point, we should state quite plainly that we are now situated in a post-Marxist terrain. It is no longer possible to maintain the conception of subjectivity and classes elaborated by Marxism, nor its vision of the historical course of capitalist development, nor of course, the conception of communism as a transparent society from which antagonisms have disappeared. (4)

Post-Marxism is a broad attempt, therefore, to acknowledge the significance of industrial and cultural shifts on concepts including class, subjectivity, work, race and gender that all elude a traditional Marxist account.[4]

[4] In *Post-Marxist Theory: An Introduction* (2005), Philip Goldstein argues that the field of scholarship derives 'from the work of Louis Althusser [2014 [1971]] and Michel Foucault [2008] and which, thanks to their extraordinary influence, has acquired philosophical, economic, historical, feminist, literary, and cultural versions […] [i]ncluding Judith Butler, John Frow, Richard Wolf, Ernesto Laclau, Tony Bennett, and

The Marxist materialist methodology here, therefore, draws on post-Marxist theorising to examine themes including artistic subjectivity in play development. In particular, I build on the theorising of Wendy Brown (2015) who is concerned with developing Foucauldian theory (2008). Below, I outline the ways in which Brown's post-Marxist examination of subjectivity informs the methodologies deployed in Chapters One and Four of this thesis and, crucially, how her scholarship supports a full discussion of how artists are conceptualised – and how they conceptualise themselves – within English play development. In addition to post-Marxism, the theorising of the Italian 'Autonomist' thinkers including Antonio Negri (2017), Paolo Virno (2004; 2009), Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2001) and Maurizio Lazzarato (1996) enables this Marxist materialist methodology to identify the contemporary mode of production and nature of work determining English play development. Autonomist thinkers develop an understanding of labour in a new era of capitalist development and thus extend traditional Marxist concepts into new knowledge and information-based societies. Such a reading becomes significant to my examination of play development in Chapters Three and Four.

Neo-Marxism

Neo-Marxism is a wide-ranging frame of scholarship emerging in the mid-twentieth century that expands on Marx's theorising whilst remaining faithful to its key principles. Neo-Marxism often involves grafting an understanding of the contemporary

others […]' (2). In addition, 'the complex thinkers who represent post-Marxism address many traditions and methods and do not form a movement or a school; however, they all restate and revise Althusserian and/or Foucauldian theory' (ibid.). Similarly, in *Marx and Foucault*, Antonio Negri contends that 'I see Foucault as a development – certainly an independent one – of a number of central analytical insights that were posed and developed by Marx' (2017: 11).

developments of capitalism onto Marx's theories contained in *Capital Volume One*. For example, at the time Marx was writing, bureaucracy was not a composite part of the means of production as it is today. Chapter Two of this thesis – concerned with the bureaucratic developments in Literary Management in the 2000s – thus benefits from accounts of bureaucracy from David Graeber (2016 [2015]) and Paul Goldman and Donald R. Van Houten (1977). Goldman and Van Houten, for example, demonstrate the neo-Marxist dimensionality in their thinking by summarising their approach as one that seeks 'to emphasize how the drive to generate surplus value can be found in the structure and decision-making of bureaucracies' (110). Such Neo-Marxists accounts allow wider structures into the Marxist frame in ways that allow me to integrate the thinking of Max Weber (1978 [1922]) with their accounts.

The Marxist materialist method of this thesis is further enriched by the neo-Marxist 'standpoint theories' of Marxist feminist scholars, Donna Haraway (1988) and Nancy Hartsock (1998) who expand and update Marx's historical materialist approach. Below, I show how, in Chapter Five of this thesis, standpoint theorising supports an engagement with how English play development became more attuned to the politics of diversity in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, the Marxist materialist method of this thesis also engages the neo-Marxisms of David Harvey (2010) and the Marxian geographical form of analysis entitled 'global commodity chain analysis' advanced by cultural geographers such as Ian Cook (2004) and Caroline Knowles (2014). Below, I note how, in Chapter Six of this thesis, geographical innovations to Marx's theory of 'commodity fetishism' help to show how artists may resist neoliberal consensus in play development. While these post-Marxist, autonomist, and neo-Marxist theories are central to examining the effects of neoliberalism in English play development, then, the most central Marxian lens of this thesis overall is cultural materialism.

Cultural Materialism

Cultural materialism emerged in the 1980s as a means to apply Marx's ideas to the sphere of culture. Its significance to this thesis and its own aim of applying Marxism to the culture of play development, then, is central. Within the tradition of Western Marxism, however, earlier theorists had already applied Marx's ideas to culture, including continental thinkers such as Louis Althusser (2014 [1971]), Roland Barthes (1972 [1957]), and those associated with the Frankfurt School (1918-39), including Theodor W. Adorno (2001 [1947]), Max Horkheimer (with Adorno 2002 [1944]) and Walter Benjamin (1968 [1935]).[5] It was within the distinct frame of British Marxism in the late twentieth century, however, that the practice of cultural materialism emerged.

Cultural materialist approaches understand culture to support the production of capitalist ideology. An 'ideology', according to Marx and Engels' definition in *The German Ideology*, is the 'ideal expression of the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas', or the way in which the ruling ideas of a historical moment are expressed (2000 [1845-6]: 12). The term 'cultural materialism' was coined by Cambridge scholar Raymond Williams who argued that culture was key to the ways in which 'a social order

[5] Continental thinkers including Althusser and Barthes worked to identify the ways in which culture operates as an ideology of capitalism. Similarly, scholars from the Frankfurt School, including Adorno, Horkheimer and Benjamin also examine how the hegemony of capitalism is transmitted in the 'culture industry' – the mass media including film, television and radio. In their joint work *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (2002 [1944]), for example, Horkheimer and Adorno apply a Marxist analysis to the study of mass culture. In an essay entitled 'The Schema of Mass Culture' (2001 [1947]: 61-97), Adorno advances an understanding of how 'the culture industry' operates, specifically in terms of what the economic base does to the concept of art. Moreover, in the same essay, Adorno writes that '[t]he existence of all forms of art is paradoxical […]. Today with the most extreme increase of real tension the possibility of the work of art itself has become utterly questionable' (77). Similarly, in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1968 [1935]: 217-251), Benjamin examines the conditions of making art under capitalism, in an era of mass production. Benjamin concludes that art has succumbed to economies of scale, to reproducibility. This theorising broadly demonstrates capitalism's increasing claim on culture.

is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored' (1981: 13). In describing culture in these terms, Williams was re-envisaging culture's place in the 'base and superstructure', the construction of a capitalist society as defined by Marx (1977 [1859]).[6] In *Marxism and Literature* (1977), Williams challenges the idea that culture is 'dependent and secondary' and suggests instead that culture is inseparable from material social life (19). What Williams means by this is that culture is rooted in a material base and part of the social superstructure, and thus contributes directly to the formation of capitalist ideology. Williams' reading of culture is rooted in the work of the earlier Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci (1999 [1926]).[7] In *Marxism and Literature*, Williams picks up on Gramsci's ideas and traces the cultural hegemony in literary production, specifically English literature and criticism, arguing that both traditions are 'actively ideological' (45-6). Moreover, Williams sees drama as literature and therefore defines it similarly (48). In doing so, Williams applies Marx's ideas to the literary sphere and, therefore, contributes to a significant advancement in Marxist thinking around culture.

The Birmingham School was founded on the aim of studying culture from a Marxist perspective. It was established in 1964 by Richard Hoggart, and later led by Stuart Hall. Like Williams, Hall also explores culture as co-constituted with capitalist ideology. Hall

[6] For Marx, the base and superstructure was a means for describing the organisation of society according to bourgeois economics: capital's ideology imposed by the ruling class. To any subordinate of this system (i.e., the proletariat), capitalism is naturalised and engenders what Engels described as a 'false consciousness' in which workers misrecognise the ideology that determines social relations (2018 [1893]). In the base and superstructure, culture, ideas, communication, information and knowledge had previously been seen as part of the superstructure and separate to the material base.

[7] Gramsci had similar suspicions regarding the role of culture, for which he coined the term 'cultural hegemony'. According to T.J. Jackson Lears, however, Gramsci's translated writings contain no precise definition of the term (1985: 568). And yet the passage that most closely communicates his ideas seems to define cultural hegemony as 'the 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group' (1991 [1926]: 145). Jackson Lears argues that what Gramsci means in the above is that the cultural hegemony is transmitted in society 'within a variety of historical and intellectual contexts' (568).

takes a semiotic approach to the study of culture, derived in part from Barthes. In works including *Culture, Media, Language* (1980), *Politics and Ideology* (1985) and *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (1996a) Hall develops a post-Gramscian account of how hegemony operates in (British) culture. In his essay entitled 'The Problem with Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees' (1996b: 24-45) Hall similarly traces the difficulty in applying Marx's ideas to culture. In doing so, Hall, like Williams, also sets out how a cultural materialist approach might be undertaken:

> [t]he problem of ideology is to give an account, within a materialist theory, of how social ideas arise […]. By ideology I mean the mental frameworks – the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thoughts and the systems of representation – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works […]. No such theory exists, fully pre-packaged, in Marx and Engels' works. (25-6)

I find Hall's ideas on cultural materialism particularly illuminating here. Hall reinforces the aforementioned difficulties in interrogating culture directly through Marx's writings. Unlike Williams, however, Hall is more specific about how a cultural materialist approach can be enacted. Cultural materialism is an approach that 'give[s] an account […] of how social ideas arise' through cultural forms. It is thus a practice of examining culture (in this case, the culture of play development) and exploring how capitalism is discursively reproduced through its 'languages […], concepts, categories, imagery of thoughts and systems of representation' (ibid.). Although Williams coined the term cultural materialism, Hall furnishes its user with a more explicit expression of how it might be practiced.

In the field of Theatre Studies, two volumes substantially develop the cultural materialisms of Williams and Hall. In *Political Shakespeare* (1994 [1985]), Dollimore and Sinfield take up Williams' idea that 'culture does not (cannot) transcend the material

forces and relations of production. Culture is not simply a reflection of the economic and political system, but nor can it be independent of it' (viii). Consequently, Dollimore and Sinfield build a cultural materialist approach for analysing play-texts. This method will be deployed in Chapter One of this thesis. Knowles' *Reading the Material Theatre* developed Dollimore and Sinfield's approach into a 'materialist semiotics' (2004: 9). Knowles draws on the tradition of cultural materialism to provide a lens for assessing plays as 'the products of a more complex mode of production that is rooted, as is all cultural production, in the specific and determinate social and cultural contexts' (9-10). Knowles' approach acknowledges the conditions of theatrical production which include the funding, training practices and working conditions of theatre artists; the institutional and professional structures of theatres including architectural, rehearsal and backstage space; and broader spatial geographies that shape meaning in any theatrical performance (10-11). Knowles' materialist semiotics refocuses the gaze to processes of playmaking, particularly its unseen labour, allowing us to appreciate, as Sarah Grochala puts it, 'the economic mode through which it is produced' (2017: loc. 274). Indeed, a cultural materialist lens allows us to see, as Lacey reminds us, that 'some of the main developments in British theatre since 1979 did not originate with aesthetics but rather with ideology and economics' (426). Knowles' cultural materialism thus pays attention to the working structures that are, as Lacey phrases it, 'more or less invisible to audiences and taken for granted by theatre workers themselves' (57). Furthermore, this approach paves the way to further studies including Christin Essin's 'Unseen Labor and Backstage Choreographies: A Materialist History of the Chorus Line' (2015), which explores behind the scenes practices.

Knowles' materialist semiotics thus channels the strategies of cultural materialism directly into the discursive field of theatre production. Crucially, the Marxist materialist method I engage here seeks to enhance this line of theorising, specifically for the

purposes of exploring play development practices. This thesis thus transports the cultural materialist approach into the field of play development practices to analyse its languages, concepts, categories, imagery and systems throughout this thesis. In order to bring my own practice of cultural materialism up to date and respond to innovations in neoliberal capitalism, however, I blend the cultural materialist approach with the aforementioned theorising from the autonomist, post-Marxist and neo-Marxist traditions, discussed above, and more recent theorising on neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism

As noted above, 'neoliberalism' broadly describes the effects of, and approach to, governing capitalism in the mid-to-late twentieth century and beyond. Bob Jessop refers to its origins as the 'post-war Atlantic Fordist class compromise [in which] at least six neoliberal policies were pursued in order to modify the balance of forces in favour of capital' (2018: 1729). These policies can be summarised as follows: 1) liberalisation – to promote the free market; 2) deregulation; 3) privatisation; 4) 'reducing the scope for non-market logics'; 5) reductions in corporate income tax; and 6) the promotion of the global flow of goods and services (ibid.). As Harvey notes, the UK and US Prime Minister and President-ships of Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990) and Ronald Reagan (1981-89) play a central role in aligning the UK and US statecrafts with capital's interests (2005: 1). For Jessop, this process was also observable in Australia, Canada, Cyprus, Ireland, Iceland and New Zealand (1730). Brown, however, argues that neoliberalism may not have been formulated as 'a 1980s political rebellion by new Right populists, not as a vision heralded by a specific set of political leaders and economic craftsmen […] but, rather as an "emergence" over the second and third quarters of the twentieth

century' (2015: 51-2). Brown thus contends that neoliberalism is an inevitable development in the management of capital in the twentieth century.

Neoliberalism might be best regarded as a period of capitalist accumulation and a shift in the means of production. For Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore in their article 'Reanimating neoliberalism: process geographies of neoliberalization', neoliberalism is defined as the 'evolving/rolling programme of restructuring' (2012: 179). As Harvey puts it, this restructuring is the process which 'seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market' (2005: 3). Neoliberalism has not only destroyed 'prior institutional frameworks and powers (even challenging traditional forms of state sovereignty) but also of divisions of labour, social relations, welfare provisions, technological mixes […]' (ibid.). As Alana Lentin and Gavan Titley argue, 'life is reduced to economics and everything, including individual action, is judged according to its profitability and "rationality"' (2011: 163). What seems important to grasp from this theorising is the extreme proliferation of neoliberalism in all aspects of life.

Neoliberalism has increased a global disparity of wealth on a new scale. For Harvey '[r]edistributed effects and increasing social inequality have in fact been such a persistent feature of neoliberalization as to be regarded as structural to the whole project' (2005: 16). Neoliberalism does not just sway the distribution of wealth. For Brown (2015; 2019), democracy and civic life are threatened by neoliberal statecraft. Moreover, according to Foucault (2008), the human subject itself is fundamentally altered by their consent to be governed in this way. Neoliberalism is responsive to the shift in the capitalist mode of production as concerns industry. The Fordist mode of production, in which goods and services are produced in standardised ways, has moved toward a 'post-Fordist' mode of service economies in which production has been diversified and deregulated (Clarke 2010). I return to all these aspects of neoliberalism in detail throughout this thesis.

In 'Explaining (with) Neoliberalism', Jamie Peck notes that 'in countries like the USA and the UK, where some may have thought they had seen the worst of neoliberalism's excesses, attacks on the social state are being pursued with new-found fervour' (2013: 138). At the end of the twentieth century, Peck argues that a Blairite neoliberalism mobilised its rationality further into UK-based institutions and structures, primarily through bureaucratic reinvention (as discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis) (ibid.). In the twenty-first century, according to Jessop, the UK has continued to experience its own 'neoliberal regime shift' (1730). Or, as Hall puts it in 'The Neoliberal Revolution: Thatcher, Blair, Cameron – the long march of neoliberalism continues' (2011), it is on the route of 'the long march of neoliberalism' that UK governments have located themselves (ibid.: 9). If successive governments, including the UK's, have been co-opted by neoliberalism, so too have cultures. Works including the aforementioned *Neoliberal Culture* (2016) demonstrate how cultural materialisms have been blended with theorising on neoliberalism to explore the effect of neoliberal rationality on global cultural production. In Chapter Five of this thesis, I deploy essays from this collection including Paul Gilbert's 'What Kind of Thing Is Neoliberalism?' (ibid.: 10-32) and Paul Gilroy's '"…We Got to Get Over Before We Go Under…" Fragments for a History of Black Vernacular Neoliberalism' (ibid.: 33-54) to engage with scholarship that demonstrates, via cultural materialisms, how neoliberalism contaminates contemporary culture.

Scholars in Theatre Studies analyse the effects of neoliberalism on theatre cultures in different global contexts and, furthermore, in the discipline's pedagogies (e.g., Diamond et al. 2017; Ybarra 2017; Greer 2018; Solga 2019). *Neoliberalism and Global Theatres* (2015 [2012]), for example, was one of the earliest volumes published on the intersections between neoliberalism and global performance. Here, the editors Lara D. Nielsen and Patricia Ybarra argue that 'enhancing performance analysis of neoliberalism […] refines our critical antennae about the ways publics express and experience […] the pressures

of capital' (x). They contend that the collection is 'for theatre and performance scholars who, like us, are concerned with the bitter quandaries of neoliberalism that affect the pasts and futures of theatre and performance research in particular and with social welfare as a whole' (1-2). I suggest this statement is broadly representative of all scholarship in the field that explores the impact of neoliberalism on theatre – including this thesis. Harvie's *Fair Play: Art, Performance and Neoliberalism* (2013) was a landmark work on the relationship between neoliberalism and performance in the UK context. Although I discuss its approach in detail in Chapter Four, it is worth noting Harvie's mode of analysing neoliberalism here. Harvie's method understands UK governments to have taken up the neoliberal project as noted by Peck, Jessop and Hall above. This allows Harvie to trace a discursive link between UK governments' neoliberal consensus and the sphere of theatre and performance cultures. In relation to this thesis, then, how might a methodology of Marxian theorising be blended with scholarship on neoliberalism?

By drawing on the approach of recent scholarship, I synthesise all the aforementioned theorising to advance a Marxist materialist lens that attends to English play development as a neoliberal culture. I develop a line of study that analyses the material ways in which English play development practices demonstrate the language, concepts and categories of neoliberalism. Moving chronologically, each chapter looks at an element of play development practice that emerged, or was in action, during the twenty-first century. I link each play development practice to neoliberal political discourses in England during the period, developing a reading that shows how play development's neoliberalisation was materially and discursively produced by broader shifts in the management of capital by English governments during this period. In each chapter, I use a different Marxist materialist lens – one appropriate to the chapter's object of study – and these perspectives underpin subsequent analysis. Below, I

introduce the objects of study and the separate Marxist materialist methodologies deployed in each chapter. Before this, however, it is worth briefly re-stating all that has been discussed in this introduction thus far: the unifying aim here is to use the Marxist materialist methodology to ascertain what aspects of neoliberalism have been naturalised in play development practices in the twenty-first century. As per the tenets of cultural materialism, what is play development's *ideology*, then? In other words, what are the theatrical conditions, in the twenty-first century, under which playmakers, dramaturgs, directors, and so forth, operate that are considered normal? Therefore, *locating the ideology* of play development at material and discursive levels is the central aim here. The method also seeks to shine a light onto ideological aspects of play development which have been disavowed by artists and practitioners and, furthermore, that have also worked to produce possible benefits. In the below, then, I show how each chapter uses this methodology to illuminate the ideological nature of play development across the twenty-first century, its relationship with neoliberalism, but also the ways in which neoliberalism is challenged or, paradoxically, has produced positive effects on English play development.

IV. Chapter Overview

In Chapter One, I attend to the ways English playwriting guides are ideologically connected to neoliberalism. In particular, I examine Steve Gooch's *Writing a Play* (2004 [1988]), Alan Ayckbourn's *The Crafty Art Of Playmaking* (2004 [2002]), Tim Fountain's *So You Want To Be A Playwright?* (2007), David Edgar's *How Plays Work* (2009) and Steve Waters' *The Secret Life of Plays* (2010). I argue that while English playwriting guides support and enhance access to play development pedagogies, they are deeply connected to US and UK Higher Education markets. I contend that, as a result, English

playwriting guides – and their ideas as concerns plays and playwrights – evolved to correspond to higher education's free market principles. I use a range of Marx's vocabularies from *Capital Volume One*, combined with the cultural-materialist theorising of Williams' *Marxism and Literature* and Dollimore and Sinfield's *Political Shakespeare* introduced above. By applying their cultural materialisms, I show how an ideology was constructed in English playwriting guides during the 2000s. I attend to how the rules and regulations of English playwriting guides obscure their foundational principles – which I read as economic. Drawing on post-Marxist scholarship, including Brown's *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (2015), I note English playwriting guides' effect on the conceptualisation of playwrights' subjectivities.

In Chapter Two, I attend to the re-structuring of literary management in the mid-2000s, when the practice of 'play development dramaturgy' emerged. The central question of this chapter is to ask: 'in what ways, and to what extent, is play development dramaturgy bureaucratic?' I investigate the structures and roles of play development dramaturgy including its strategies and practices in a range of theatres and companies. Furthermore, I analyse English play development dramaturgy in relation to New Labour's intervention into the arts, in which public sector institutions were encouraged to produce structures of enhanced managerialism. I assess the practice of play development dramaturgy and the critical claim of its proximity to bureaucracy through an engagement with the writings of Weber (1978 [1922]) and Graeber (2016 [2015]. By analysing play development dramaturgy in this way, I trace its ideological connection with emergent management principles used by New Labour in the arts during this period. I also demonstrate that, despite its bureaucratic excesses, the proliferation of play development practices in this era contributed to a range of openings for playwrights, the resourcing of new creative roles in theatres and the dynamic production of a range of highly specialised play development practices.

Chapters Three and Four move on to explore English play development practices in the context of the Clegg-Cameron coalition (2010-2015). They examine the practice of play development at the aforementioned key new writing theatres in the mid-2010s, in which I interviewed Literary Managers and Associates, Dramaturgs, and Directors with play development responsibilities. Chapter Three uses the testimonies of play developers to explore the structures of play development in operation in key English theatres in the mid-2010s. Building on the work of Rebellato (2009) and Bolton (2012), I argue that play development structures in key new writing theatres during this period operated according to capitalist modes of production. In order to assess the material modes of play development in key English theatres, I deploy accounts of Fordism and post-Fordism from Gramsci (1999 [1926]: 558-620) Hall (1988) and a range of aforementioned Italian Autonomist thinkers. I interrogate the extent to which the standard process of play development I identify in key new writing theatres displays characteristics of Fordism. Furthermore, I interrogate the extent to which the bespoke process of development I also identify displays characteristics of post-Fordism. I note that, while the assimilation to capital's modes of production engenders a range of problems in play development, it does signal the initiation of fully operational mechanisms for play development across these theatres.

In Chapter Four, I look at artistic subjectivity in the aforementioned English play development structures. Building on a line of scholarship that attends to neoliberal subjectivity and, furthermore, neoliberal artistic subjectivity (e.g., Brown 2015; Foucault 2008; Harvie 2013; Ridout 2013; and Kunst 2015), I ask to what extent artists perform as neoliberal subjects in play development. Using Harvie's, Ridout's and Kunst's ideas, I ask to what extent, and in what ways, might artists subscribe to and evade neoliberal subjectivity? I engage, for a second time, Brown's *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. In this work, Brown explores the effect of neoliberalism on subjectivity.

Tracing Foucault (2008), Brown argues that we operate today as units of human capital. Drawing on this understanding, I attend to the status of the artist in play development, exploring to what extent their subjectivity is materially economised inside structures of play development in key new writing theatres.

Chapter Five continues the exploration of play development under the coalition. I focus on the heightened importance of diversity during this period, following the introduction of the Equality Act in 2010. I explore the effect of Arts Council England's *Creative Case for Diversity* (2011a) on structures of development. Drawing on my own Arts-Council-England funded projects, noted above, I assess the aims of *The Creative Case* in relation to play development. I explore the integration of *The Creative Case* in the play development of Andy Smith's *Summit* (2017; 2018 tour); Barbados and Friends Association's; Sitelines [sic]; and the University of Reading's *Being Gordon Greenidge* (2017; forthcoming tour); and Dante or Die's *Kiss, Marry, Kill* (forthcoming). I explore the potential shifts that *The Creative Case* has made inside these processes of play development and evaluate the ways in which structures of development evolve and sometimes resist its aims. I argue that, by exploring the legacy of *The Creative Case* in play development, we can locate how neoliberal consensus is brought into English play development. I read *The Creative Case* and its effect on structures and artists in play development through the Marxist-feminist standpoint theories of Haraway (1988) and Hartsock (1998), among others, to explore the material effects of integrating minority epistemology into play development processes. I demonstrate that while *The Creative Case* has the potential to introduce neoliberal diversity into play development, the discursive effect of standpoint theorising could constitute a genuine rejection of neoliberal consensus.

In Chapter Six, I explore play development practices in the later 2010s, this time in the context of a Tory government. In this chapter, I attend to 'performances of

development': performances that comprise accounts of process. Moving into the sphere of Live Art, I focus on Selina Thompson's *Salt* (2016; 2017; 2018; 2019), Sh!t Theatre's *DollyWould* (2017; 2018) and Greg Wohead's *Call it a Day* (2019). I ask what are the structures of performances and development? I suggest that performances of development reveal the usually hidden units of process and assess the ways Thompson's, Sh!t theatre's and Wohead's performances do this. I argue that some performances of development constitute a means of evading the neoliberal structures that have overwhelmed play development over the past two decades. I use Marx's understanding of 'commodity fetishism' (163-177) and the neo-Marxist-inspired geographical form of analysis entitled 'global commodity chain analysis'. I suggest that global commodity chain analysis methods support an engagement with performances of development, enabling a reading of them as 'development chain analyses'. Like global commodity chain analysis, I argue that development chain analyses have radical potential for disrupting the political economy of play development.

Overall, this introduction has outlined the key questions for this thesis including: was English play development between 2000-2019 a neoliberal culture? How might its proximity to neoliberalism be understood? Furthermore, in what ways might its participants resist neoliberal impulses and how might neoliberalism work productively to enhance play development? I have introduced the scholarly context of English play development that critically informs this thesis. Finally, I have argued for an engagement with English play development on Marxist materialist terms. Using a Marxist materialist lens that intersects Marxian theorising, particularly the cultural materialist aim of locating (neoliberal)capitalist ideology, this thesis begins its journey of locating the economic base in English play development practices in the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER ONE

IMAGINING PLAYS AND PLAYWRIGHTS:

THE IDEOLOGY OF ENGLISH PLAYWRITING GUIDES

1.1 English Playwriting Guides and New Labour

In this chapter, I focus on a sphere of play development practice that expanded in English theatre in the early 2000s: an array of new publications on the craft of playwriting. I argue that 'English playwriting guides', as I term them, operate as a neoliberal ideology: a set of ideas that imagine plays and playwrights according to the economic logics of UK higher education (henceforth 'HE') and the English new writing culture – both of which, I argue, were in the 2000s informed by the neoliberal consensus. Using a cultural materialist analysis, I analyse how the economic logic of these guides informs the ways in which they represent plays and playwrights.

At the beginning of the 2000s, several books were published with the stated aim of supporting the craft of playwriting. Referred to by Inchley as 'self-help writing guides' (2015: 39) and by Waters as a 'literature of playwriting' (2013a: 138), this canon commenced in earnest with the republication of Steve Gooch's *Writing a Play* (2001 [1988]) and Alan Ayckbourn's *The Crafty Art of Playmaking* (2004 [2002]). Inchley uses

the term 'self-help writing guides' to refer specifically to 'how-to' texts published during the 2000s, including Cathy Birch's *Awaken the Writer Within: Discover How to Release Your Creativity and Find Your True Writer's Voice* (2001), Noël Grieg's *Playwriting: A Practical Guide* (2005) and Tim Fountain's *So You Want to be a Playwright?* (2007). For Waters, the literature of playwriting is distinct from 'the rather less elevated industrial "how-to" guides' and comprises a canon already in existence (2013a: 138). Waters traces a tradition that begins with Aristotle's *Poetics* and develops in 'commentary derive[d] from the neo-classicists such as Dryden, Boileau or Corneille […] from Lessing […] to Georg Buchner's aesthetic figured in *Lenz,* from Zola's apologia for *Miss Julie*, from Shaw's prefaces to Brecht's prolegomena […]' (ibid.: 139). Like Inchley, however, Waters identifies an English revival in the 2000s, and, although initially keen to define how-to guides separately from the literature of playwriting, he conflates the canons and argues that, together, they 'offer a typology of approaches ranging from the anecdotal self-help [to] the refined wisdom of elders and masters' (143). Waters adds to this collection David Edgar's *How Plays Work* (2009) and his own *The Secret Life of Plays* (2010).

In this chapter, I combine Inchley's and Waters' terms and refer to 'self-help writing guides' and a 'literature of playwriting' collectively as 'English playwriting guides'. In contrast to Waters' historically and geographically broad approach, I focus on English publications in the 2000s: in particular, the work of Gooch, Ayckbourn, Fountain, Edgar and Waters. While there are more recent examples in this tradition (e.g., Jeffreys 2019; Foxon and Turvey 2018; Grace and Bayley 2016; Goldman 2012), the guides of Gooch, Ayckbourn, Fountain, Edgar and Waters were, in the English context, some of the most significant contemporary works in this field circulating in the 2000s.

The re-emergence of English playwriting guides in the twenty-first century followed the establishment of UK HE playwriting courses and the renewed cultural emphasis on playwriting in England in the late twentieth century. As Waters notes, the publication of

English playwriting guides came after 'the establishment of courses in higher study such as the University of Birmingham's in 1989, or [was] coincident with the wave of new writing' (2013a: 142). They also followed what Craig Batty terms the 'screenwriting turn' in the 1990s (2014: 1). Although the screenwriting guide tradition has a much longer history (as discussed below), at the end of the twentieth century, a collection of American screenwriting publications emerged correlative to the rise in screenwriting programmes in the American academy. Works included David Trottier's (2014 [1994]) *Screenwriter's Bible*; Christopher Vogler's (2007 [1998]) *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*; Robert McKee's (1999) *Story* and the republication of Syd Field's (2005 [1984]) *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*.

While there are some differences in the ideas that are advanced, both playwriting and screenwriting guides necessarily look to develop principles for what usually works – and what usually doesn't work – when writing a play or screenplay. By primarily citing examples from the history of Anglophone drama and screenwriting, they induct emerging writers into play and screen fields by offering canonical histories. Often, they include pragmatic sections on how to approach the industry, presenting guidance on issues including representation, remuneration and how to avoid potentially precarious aspects of development including unaccredited training programmes (e.g. Fountain 2007: 79-107; Foxon and Turvey 2018: 4). More recent guides provide further detailed financial advice on funding and, if the play or screen text is published, lending credibility and royalties (Grace and Bayley 2016: 242). As a result, English playwriting guides published in the 2000s undeniably provided would-be playwrights with a range of benefits. They included greater access and transparency to play development's usually hidden processes; furthermore, they supported equality of opportunity by being readily available to anyone who could afford to purchase or borrow a copy. Crucially, they instructed readers on the economics of the theatrical workplace thus allowing

playwrights to make informed decisions about the industry they wished to enter. As Foxon and Turvey note, '[n]obody goes into theatre for the money' (2018: 22).

The scholarly response to 'how-to' writing guides, however, has been scant and, in many cases, cynical. Stayci Taylor and Craig Batty note that 'in the academy little attention has been paid to this phenomenon of the "'how-to" market' (2016: 204). Bridget Conor, for example, notes how screenwriting guides 'are […] exemplary of chaotic, precarious capitalism, embodying exactly the instabilities and insecurities felt by the workers they call into being' (2014: 123). Michael Green adds that they 'typically do not mandate cultural studies and representation be taught within them' (2013: 31). Waters argues that they are 'commercially focussed' and Taylor and Batty portray them as works where 'the terms "development" and "finance" frequently appear together' (2013a: 140; 2016: 206). Scholars therefore construct a narrative in which screenwriting guides are seen to idealise the precarious screenwriting industry, endorse hegemonic representations of screenwriters and establish regulatory norms around how screenplays work. For example, Mckee's *Story* proclaims that '[t]he writer *must* master classical form' (1999: 64 [my emphasis]).

Recent scholarship on English playwriting guides has found how they too establish regulatory norms. Analysis thus far has focused on how playwriting guides understand playwriting according to conventional Western dramatic form (which I will return to below). For example, Turner notes how Edgar's *How Plays Work* 'usefully clarifies the significance of the "rules" of playwriting' (2013: 114). Similarly, John Ginman observes how Fountain's *So you want to be a playwright?* and Waters' *The Secret Life of Plays* advance rules that respectively articulate 'narrative [as] the starting point of process' and 'identify [its] prime importance' (2013: 131). Love agrees that '[i]n these guides writers are typically advised to focus on character objective and motivation, tracing a clear linear progression towards a goal […]' (2015: 118). Tomlin, however, observes how Edgar's

and Waters' guides suggest possibilities for rule-breaking, but notes, in relation to Edgar's, that 'the potential of a diverse range of […] structures, or departures, is not considered' (2013a: 125). Moreover, the playwright, as a collaborator in a wider theatrical process, is seen to be effectively effaced in English playwriting guides. This is because English playwriting guides are constituent of what Tomlin regards as a 'pedagogical process that isolates the writer from the collaborative theatrical context' (ibid.: 121). This approach, she continues, 'is very good at enabling students and new writers to follow the well-established principles of the broadly realist dramatic playtext', but Tomlin contends that, given this approach, it is less certain how 'the new writer [will] begin to make informed decisions about how divergences from these principles will function in performance' (ibid.).

Inchley claims that English playwriting guides are representative of the 'democratic ideology of "finding the voice" through writing' (40). As noted in the introduction, an 'ideology', according to Marx and Engels' definition in *The German Ideology*, is the 'ideal expression of the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas', or, the way in which the ruling ideas of a historical moment are expressed (12). We can thus consider to what extent the 'democratic ideology of "finding the voice"' is an expression of the ruling ideas and dominant material relationships of neoliberalism in English playwriting guides. Waters, as noted above, argues that the immediate material contexts of English playwriting guides were the culture of English new writing and the concurrent emergence of HE playwriting programmes (2013a: 142). It is my contention that these immediate material contexts, as well as the dominant American HE screen and playwriting context, are inseparable from the broader context of ruling ideas rooted in the economic rationale of neoliberalism.

In the introduction to this thesis, for example, we observed how the new writing culture was underpinned by an economic rationality that valorised plays and playwrights

as commodity forms and labour power. Similarly, it is widely recognised that, during the same period, HE increasingly operated on neoliberal logic. The deregulation in UK-based HE is traced, for example, by Mark Fisher (2009); Mike Molesworth, Richard Scullion and Elizabeth Nixon (2010); Roger Brown and Helen Carasso (2013) and Colin McCaig (2018) who attribute the economisation of the English public sector during this period to New Labour's 1997-2010 policies (discussed below). These economic shifts were representative of broader state engagement with neoliberalism across the Euro-Atlantic world. For example, the parallel economisation of American HE is documented by Henry A. Giroux (2014) and Wendy Brown (2015) and linked, by Brown, to the Obama administration's (2009-2017) own neoliberal project in which education and liberal arts were similarly framed 'in terms of [their] contribution to economic growth and American competitiveness' (ibid.: 25). Thus, in this chapter, I develop an understanding of English playwriting guides as an ideology built on the economic rationality of the neoliberal logic of UK and American HE and the English new writing culture. I address the following questions: where does the ideology of English playwriting guides come from? How is it constructed? And how does it shape the definitions of plays and playwrights? To answer these questions, I use the reading practice of cultural materialism.

1.2 Towards a Cultural Materialist Analysis of English Playwriting Guides

In order to reveal the neoliberal logic of English playwriting guides, I apply the cultural materialisms of Williams (1977) and Dollimore and Sinfield (1994 [1985]) as introduced in the introduction of this thesis. Williams' *Marxism and Literature* argues that English literature and criticism are actively ideological; i.e., a conduit for consensus to capital's

logic. Moreover, Williams argues that criticism is ideological for three key reasons: like literature itself, criticism separates culture from its material modes of production. It has the 'general tendency […] towards an emphasis on the use of (conspicuous) consumption of works, rather than on their production' (49). Second, it is informed by 'systems of belief characteristic of a certain class' (66); Williams argues that 'the concepts of literature and criticism are […] forms of class specialisation and control of a general social practice' (49). Third, criticism is seen to introduce 'selective' parameters into culture; 'great', 'major', 'minor', 'bad', and 'negligible' works can be sorted into a hierarchy (51). This 'specialising process', Williams contends, is redefined by the dominant class in each historical moment, who 'find […] new means, new forms and then new definitions of a changing practical consciousness' (52; 54). Williams' description of how ideology operates in criticism can be usefully applied to English playwriting guides since we can observe an ideology in their system of beliefs around plays and playwrights. As a result, we can define English playwriting guides as a form of English literary criticism in line with Williams' definition and explore them collectively as ideological works using the cultural materialist lens.

How should 'actively ideological' criticism, such as English playwriting guides, be explored (Williams 1977: 45)? As noted in the introduction, Williams advances an approach which he terms cultural materialism. In *Marxism and Literature*, he sets out a broad literary sociology in which Marxist theories of language are integrated with Marxist theories of literature to produce an innovative method through which literary concepts and theory can be reappraised. Nearly twenty years later, in *Political Shakespeare*, Dollimore and Sinfield develop this method into a schema and take up Williams' ideas to build a cultural materialist reading practice for analysing texts:

> our belief is that a combination of historical context, theoretical method, political commitment and textual analysis offers the strongest challenge and has already contributed substantial work. Historical context undermines the transcendent significance traditionally accorded to the literary text and allows us to recover its histories; theoretical method detaches the text from immanent criticism which seeks only to reproduce it in its own terms; socialist and feminist commitment confronts the conservative categories in which most criticism has hitherto been conducted; textual analysis locates the critique of traditional approaches where it cannot be ignored. We call this 'cultural materialism'. (vii)

A cultural materialist methodology, that draws out the ideological constructions in texts, can be undertaken as a two-part reading practice. It examines its subject by first recovering historical context and then by conducting textual analysis. Embedded into these analyses should be a 'socialist and feminist commitment that confronts conservative categories' that, in turn, shapes a theoretical commitment to unearthing hidden hegemonic patterns in texts (ibid.). Drawing on this reading practice, I structure the rest of this chapter in a two-part analysis that outlines the historical context of English playwriting guides and then analyses their form and content to draw out their co-constitution with neoliberalism.

1.3 A Cultural Materialist Analysis of English Playwriting Guides: Historical Context

A cultural materialist analysis commences with identifying the material base of the historical moment that determines the ideas English playwriting guides advance. This does not just mean looking back at the historical context preceding English playwriting guides; it also means looking across to material contexts that structure their thinking in the same historical moment. In the introduction of this chapter, I established that the material contexts for English playwriting guides were the American HE context and its

own 'how to' tradition, the UK HE context and the English new writing context. This analysis, then, is structured to engage chronologically with the American and UK-based HE playwriting contexts, the new writing context, then a final section on the careers of Gooch, Ayckbourn, Fountain, Edgar and Waters. I argue across each of these analyses that English playwriting guides advance an ideology determined by neoliberalism's increasing claim on these contexts and the authors themselves. My aim, therefore, is to momentarily set aside direct discussion of English playwriting guides before returning to analyse them in section 1.4 below.

The American Higher Education Context

The American playwriting guide tradition originated in the American academy, but it was made possible by changing material factors at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1878, the formation of the American Dramatic Authors' Society had started to connect playwrights, and, as Amy Lyn Negley Arbogast notes, in 1897 'a new copyright measure went into law that did more to protect the creative work of dramatists [and] firmly established the profession of playwriting […]' (2016: 288). Furthermore, Waters shows how, from the 1900s, we can observe 'the early positioning of playwriting as something that could be taught on campus, whether at Yale or elsewhere' (2013: 140).

Dramaturg George Pierce Baker initiated a playwriting workshop at Radcliffe Women's College and subsequently transferred it to the English Department at Harvard in 1905 (Reilly 2013: 109). Following this, Baker's own *Dramatic Technique* was published in 1919 (2001). The stated aim of *Dramatic Technique* was to show 'what successful drama has been in different countries, at different periods, as written by men [sic] of highly individual gifts' (ibid.: 1). Baker's project was to instate playwriting tuition as a means to support the nascent American dramatic canon. As Kara Reilly notes, Baker was

'committed to helping to create a new American theatre' (2013: 108). He was not a playwright himself; rather he 'dedicated himself to giving playwriting students production opportunities. He valued not only hearing their plays read aloud in staged readings, but also taking their plays into full production' (ibid.: 108).

Early American playwriting pedagogy and its guides supported the emergence of an American screenwriting tradition. For example, John Howard Lawson's *Theory and Technique of Playwriting* (2018) was published in 1936, followed by University of Michigan's playwriting tutor Kenneth Rowe's *Write that Play* (1939). In interview, Robert McKee notes that in *Story* (1999) and in his screenwriting tuition at Sherwood Oaks (commencing in 1981), he was 'repeating what I was taught, and then adding some little insights I'd had – but basically recycling Kenneth Rowe and John Howard Lawson and Aristotle, and putting it in a contemporary context […]' (Parker 2003). McKee's own 'recycling' of playwriting guides in nascent screenwriting pedagogy can be contextualised in relation to the explosion of literary production in American universities in the mid-to-late twentieth century across creative writing, play and screen fields. As Mark McGurl argues in *The Programme Era*, there was a widespread expansion of writing faculty and programmes in higher education in the 1960s and 1970s (2009: xiii). As Brown notes, the 1960s, in particular, 'promised not merely literacy, but liberal arts to the masses' (2015: 180). In the late twentieth century, for example, Master of Fine Arts and undergraduate playwriting programmes emerged at USC; DePaul University; NYU; Boston University; Brown; and UCLA – as well as continuing at Yale and Harvard.

Scholars note the increasing marketisation of creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting MFAs in US HE and, more broadly, the marketisation of the entire sector from the mid-twentieth century. The first integration of playwriting studies into HE at Harvard and Yale occurred during the period regarded as the arrival of the 'modern American university' that orientated research, teaching and learning toward practical,

technological and economic concerns. Christopher P. Loss describes the 1914-18 years as the moment when 'higher education finally got "big"': a move towards 'bureaucratic reinvention' where the academy's civic, social and economic benefits were first observed (2011: 16). As Rebellato observes in *Theatre and Globalization*, 'the nineteenth century's tentative and piecemeal moves towards a global free market were brought to a halt in the early part of the twentieth century. The three crises of the First World War, the Russian Revolution, and then the Wall Street Crash saw capitalism retreat behind national boundaries again' (23). Behind national boundaries, however, American capitalism was growing; US exports soared to two and a half times greater than the highest pre-war level and, between 1914 and 1917, the GNP increased by almost twenty percent (Woods 2015). Indeed, as Brown notes, the rise of university education in the twentieth century was a central means of capital's development in late modernity: '[i]t is a commonplace that broadly accessible and affordable higher education is one of the great casualties of neoliberalism's ascendance in the Euro-Atlantic world' (2015: 175).

In the late twentieth century, when creative writing programmes in all media were now established, McGurl notes that the American faculty had begun to 'behave like a corporation, integrating new management techniques and market valuations into its wholly self-referential, self-producing practices' (2009: 406). In the 2000s, as Hillary Miller notes, playwriting delivery practices became increasingly standardised with 'the contemporary workshop model becom[ing] entrenched as the standard fare of MFA programmes' (2013: 33). Gary Fine notes that MFA arts programmes in the 2000s became a form of 'occupational socialization' (2017: 1463). Their approach, then, mirrors Conor's description of the 'self-help tradition that offers an ideal model for the screenwriting worker, a tradition that purports to help writers navigate […] real-world conditions in which writers must function' (134). And yet, as Miller notes, MFAs in the 2000s were not straightforward channels into the industry as they might purport; rather,

they were characterised by 'the questionable pedagogy of the workshop, the financial burden of the student' and the 'subtle bureaucratic boundaries [that] in fact add hues and tints to the functioning of each program, and often determine the workshop sequences, literature courses, and electives that are required of students' (2013: 34).

As noted in the introduction of this thesis, Bolton argues that the first stage in commodifying playwriting occurred in the UK in the twentieth century when it became a pedagogy (2012: 213). The history of American playwriting pedagogy in the twentieth century, I suggest, conforms broadly to Bolton's idea that dramatic tuition is immediately co-opted by market forces, in this case the increasing claim of neoliberalism. After having been valorised in American HE, then, the playwriting guide tradition moved on, I suggest, to establish a material base in UK HE in the 2000s.

The UK Higher Education Context

In a move that mimicked Baker's project of encouraging an American dramatic canon, playwright David Edgar attempted to revive new English drama in the 1980s by establishing the first UK-based playwriting degree. In 1989, Edgar established the MPhil (later MRes) Playwriting Studies at the University of Birmingham. In *How Plays Work*, Edgar argues that the course's emergence was an 'outgrowth of a grassroots self-help movement' among UK-based playwrights in the 1970s – as evidenced by Edgar's own fortnightly playwriting option at Birmingham in the mid-1970s (xi). The UK playwrights' 'self-help' movement began proper, according to Bolton, when Ian Brown, founder of the Scottish Society of Playwrights, visited the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Connecticut, home of the National Playwrights Conference, and returned to Scotland intent on introducing the American model (2011: 44). The SSP example was soon followed by the Northern Playwrights Society in 1975, establishing a culture in

which playwrights created workshop models, seminar sessions, one-to-one tutorials, and 'feedback' practices. Taken up by the Birmingham course, these workshops, imported from America, inevitably mimic Baker's original practices. As quoted above, for example, Reilly describes Baker's approach as a workshop model in which students would read, perform and offer feedback on each other's plays. As we have seen, the American workshop model remained in place, but became co-opted by the neoliberal turn in American HE. Might the same be said about the workshop pedagogies in UK-based HE playwriting studies?

Following the University of Birmingham's course, a number of playwriting degrees emerged in the 2000s including postgraduate degrees at Bath Spa, Central Lancashire, Bournemouth, York, Essex, Falmouth, Manchester, Goldsmiths, Royal Holloway, University of the Arts London, the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and Universities of Wales, St Andrews, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Undergraduate playwriting studies was introduced at universities including Winchester, York, East Anglia, Portsmouth, Derby, Bangor, Liverpool John Moores and Kingston. Like Birmingham's programme, workshop models were originally deployed across these courses as the central means through which playwriting tuition was delivered. Due to increased student numbers and limitations in staff resourcing, however, the workshop model is now often reduced or eliminated; for instance, at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, it has been removed. The Birmingham course closed in 2016. Despite its closure, the other courses listed above are, in 2019, still in operation. If, as Miller notes, the American workshop method was compromised by the bureaucratisation and commodification of American HE in the 2000s, we can observe similar shifts in playwriting pedagogy in the UK HE context. Historic workshop models are increasingly set aside and the need for individuated practices, such as the consultation of English playwriting guides, becomes more central to playwriting provision.

The growth and disciplinary shifts in playwriting studies in the 2000s can be contextualised by the New Labour government's (1997-2010) education policy. Party leader and Prime Minister Tony Blair (1994 (97)-2007) promised to invest in education. In relation to HE, Labour instated certain key shifts: first, notoriously introducing student fees. For Anthony Heath et al., 'this was partly driven by the need to fund the expansion of participation […]. The New Labour critique of free HE was that it operated on a '"middle-class subsidy" because [it] is disproportionately enjoyed by middle-class children' (2013.: 228). The introduction of tuition fees was part of New Labour's project to furnish HE with an economic base which, according to Alpesh Maisuria and Mike Cole, was 'achieved by the Brown administration's encouragement that universities should be "business-facing"' (2017: 605). The evolution towards the neoliberalisation of HE in the 2000s, for Maisuria and Cole, included the insertion of Quality Assurance processes, marketisation that 'demands that universities act like businesses', QA as 'excellence' and privatization (ibid.: 606-8). It also included the new research excellence framework introduced in 2008, including the introduction of research metrics via 'impact', as discussed by Brown (2015: 23). Fisher reminds us, though, that New Labour's re-branding of HE was not unique; rather, '[t]his battery of bureaucratic procedures [was] by no means confined to universities, nor to education: other public services, such as the National Health Service and the police force, [found] themselves enmeshed in similar bureaucratic metasases' (2009: 41). Such changes, as we have seen, resulted in higher volumes of students and shifts in disciplinary practices, but also encouraged courses, such as playwriting, to operate on economic imperatives.

Playwriting programmes, especially after the cap on tuition fees was removed following the 2010 Browne Review, were forced to accord to free market principles and appeal to students paying around £9,000 per annum in tuition fees. In the 2000s, playwriting programmes played their role in reconstituting UK HE as a competitive

market, developing commodity appeal in terms of quality, satisfaction and value added. Moreover, in the 2000s, degree awards started to be judged on the causational result of 'employability'. As Inge Römgens, Réne Scoupe and Simon Beausaert argue, '[p]articularly since the 2008 economic crisis and its effects on both public funding for HE and graduates' struggles with finding connection to the globally competitive labor market, employability has been at the centre of HE agendas in many Western countries' (2019: 1). According to the Browne Review, the economicisation of HE was innately a good thing since '[c]ompetition generally raises quality. The interests of students will be protected by minimum levels of quality enforced through regulation' (2010: 2).

We can see that playwriting degree students became increasingly swayed by Labour's discourses of quality and added value. The quality of a playwriting programme began to be measured in terms of its interface with industry development cultures, with notable practitioners, but, also, in the opportunity for a reading or production and, in addition, alumni success. For example, the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama's MA in Writing for Screen and Broadcast webpage lists the programme's significant industry contacts, including playwrights, script services, new writing theatres and companies (2019). It seems that a course's connections, in fact, directly conform to quality assurance semiotics. Playwriting programmes, however, do vary in terms of the extent to which they acquiesce to competitive logic; for example, The University of Salford's now-closed MA in playwriting argued confidently that 'many of the graduates of [their] course will go on to forge successful careers as playwrights' (2014). Others are more careful in framing students' commercial success. For example, Course Leader of the aforementioned MA/MFA at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, Sarah Grochala, argues that 'no course can guarantee a career' (Foxon and Turvey 2018: 12). This echoes Miller's understanding that '[i]t is a recognized and accepted fact that playwriting programs do not provide entrée to full-time careers in playwriting' (2013:

32). Both Miller and Grochala articulate, then, a possibility of evading some of the most aggressive aspects of playwriting studies' new economic base. But as Brown argues, 'higher education now produces human capital'; this is to say that it is in HE in which students learn their compulsory performance in the neoliberal economy through a process of 'professionalisation' which 'remov[es] quaint concerns with developing the person and citizen or perhaps reducing such development to the capacity for economic advantage' (2015: 24; 23).

The neoliberalisation of playwriting programmes at UK universities, then, created a new type of use value and consumer for English playwriting guides. With pedagogies shifting away from workshop models and students demanding individuated support and, in some cases, sure success, a fully-formed market for English playwriting guides emerged. Student-playwrights in HE, in addition to the writers working independently, or inside industrial development contexts, started to comprise a third market for English playwriting guides. Furthermore, in addition to supplying consumers for playwriting guides, HE also deploys the same suppliers; e.g., all the authors referenced here have pedagogical careers inside HE (discussed below). The new degrees, however, did not necessarily bring about the new publications; rather, the neoliberal turn in HE necessitated their emergence and approach. Moreover, playwriting degrees might be considered, like the guides, to be products of the demand for playwriting pedagogy stimulated by the new writing culture in the 1990s. Before turning to look at English playwriting guides in detail, then, let us explore briefly the ways in which the neoliberal consensus in the new writing context also frames them.

The New Writing Context

In addition to the American and UK HE landscapes, the English theatrical culture known as 'new writing' constitutes a third material context informing the ideology of English playwriting guides in the 2000s. English playwriting guides, I suggest, interacted with the new writing culture in two key ways. First, they are an extension of new writing's own ideology as concerns playwrights; second, they are a key resource supporting new writing's burgeoning practices of play development. These two relationships between new writing and English playwriting guides are direct results of changes New Labour inspired in English theatre during this period. As with the education sector, New Labour encouraged the English arts to operate on market principles. As Luckhurst notes, arts '[f]unding criteria under the Blair government promoted 'access', 'diversity', 'excellence' 'education' and 'economic value' (2006: 209). These aims were to be achieved via Arts Council England's funding criteria which now requested recipients demonstrate their enactment of these principles. Crucially, as a key means to promote 'education', 'excellence' and 'access' in English theatre, Art Council England's *Theatre Writing Strategy* (2003b) promoted the instating of play development practices at producing theatres and companies (*Writ Large* 2009b: 36). As I will explain below, these changes reinforced the market for English playwriting guides, but, before discussing this, it is important to note how Labour changed English theatre's ideas as concerns playwrights in ways that become central to their representation in English playwriting guides.

Inchley traces a link between the 'New Labour vision of an equal and inclusive voicescape' and the aforementioned 'democratic ideology of "finding the voice" through writing' in English theatre (29; 40). New Labour placed an emphasis on individualising the politician's voice, via Blair's 'trusting and inspiring tones', the

diversification of MPs, and the plural tones of ministers and speakers including Claire Short, Baroness Amos, Mo Mowlam and John Prescott (22; 23). Inchley argues that this shift 'links ideologically with the "democratization of creativity"' (39). New Labour's voicescape may have inspired the development of playwriting programmes in the academy, but, according to Inchley, it also determined how playwrights were conceptualised in industry. New Labour's interest in widening access and participation, as well as its plural voicescape, democratically repositioned playwrights, like politicians, as unique individuals from a plurality of backgrounds. This identity pluralising mimics Labour's reconceptualisation of the student beyond middle-class iterations – as discussed above. In relation to the individual playwright, it meant that 'pressures were exerted on individuals to "have" or "find" their own voice and to represent the voice of others' (35). Although I admire Inchley's reading here, I wonder if the diversification of voice in New Labour was more of a stealthy cover for their interests in capital. If the diversification of playwriting voicescapes was a result of Labour's own diversification, it is my feeling that it is similarly a carrier of economic rationality that uses diversification as a means to support the economic well-being of new writing.

We can understand, then, that New Labour's voicescape directly influenced not only the market reach of HE, and its playwriting pedagogy, but, crucially, the economic conception of the playwright. In new writing play development contexts, playwrights could be seen now as diversified service-users who were inducted into a process in which they would become personifications of vocal diversification. I suggest these shifts, as concerns playwrights, mimic the neoliberal individualising of students via processes of professionalisation, employability and entreprenuerialisation which prepares them, as far as possible, to conceive of themselves as units of human capital. By this comparison, we can see play development in industry to operate on the same neoliberal principles as higher education: as an individualising process where '[a]s

human capital, the subject is at once in charge of itself, responsible for itself, yet an instrumentalizable and potentially dispensible element of the whole' (Brown 2015: 38). The new emphasis on the playwright's specifically neoliberal individuality in the new writing context in the 2000s, the focus on their competitive positioning and entrepreneurial strategising, combined with the overlapping conception of students in HE, as we will see below, is central to the ideology advanced in English playwriting guides.

The problem with Labour's formal and informal influence in English theatre, however, is that nascent play development services and mechanisms, in the 2000s, were still in their infancy (a subject I return to in Chapter Two). Scholars have argued that, to support play development, in the 2000s, a new tier of roles in buildings emerged, including Literary Managers, Associates and Dramaturgs, and yet, as Luckhurst notes, '[t]here are real questions about who is appointed a Literary Manager [and] how they are trained' (2006: 215). How did these new roles, for instance, ensure the enactment of Labour's tacit stipulations around voice? Luckhurst notes that, in the 2000s, there was little formal training and few resources for Literary Managers, Associates and Dramaturgs in the UK while, paradoxically, a fear that 'standardised training and possible mass production of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs through higher education could, if not carefully planned and monitored, result in a creative and intellectual stagnation' (2006: 218). The limited training available for the new regime of play development in this moment, then, allowed English playwriting guides to function as a key resource for industrial play development practice.

Play developers in new writing contexts thus formed an additional group of consumers for English playwriting guides, in addition to would-be playwrights, particularly those in the academy, as noted above. We know this because Arts Council England recognised the ways in which playwriting studies could support these emergent

industrial play development practices. The *Writ Large Report*, for example, confirms that the 2003 *Theatre Writing Strategy* also 'accept[ed] the increase in college-based training and other forms of playwrights' development practice' to extend the new writing base (2009b: 36). To summarise so far: English playwriting guides can be contextualised by neoliberal governance in HE and new writing industrial contexts, which now generate the use value and consumers (and, as we see below, producers) for the guides. How do the careers of the individual authors, then, support an understanding that the economic bases of HE and the new writing culture create an ideology in English playwriting guides?

Authors' Careers

Since Gooch, Ayckbourn, Fountain, Edgar and Waters are all playwriting pedagogues with significant professional contributions to the academy, and since all have also made equally sizable contributions to a new writing culture, each author's own career trajectory forms part of the economic base of English new writing guides. Gooch's *Writing a Play*, first published in 1988, was the earliest contribution to a contemporary tradition of the English playwriting guide. Gooch, a Literary Manager, playwright, and playwriting tutor, most notably attached to The Greenwich Theatre, and The Gate, authored *Writing a Play* while in his role as a tutor at the City Literary Institute. Gooch's relationship to new writing theatres associate his book with play development practices in theatres during this period, and, as the work has been re-released in 1995 and 2001, in addition to its most recent 2004 edition, it remains relevant in that context. In the 2004 edition's introduction, Gooch says:

> [t]he thoughts in this book have developed through some thirty years of work as a freelance dramatist, working in half-a-dozen theatres as a

> 'literary manager' and, above all, from teaching. A number of students who have gone on to have their plays produced, win prizes and get commissioned to write plays have found them useful. (2)

In framing the most recent publication in the terms above, *Writing a Play* makes use of New Labour discourses that connect pedagogy to quality and competition. For example, it documents a vocabulary and methodology that is clearly informed by playwriting training's commercial underpinning in two ways: primarily Gooch highlights his own quality assurance by way of citing the industrial success of his students. As Gooch also has a history of teaching in the academy in both the UK and US (Goldsmiths, NYU, etc.), *Writing a Play* crucially connects the American academy and its 'how-to' commercial legacy to a UK academy and new writing culture.

Ayckbourn is an Olivier and Tony Award winning playwright with a canon of over eighty plays, commencing with *The Square Cat* (1959) and running to *Birthdays Past, Birthdays Present* (2019). In interview with Ayckbourn, Ian Shuttleworth notes that 'it transpires that this stylistic adventurousness (to put it mildly) has also had a commercial motive' (2008). Ayckbourn's commerciality is rooted in his aim to create 'event theatre' in Scarborough; most of his works premiered at the Steven Joseph Theatre, where he was artistic director between 1972-2009 (Murgatroyd 2019). In interviews with Ayckbourn's collaborators including Penelope Wilton, Ben Miles and Nina Sosanya, Matt Trueman documents the extent of Ayckbourn's success, which, according to Wilton, is rooted in his ability to understand 'the British and the middle classes' pomposity and vulnerability, the way they try to keep up appearances' (2019). *The Crafty Art of Playmaking* emerged, Ayckbourn says, because he was 'asked on a number of occasions if I'd care to write something about playwriting, or rather, more accurately, how I go about playwriting' (ix). The first half of the work addresses the would-be playwright, and the second half addresses the would-be director. The ideas advanced,

then, have roots in Ayckbourn's own 'self-help' trajectory, but also his appointment as The Cameron Mackintosh Professor of Contemporary Theatre at Oxford University in 1992, where he taught playwriting.

Fountain's *So You Want to be A Playwright?* was published in 2007 as part of the Nick Hern 'how to' series that also includes Steven Unwin's *So You Want to be a Director?* (2004) and James Seabright's *So You Want to be a Producer?* (2010). Fountain is a playwright, active between 1999 and 2010. He was Literary Manager of the Bush Theatre between 1997-2001 and Lecturer in Creative Writing at Strathclyde University between 2006-2009. With ties to both the academy and industry, Fountain's text, like Gooch's, pivots on the New Labour discourses of quality assurance by focusing on his own industrial success, reproduced in a confessional register. For example, '[t]hroughout most of my career I have only finished plays because I have been frightened by deadlines: seeing the posters being displayed or the production dates listed in theatre brochures […]' (3). In interview with Sierz, Fountain notes that he decided to write his volume because he had found that his students were gifted at telling stories, yet found the concept of playwriting challenging (Sierz 2008). What is interesting about Fountain's argument here is that it combines, for the first time, a commercial playwriting pedagogy with the narratological principles of storytelling. Fountain thus establishes the deep connection between commercial playwriting pedagogy and narrative principles – a feature I return to below.

Like Ayckbourn, Edgar is a playwright who has authored around eighty plays, from *Two Kinds of Angel* (1970) to *Trying It On* (2018). As observed, he also has strong connections to the academy, most notably via Birmingham and his delivery of playwrights' workshops since the mid-1970s and the degree from 1989-2016. Between 1974-5, he was playwright-in-residence at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, and he began what would be a long association with the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1976.

In 1995, the University of Birmingham inaugurated Edgar as a Professor of Playwriting. In 1996, Edgar became a Judith E. Wilson visiting fellow at Cambridge University. He is also a former president of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain. *How Plays Work* was published in 2009 and it is interesting to observe how Edgar conceptualises his career therein. For example, unlike any of the works discussed above, *How Plays Work* does not cover Edgar's own writing, or his success at developing playwrights including, for example, Sarah Kane in Birmingham's 1992-3 cohort; moreover, this work does not address the would-be playwright (despite the fact that the work clearly would be consumed in this way). By absenting industrial discourse, Edgar seems to position his work as far as possible away from the commercial legacies of the playwriting guide, and yet, as we have observed, the academy is not free from processes of marketisation. By aligning his work so closely with the academy, particularly the Birmingham playwriting course, Edgar implicitly links his work, then, to the economic base of UK HE during the 2000s.

How Plays Work was followed closely by Waters' *The Secret Life of Plays,* published in 2010. Waters is a playwright with fourteen plays, from *English Journeys* (1998) to *Limehouse* (2017). He studied playwriting at the University of Birmingham, under Edgar, between 1992-3, in the same cohort as Kane. He became convener of the Birmingham course in 2006 before moving, in 2013, to lead the Creative Writing MA at the University of East Anglia. *The Secret Life of Plays*, like *How Plays Work*, begins with Waters situating the role of the Birmingham course. He thanks a long line of teachers and collaborators, including 'Edgar himself, without whom [*The Secret Life of Plays*] would simply have been an unthinkable task; to the late Clare McIntyre [convener of the Birmingham programme 1991-1998], who taught me the instinctual aspect of the craft and to the also much-missed Sarah Kane, who taught me to rethink everything I thought I had learned hitherto […]' (x). Waters makes these connections as part of the

acknowledgement section, rather than in the main body. As such, we can understand his aim in citing these figures not as a qualifying one that links his work to commercially successful playwrights and pedagogues, but, rather, as a personal note of thanks. This arrangement does, however, have the inadvertent effect of linking *The Secret Life of Plays* to New Labour semiotics of quality and connects this guide clearly to HE's economic base.

What seems clear from the above is that the authors, to some extent, try to determine the context of their work. Gooch, Ayckbourn and Fountain each have had playwriting-pedagogue careers in HE, but, rather, consciously frame their advice as drawn from their practice in industry. Paradoxically, Waters and Edgar make links to their connections with playwriting in the academy, particularly the Birmingham course. This distinction helps us to appreciate how English playwriting guides have been described according to different terms, with Inchley referring to 'self-help writing guides' and Waters referring to the 'literature of playwriting' (2015: 39; 2013a: 138). By discussing their own industrial careers and experience, Gooch, Ayckbourn and Fountain do not just link their work to the new writing context, however; they unconsciously link to its economic base. Similarly, Edgar and Waters link their ideas to the economic base of HE. As we observed above, however, both HE and the new writing contexts constitute pervasive markets that underpin the *entire tradition* of English playwriting guides in ways that are beyond the control of the individual authors. Overall, we can see that English playwriting guides are products of, and conduits for, the neoliberal contexts from which they have emerged.

1.4 Close-Textual Analysis: The Ideology of English Playwriting Guides

The second stage of a cultural materialist analysis of English playwriting guides comprises a close analysis of the texts. Given their neoliberal imperatives, what are the 'rules' of English playwriting guides, how do they imagine plays and playwrights and, furthermore, how do the rules connect with the American and UK HE contexts and new writing culture's economic bases? From the above analysis, it is possible to see that these contexts provide a basis for how playwrights and plays might be imagined in English playwriting guides. For example, we have understood that, in the UK and new writing context, Labour had ensured that both students and playwrights were envisioned on market terms, or, as Brown puts it, as individual 'units of human capital' (22). Furthermore, we observed how playwriting degrees and play development contexts became attuned to commodifying students and playwrights. In the introduction, we observed how scholars have previously understood English playwriting guides to co-produce rules around the development of a play-text and, by extension, how the playwright's individual voice might be captured in play-text form to produce a 'new writing' commodity. In the sections that follow, then, I demarcate how English playwriting guides produce an ideology that imagines plays and playwrights on neoliberal terms.

The Playwright as an Individual Unit of Capital

English playwriting guides advance an idea of the playwright as a unit of human capital. A 'unit of human capital', as Brown describes it, is the remaking of the human as nothing more than a practitioner of 'entrepreneurialism, self-investment, and/or

attracting investors' (22). All English playwriting guides imagine the playwright as a unit of human capital. Furthermore, they advance an understanding of the playwright's working day, which is imagined to be isolating, undertaken outside the social relations of theatre, exhausting and exploitative. All of these conditions, however, are regarded as necessary aspects of self-investment: a means to enhance the playwright and play as units of capital.

For Fountain, playwrights will dedicate 'many hours […] to the understanding of dramatic structure' (3). For Waters, the playwright is a figure always 'sitting in the corner with manuscript, thermos flask and pencil […]' (182). For Ayckbourn, the playwright works alone, but remotely – from home: 'if you don't have the initial inspiration, put down the pen, put the pencil back in the jar, switch off the computer and go and dig the garden instead' (7). This image carries assumptions about the playwright's status; the playwright's work is imagined as middle class in ways correlative, perhaps, to Andrew Haydon's observation that middle class playwrights remained (despite Labour's interventions) to be the most significant demographic of produced playwrights in the 2000s (2013: loc. 1278).

The guides imagine the playwright's work, then, as isolated, long, unregulated hours of study and writing. Furthermore, they imagine it on exploitative terms. For example, Ayckbourn's suggested isolation of the playwright at home implies a more precarious, two-fold remoteness. Not only are playwrights isolated, but this isolation may be durational since would-be playwrights, whom Ayckbourn addresses, may never receive a premiere and enter social relations in theatre. Fountain also imagines playwriting as exploitative work in which would-be playwrights must write in a shift system with other forms of labour: '[y]ou work full time, you have children to bring up. Tough. If you want it enough you will find the time and space' (4). The playwright's isolation, then, is a means through which the playwright becomes a unit of human capital and, in so doing,

on Marx's terms, in *Capital Volume One*, must set their own 'limits to exploitation' (353). Playwrights must be their own managers: according to Gooch, for example, as a playwright, you should 'constantly [be] looking over your shoulder anticipating criticism […] be your own severest critic' (97). Playwrights are thus both overseer and overseen and must internalise the relations of production. Moreover, English playwriting guides understand the working conditions they advance as directly correlative to the extent to which the playwright can become a unit of human capital. In other words, the suggested working model is the means through which the playwright can construct themselves as investors in the new writing adage of 'finding the voice'. Isolation is thus entrepreneurial; it allows the playwright to, as Fountain puts it, find and tell '[t]he story only [they] know' (7).

Perhaps most interestingly, the playwright is not only imagined as a unit of human capital; in most of these guides, they are imagined as a mother engaged in parenting, care and emotional labour. Waters develops a metaphor that imagines playwriting as a birth:

> [t]he muse, if she exists, governs the dangerous, breach birth of the first draft, when the play emerges gory, unruly and untamed. It's a rare playwright who delivers that child ready to walk and speak; only with secondary, revisory work does that inchoate creature develop into something that is expressive to an audience rather than a private spasm. Left to its own devices, the dark embryo tends to yield up work that is, well, obscure and embryonic. (7)

By this account, the playwright grows the play in a process that mimics gestation with a finale that mimics birth. The play, by extension, is embryo, foetus, new born, child. Furthermore, the analogy is rendered in gothic terms: the mother and child are Frankenstein and monster. Waters does not cover conception; instead, the figure of the muse suggests an immaculate one with the result of mother and child as single-parent

family. Waters is not alone in deploying filial metaphors to describe playwriting; Gooch, for example, entitles a chapter 'Protecting your baby' and reinforces the single-parenting metaphor (112-115). Similarly, Fountain suggests that playwrights construct their play in trimesters of first, second, and third draft (62-74).

Why do English playwriting guides imagine the labour of playwriting with allusion to these filial metaphors – especially since, as I argue below, their models of practice are mostly male playwrights? These metaphors have multiple purposes in relation to constructing the playwright as units of human capital. First, the metaphors in some way naturalise the aforementioned playwriting working practices by rendering them in familial and emotional terms. In other words, the isolated and exploitative conditions of playwriting described above are, in some ways, assuaged by the filial definition, supporting the playwright's engagement and self-investment in this work. Second, I suggest that the filial metaphors imagine the playwright on the most entrepreneurial terms. The single-mother is coding for the playwright as self-starting entrepreneur, working for themselves, on their own terms, subject to and supported by no-one. The child-play, by extension, is coding for the product made by the entrepreneur, envisaged in their own terms, developed, financed, controlled and owned by them alone. English playwriting guides, then, imagine the playwright as a unit of human capital by setting out the terms of their entrepreneurialism, and, finally, through filial metaphors, ensuring that this work is imagined on the most competitive and individualistic of terms in ways that give the playwright utmost control and autonomy in the theatrical process.

The filial metaphor also ensures that playwrights extend an economic understanding of themselves in rehearsal. First, the playwright learns, through expressions such as Waters' immaculate conception and birth metaphor, that collaboration is unnecessary – a potential threat to the singular authority they have over their commodity and its mode of production. Rehearsal is thus conceived as a space in which the playwright's self-

investment, entrepreneurialism and outputs – their baby – is in danger. As Waters notes, playwrights might, if they are not careful, become 'superfluous'; a 'visitant'; 'present yet absent' (183). In rehearsal, Gooch informs the playwright that they will feel as if they 'come from a different world' (118). In order to empower the playwright, Gooch argues that they must remember that, even in rehearsal, 'he [sic] possesses a power which can't be democratized beyond a certain point' (117). The filial metaphors of English playwriting guides, I suggest, therefore reinforce the conventional playmaking hierarchy in place in English theatres during the 2000s: that, as Sierz sees it, ensures the playwright is 'central to the theatre making process' and, as Rebellato reminds us, 'plays [in this period were] performed in a way that is broadly consistent with the playwright's intentions' (2011: 50; 2013b: loc. 1142). The playwright's working practice, then, despite appearing to distance the playwright from the theatrical production process, actually constitutes a means through which their centrality is enhanced and their intentions enforced inside it. The working isolation supports the custodial relationship between playwright and play; it creates an authority for the playwright to be deployed in rehearsal. Overall, the representation of the playwright and their labour encourages the playwright in isolating their practice and, furthermore, dismisses the collaboration of others. This advice, however, is economically rationalised; it valorises the play and playwright as ideal producers and products of new writing. In what other ways do English playwriting guides reproduce their advice according to neoliberal logic?

The Playwright and Play in Conservative Categories

English playwriting guides, I suggest, construct the playwright and play in hegemonic terms according to a neoliberal rationality that will best serve the economic logic of the new writing context. That is to say that they advance an idea that plays should be texts,

and, furthermore, that they should conform to Aristotelian dramaturgy. Moreover, since English playwriting guides demonstrate the operation of this dramaturgy in models of theatrical practice, they imagine plays overwhelmingly according to the Aristotelian aesthetic and, in doing so, implicitly imagine playwrights as predominantly male and white. English playwriting guides do this partly through conscious and unconscious bias in their politics of citation. For example, as Edgar notes of his own work:

> [i]t is certainly based on a limited sample, which is partly about my tastes, partly about the taste of my colleagues, and partly about the repertoire of the British theatre […]. So there's a great deal from the British theatrical grand narrative, from Shakespeare via the Restoration, Sheridan and Shaw to the flowering of new drama since the Second World War. There's some classical Greeks, a lot of Ibsen and Chekhov, Brecht and Arthur Miller; but regrettably little from the French, Italian, Spanish or German theatres, at least before 1900. (xiv)

Here, Edgar demonstrates the 'specialising process' and 'conservative categories' that Williams and Dollimore and Sinfield saw as the ways in which ideology is constructed in English literature and criticism (66; vii).

The ideology constructed in English playwriting guides does not operate just on the basis of bias, but, rather, is an extension of the economic logic of the historical context. Plays and playwrights are imagined according to which versions would be the most economically successful in the new writing context. For example, the statistical examination of the English repertoire between 2003-2009 in Arts Council England's *Writ Large* report noted that '[p]lays [defined as new or written texts] in general, and new plays in particular, continue to form the bedrock of the repertoire' with 81% of the repertoire devoted to them, and the remaining 19% to devised or experimental work (2009b: 66). It noted that 'on the question of style […] people like story, but will respond to experiments with form if the subject matter is compelling […] making

naturalism less evident, while at the same time an ear for realistic dialogue remains important […]' (74-75). In terms of representation it noted that, between 2003-2009, 'only the RSC and the Birmingham Rep out of our list of interviewees engaged in acts of monitoring' (94). It noted '[h]owever, all theatres in the survey felt more ethnically diverse' (ibid.). Furthermore, no formal monitoring was done on sex; male playwrights, however, seemed to dominate; for example, 'Paines Plough notes the continued lack of women playwrights' (97). From the above, then, we can see how the material base of new writing, in the 2000s, and its own conservative categories, determine the hegemonic terms in which playwrights and plays are imagined in English playwriting guides and, furthermore, that there is a tacit understanding that these representations are, in this period, the most economically successful. Let us look at how this plays out in the advice advanced.

A playwright, according to Gooch, should think of playwriting 'as a kind of "thinking aloud" on paper' (37). 'By writing things down,' he says, 'your choices become clear' (37). In English playwriting guides, the playwright is imagined as constructing a literary artefact from existing compositional formats of Western dramaturgies. In particular, the playwright's work on the page should deploy Aristotelian dramaturgies – the touchstone of dramatic structure according to English playwriting guides (e.g., Waters 2010: 2; Edgar 2009: 17-8; 23; 41-2; 63-8). Seen as central to dramatic composition are the key storytelling tropes identified by Aristotle including peripeteia (the protagonist's reversal of fortune) and anagnorisis (the protagonist's singular moment of recognition) (1996: 15; 18). Moreover, while Aristotle wrote only of a unity of action (9; 15; 38), English playwriting guides often follow neoclassical theorists in also advocating unities of time and place (e.g., Ayckbourn 2004: 47). In addition, plays should deploy the three types of conflict – inner, inter-personal, or extra-personal – that English playwriting guides see as central to the construction of a drama (e.g., Fountain 2007: 10-11). Inner and inter-

personal conflicts refer to the protagonist's internal struggles and their struggles with others; extra-personal conflict refers to struggles between the protagonist and the structures within which they exist. The implications of this in relation to formal conservativism are acute. This ideology preserves the traditional understanding of playwrights as producers of texts and absents the writer's potential, in development, for collaborative practice as studied by, for example, as noted above, Tomlin (2013a), but also Rudi Laermans (2012). The rules also dismiss important counter-narratives, such as Radosavljević's, which reminds us that there are 'many other approaches to the text' (2013a: 75).

English playwriting guides advance their understanding of Western dramaturgies through a series of examples, showing how dramatic tropes function in the works of canonical playwrights. As Ginman says, English playwriting guides are 'a study of what we might learn from Aristotle, Shakespeare and Chekhov' (2013: 133). In conducting my own data collection on the citations in English playwriting guides, I found them, together, to reference a total of one hundred and nineteen playwrights (see Appendix B p.310). Of those, ninety-nine are men, twenty are women, ninety-four are white men, seventeen are white women, five are playwrights of colour, three are female playwrights of colour and two are male playwrights of colour. The most commonly cited are Ayckbourn, Beckett, Brecht, Chekhov, Coward, Ibsen and Shakespeare. Although these playwrights cannot be defined collectively as representing a coherent aesthetic, the supporting array of examples from the twentieth century Anglophone realist canon means that the form English playwriting guides most cite is overwhelmingly mainstream twentieth-century realism written by men including Jez Butterworth, David Hare, Mike Leigh and David Mamet. The implications of these politics of citation are significant. Female playwrights and playwrights of colour are marginalised by these representations; moreover, the themes that they explore, the subjects beyond white male patterns of

experience, are erased from the canon. Furthermore, the alternative dramaturgies and formal innovations styled by female playwrights and playwrights of colour are similarly lost. Such omissions seem almost paradoxical since English playwriting guides otherwise try to appeal to all possible consumers on the basis that anyone can be a playwright. It seems, therefore, that the unconscious bias in English playwriting guides often operates against the economic logic to which they otherwise conform. At the same time, the citations ensure that the guides do conform strictly to the economic rationality of foregrounding the most commercially successful dramatic works: Aristotelian forms authored by male playwrights.

In focusing on twentieth-century realist work – but also the works of nineteenth-century naturalists including Strindberg, Ibsen, Chekhov and Shaw, English playwriting guides not only focus on men; they focus on conservative dramatic forms including story, narrative, plot and the material construction of space and time in written structures. Moreover, English playwriting guides tend to foreground behaviourist iterations of character and dialogue, thus normative ideas of mimetic representation. This is because, as mentioned above, the plays referenced in these works are largely drawn from aesthetic traditions in which single characters are usually played by single actors whose casting has historically been representational. Moreover, in line with Aristotle, English playwriting guides tend to understand acting, and by extension casting and the body in performance, as a means for clarifying narrative and enhancing characterisation (see Aristotle 1996: 45). For example, Fountain has a chapter entitled 'Choosing your actors' in which he argues that 'casting can be useful to the final honing of your play' since actors are seen only to support final flourishes of characterisation (90-1).

In line with the *Writ Large* report, which argued that 'realistic dialogue remains important', English playwriting guides advance ideas supporting the construction of

realist dialogue (74-75). For example, Fountain puts forward a case for how playwrights should approach language that corresponds to some of the previous discussion on the economic importance of the playwright's unique voice: it should have the 'hot stink of authenticity', be unique to the playwright, and be informed by subjective experience (9). For Ayckbourn, the individual voice is important, but it needs to be honed to produce an individual story; as the playwright progresses, the story becomes a distinctive set of stories expressed in a distinctive form, producing a recognisable style and subject matter across their oeuvre (3). The idea of the unique voice on the page is central to the economic logic of the new writing culture, but it can, however, be traced back to *Poetics* where Aristotle argued that playwrights should produce a language that is innovative, clear and contemporary: 'what is needed is some kind of mixture of […] diction out of the ordinary […] while current usage will contribute clarity' (36). According to Waters, a playwright can be a poet: 'attentive to the power of words, of rhythm' (196). Yet, Waters continues, 'plays are about story, not poetry. Language is a means, not an end' (ibid.). English playwriting guides' wariness regarding poetic form is clearly differentiated from the classical and neoclassical dictums that understood drama to be written in verse; however, in distancing the dramatic from the poetic, English playwriting guides emphasise Aristotle's idea that language should be 'subordinate and secondary'; it should function only as the vehicle that works to realise the plot's potential (Heath in Aristotle 1996: xx). Overall, the advice on structure and language reflects and reproduces the economic logic of the dramatic pro forma for new writing in the 2000s; as Haydon puts it, 'the new writing play would be naturalistic, contemporary and set in a very specific […] social milieu. It would generally have a small cast, a perfunctory storyline and forgettable characters. […] Form, theatricality, poetry, metaphor, all of these things are either ignored or dispensed with summarily' (loc. 1367-72). We can see that English playwriting guides reinforce the formal logic Haydon expounds here, and furthermore,

specify the demographics of playwrights and their working practices according to neoliberal consensus and its market logic.

Overall, we can see that the neoliberal base of new writing in the 2000s, and its statistical predominance of text-based conventional plays written predominantly by white men, translates to an ideology in English playwriting guides. English playwriting guides construct an ideology in which the playwright and play are imagined as units of capital and, furthermore, in which the play, as a unit of capital is required to acquiesce – to a certain extent – to hegemonic formal categories in order to ease its treatment as a commodity in the new writing market place.

1.5 Conclusion

The emergence of a suite of English playwriting guides in the 2000s was undeniably enriching to the culture of English play development. At both an individual and structural level, these texts offered much to the would-be playwright and to the industry of English playmaking. To the playwright, they provided detailed critical understanding of the generic possibilities and limitations of Anglophone dramatic form – including an emphasis on the dramatic devices that most appealed to audiences at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Because of their availability, they furnished would-be playwrights – perhaps for the first time – with unprecedented access to the English theatrical industry, including guidance on its economics to better inform financial decision-making. In relation to the culture of English play development, they democratised the epistemology of dramatic production and supported nascent play development practices in theatres. Furthermore, the connections that English playwriting guides forged between the academy and industry created an important

interface between training programmes and an infrastructure across play development pedagogies that continues today.

Using a cultural materialist analysis, however, this chapter has focused on revealing the part English playwriting guides have played in naturalising a neoliberal capitalist ideology in English play development. It explored how the American and UK HE contexts and the new writing culture in the 2000s constituted a neoliberal economic base that furnished English playwriting guides with ideas that fundamentally inform their representations of plays and playwrights. The economic logic informing English playwriting guides, I have argued, was primarily driven by Labour education policy and its neoliberalising effects. By revealing their material context, I demonstrated how English playwriting guides presented playwrights as human capital and plays as commodities. For example, from the HE context, we observed how an understanding of the student as a unit of human capital was co-constituted with these texts' imagined ideas of the playwright. Furthermore, via close textual analysis, I showed how conservative categories in the repertoire informed the politics of citation in the guides and, thus, transformed the concept of the play into a highly regulated commodity.

It might be tempting to conclude – according to a traditional Marxist framework – that playwrights became a vulnerable proletariat who sold their wage labour to exploitative theatre-factories and, furthermore, that English playwriting guides were manuals that lured playwrights into these antagonisms. But as we have already observed in the introduction, the contemporary functioning of capitalism cannot be reduced to a simple binary of workers who are exploited by capitalists; rather, in complex ways, the economics of capitalism are already always constitutive of subjectivities and social practices. By arguing that English playwriting guides cast playwrights as units of human capital rather than workers, however, we can better observe the economic basis for the conception of playwrights during this period. Since capital is value in motion, we can see

that English playwriting guides ensure that playwrights, and their plays, operate as value in motion. In English playwriting guides, we observe, then, the specifically neoliberal process through which playwrights and their work are conceptualised and, furthermore, the ways in which these works encourage playwrights to invest in themselves and their plays.

Overall, then, this chapter shows that English playwriting guides commence the process in ensuring that English play development operates as a neoliberal culture. In particular, it shows that the concepts of 'play' and 'playwright' are ideologically saturated. English playwriting guides support the idea that such concepts are open, dynamic and flexible; that they can facilitate any possible dramatic or demographic iteration. This chapter reveals, however, that these terms are the products of particular social contexts and environments, tastes and, above all, neoliberal economic rationality. This illumination is important. In many play development contexts, the terms 'play' and 'playwright' are used uncritically. By studying the ideological construction of these terms, however, this chapter reveals their highly specific referents and, moreover, signals the need to critique the meaning behind 'play' and 'playwright'. In addition, by flagging up the economic base of dramaturgical concepts, this chapter paves the way to the next examination of the ways in which the ideas and practices of English play development have been co-constituted with neoliberal features.

CHAPTER TWO

A UTOPIA OF RULES?

PLAY DEVELOPMENT DRAMATURGY IN THE AGE OF TOTAL BUREAUCRATISATION

2.1 New Labour and English Play Development

In this chapter, I ask how another of New Labour's neoliberalisms, this time the public sector bureaucratisation known as 'New Public Management', affected the political and economic culture in which new writing theatres were operating in the 2000s. 'New Public Management' is a term that has been used since the early 1990s to describe the Thatcherite approach to running public service organisations as businesses. Here, I explore how, in the context of New Public Management, play development practices changed. What was the relationship between emergent models of play development and emergent models of bureaucratic arts management? Furthermore, did the contextual increase in bureaucracy benefit or hinder English play development practices?

This chapter is structured in seven subsequent parts. Section 2.2 presents the changing political and economic culture in which new writing theatres were operating; it defines New Public Management and summarises debates around the bureaucratisation of the English arts. Section 2.3 defines 'play development dramaturgy' as an expanded practice of literary management that emerged in English theatres and companies during the 2000s; its emergence was noted and critiqued in Arts Council England reports

including *Writ Large* (2009b) and *The Dunton Report* (2009c), and in theatre scholarship including Luckhurst's *Dramaturgy: A Revolution in Theatre* (2006); Turner and Behrndt's *Dramaturgy and Performance* (2008); Bolton's doctoral thesis 'Demarcating Dramaturgy: Mapping Theory onto Practice' (2011); and Trencsényi's *Dramaturgy in the Making* (2015) – works I refer to here in detail. Section 2.4 looks at new models for script development that emerged alongside the expanding practice of literary management; it considers the mass reading of unsolicited scripts, playwrights' networks, playwrights' attachments, scratch events and one-to-one dramaturgical interventions. Section 2.5 develops a methodology to support a study of the relationship between these new models of play development and new models of bureaucratic public management; it proposes a Marxist materialist 'bureaucracy analysis' developed from the bureaucratic analysis method of Paul Goldman and Donald R. Van Houten (1977) and key accounts of bureaucracy from Weber's *Economy and Society* (1978 [1922]) and Graeber's *The Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity, and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy* (2016 [2015]). Section 2.6 analyses the aforementioned existing scholarship that relates play development dramaturgy to bureaucracy. Section 2.7 proposes a new conception of this relationship, drawing on the bureaucracy analysis tool advanced in section 2.5. I conclude the chapter in section 2.8 by discussing the implications of the connections between neoliberal bureaucracy and new play development.

Throughout this chapter, I attend to the negative effects of increased bureaucracy on play development. I also show how increased bureaucracy sometimes supported artists. For instance, during this period, emerging and established playwrights received increased support from new writing theatres. This manifested in mass revisions to new writing policy, the re-organising and increased resourcing of literary departments, the instatement of management practices into artistic process including the establishment of new theatrical roles for play development including Dramaturgs. In addition, there was

also an emergence of new support mechanisms including the mass reading of unsolicited scripts, playwrights' networks, playwrights' attachments, scratch events and one-to-one dramaturgical intervention. The rise in these services, I argue in section 2.4, not only supported the professionalisation of freelance playwrights, thus increasing transparency and democratic accountability around commissioning structures and working practices, but also resulted in increased access to play development services, with more would-be playwrights enabled to engage with the theatre industry than ever before. While this chapter acknowledges the undeniable benefits, then, of the evolution of play development practices during this period, it is primarily concerned with charting their proximity to contemporaneous new public management bureaucracy.

2.2 New Labour, New Bureaucracy

New Public Management

In this section, I summarise the broad context of Labour's approach to New Public Management during the 2000s and their introduction of an interventionist administration across the arts. I then address the impact of these changes on Arts Council England before considering their impact on state-subsidised theatres. According to Christopher Hood's 'A Public Management for All Seasons?' (1991), New Public Management is 'a shorthand name for the set of broadly similar administrative doctrines which dominated the bureaucratic reform agenda in many of the OECD [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development] group of countries from the late 1970s' (3; see also Hood 1995). In essence, New Public Management is a means to increase the privatisation and marketisation of public sector institutions via enhanced managerialism. Consequently, from the 1980s, there was a large-scale human resource

expansion across the English education, health, heritage and arts sectors. In 'The Legacy of Thatcherism: Public Sector Reform', Peter Dorey writes that this process included 'the parallel imposition of a 'managerialist' regime in Britain's public services [and] the increased role of audits, inspections and other monitoring exercises to measure the performance of public services and their staff' (2015: 33).

Labour deployed New Public Management in the arts in ways the Tories had not been able to. Cécile Doustaly and Clive Gray find, for instance, that 'the Labour governments post-1997 have effectively been more managerially interventionist into the arts sector than the Conservatives' (2010: 322). The long-established tradition of 'arms-length funding', and the detachment of arts institutions from the centre, meant the Tories had struggled to introduce New Public Management practices into diverse and remote arts organisations (ibid.: 323). Moreover, for the Thatcher government, there was no real confidence in the arts' value. For example, Arts Council England's report *International Data on Public Spending in the Arts in Eleven Countries* shows that public funding in the UK in the early 1990s was 0.14% of Gross Domestic Product, much less than the Arts Spending from comparable countries (1998b: 5). It seems that New Labour, however, saw economic and social value in the arts. As a result, they placed greater emphasis on implementing New Public Management.

Labour increased investment into the arts. According to Tomlin, '[n]ot only did New Labour, towards the end of its first term, virtually double the grant-in-aid available for arts funding, but there was a sense that this government understood culture to be central to the country's status and prosperity' (2014: 2). Tomlin captures the spirit of the moment here, where, initially, Labour's investment in the arts seemed to be well received. In 2002, the Treasury's *Comprehensive Spending Review* promised an annual increase in real terms of 3.5% to the arts for three years. Overall, between 1997 and

2010, not only were Arts Council England resources increased, but a further £3 billion of Lottery funds was distributed to the arts (Hesmondhalgh et al. 2014: 5).

The additional funding came at a price. The Labour government offered this financial boost in exchange for managerial access. As noted above, this approach rendered Labour much more managerially interventionist than the preceding Tory government (Doustaly and Gray 2010: 322). Moreover, the continued reference to the arm's-length principle allowed Labour to set aside claims of political interference, whilst building an infrastructure exactly for that purpose. In 1997, the creation of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (henceforth 'DCMS') enabled Labour to take power and control of the arts, despite 'the rising chorus of objections […] from the cultural left and the cultural right' (Hewison 2014: 126). The instating of the DCMS meant that, henceforth, Labour had the structures in place to run cultural institutions as private businesses with a top-down approach (McGuigan 2005: 238). Labour had created a means of access into the arts which they then intended to manage through what Inchley summarises as an 'ideologically saturated means' (2015: 26). This ideology was an 'incipient "impact" agenda' that would demonstrate the arts' economic and social value (ibid.). The way the arts would demonstrate their value, and therein justify their public funding henceforth, would be in the implementation of New Public Management techniques via the DCMS.

There were immediate concerns, however, that Labour was implementing what Eleonora Belfiore calls an 'auditing culture' in a journal article of the same name (2004). Critics of Labour's cultural policy argued that top-down control made arts and cultural policy vulnerable to shifts in political direction and represented an attack on the public domain (Hesmondhalgh et al. 2014: 9). Bowerman et al. (2000) argue that the terms 'audit society' or 'audit culture' were insufficient descriptors for this shift; they argue that Labour introduced a 'performance management society' via New Public

Management across the public sectors. Despite critiques, then, that New Public Management might not be wholly beneficial, it seems that Labour continued to increase bureaucracy. All government departments were now required to adhere to Public Service Agreements (PSAs) with lists of objectives known as Delivery Service Objectives (DSOs) and targets that would trickle down to the next layer of operation. For the DCMS, one of these would be Arts Council England. It is my suggestion that New Public Management cascaded from the centre and into the Arts Council, creating a channel through which it might inflect artistic practices such as new play development dramaturgy at the level of the individual theatre – introduced in more detail below.

New Public Management and Arts Council England

Arts Council England reinforced New Labour's arts ideology by buying into New Labour's neoliberal discourse of value production in the arts and forcing individual arts organisations to meet these different values. If Labour valued the arts for their potential economic and social value, it was Arts Council England that elaborated on these ideas. For example, *The Value of Arts and Culture to People and Society* argued that there were four different economic values that the arts might offer: 1) enhancing savings to the public purse; 2) supporting the national economy; 3) supporting local economies and 4) supporting artists and the creative and cultural industries (2014: 15). Furthermore, there were multiple additional types of values that the arts were seen to offer in relation to health and wellbeing, social inclusion, crime reduction, educational attainment, curriculum development, employment and a range of 'soft' and intrinsic outcomes (ibid.; see also McCarthy 2004). By the end of Blair's term in office in 2007, then, it appeared that Arts Council England had completely absorbed Labour's arts ideology centred on economic and social values and administered by New Public Management. I

suggest that the reason for Arts Council England's easy absorption of this ideology was that, by this time, New Public Management had been normalised, and, furthermore, it had become a common feature of neoliberal governance to conflate cultural and social policy – often for the benefit of the latter. For example, as Jim McGuigan argues, 'a distinctive yet seldom mentioned feature of neoliberal development is to translate issues of social policy into questions of cultural policy. And, in its turn, cultural policy ceases to be specifically about culture at all' (2005: 238). Here, McGuigan hints at some of the negative implications of these changes on the arts in ways I come to below.

By 2007, Arts Council England seemed to agree with Labour that a 'more entrepreneurial and innovative culture' would ensure that theatre was 'valued by and in tune with the communities it serves' (*Theatre Policy* 2007: 2). What is not clear from such reports is the reasons why the arts had been reconceptualised in these ways. As Geoffrey Crossick and Patrycja Kaszynska argue, the need to demonstrate impact via a New Public Management approach had 'led the arts sector's objectives and value [to] becom[e] entwined with other agendas' (2016: 16). In short, the value systems placed on the arts by Labour and now Arts Council England had double functions. The government was using the arts as a means through which they could deliver on other policy priorities, namely economic and social outcomes. I agree with Tomlin that the arts became 'instruments for government policy' and, as Crossick and Kaszynska term it, subject to 'defensive instrumentalism' whereby the arts were being used openly for the purposes of advocacy (2014: 6; 2016: 17). My reading is that this shift in value structures around the arts was harmful to their self-determination; they became a vehicle for the neoliberal social progressivism of central government and, as such, were henceforth resourced and managed accordingly.

It is tempting, therefore, to read Arts Council England's initiatives during this period as mechanisms for funding artistic activities based on the potential they held for

fulfilling social or economic policy objectives (as do Doustaly and Gray 2010; McCarthy 2004: xi; Crossick and Kaszynska 2016: 14). What is positive, however, was that, during the 2000s, there was a relatively high level of funding for the arts. As a payoff for the increased funding, in order to ensure that arts organisations were demonstrating the values identified above, however, Arts Council England introduced an intensified use of audit and New Public Management techniques (Hesmondhalgh et al. 2014: 11). I suggest that the integration of these techniques at the drop-down level of individual arts organisations is really where we start to see the costs of increased bureaucracy on play development. For example, Arts Council England generated a centralised data management system through which standard measures could be imposed across the arts to empirically evaluate social and economic impacts (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016: 16-17). The data management system meant that Arts Council England could impose new frameworks through which the arts might be assessed; these included the 'Generic Learning Outcomes' developed in 2001 and the 'Generic Social (Cultural Value) Systems' that assessed respectively the educational and social impact of art works. Such changes meant the significant restructuring of organisations, shifts in priorities and resources and, crucially, a splitting of activities between making art and measuring one's metrics of making art. The metrics would also include evidence of theatres focusing on generating play development activities. For example, as noted in the introduction of this thesis, in 2000, Arts Council England published two reports, *The Boyden Report* and The *National Policy for Theatre in England* (2000a; 2000c). The former argued that 'new writing was failing to attract audiences' and the latter resultantly prioritised new writing, pledging funds to support growth (*Theatre Assessment* 2009a: 5). The funds arrived via the *Theatre Review* (2003a) which allocated twenty-five million pounds intended in part for talent development. The *Theatre Writing Strategy* (2003b) included recommendations that all theatre organisations should enhance training and development, their literary

departments, their focus on new writing and their playwright support (*Writ Large* 2009b: 4). In addition to generating new development activities, theatre organisations were to self, joint and peer assess the ways in which their art had, for example, educational impact and a role in social and community empowerment. Moreover, in 2006, under Gordon Brown, it was recognised as part of the Treasury's 'Invest to Save' programme that a need for further training would support proper arts management from these systems. Bypassing the DCMS, £12 million went to Arts Council England to invest in leadership that would support the management of the cultural sector on the terms identified above (Hewison 2014: 128).

I suggest that these changes created what could be described as a 'total bureaucratization' in the sector – a term I define in more detail below (Graeber 2016: 18). As Robert Hewison notes:

> [b]y 2003, targets had become a target. For the cultural sector they were an emblem of New Labour's instrumentalism: they forced artists and cultural organisations to jump through hoops that were not of their own choosing, in pursuit of goals that were not of their making. Worse, there was little faith in the means used to measure whether the targets were being hit. Yet after a decade of Conservative parsimony, New Labour was being generous to the arts. If instrumentalism was misguided, it was up to the cultural sector not only to point this out, but also to find a better way to justify government support for what they did. (2014: 121-2)

I agree with Hewison here that the introduction of targets generated immediate, negative implications in the cultural sector. The two significant problems seem to be not only the increased administration, but also the fact that subsidised artistic practice would henceforth be externally regulated. Hewison hints, however, that because the arts still appreciated the additional funding, it remained unclear as to whether they would resist, or acquiesce to, these bureaucratic changes.

The negative effects of New Public Management on individual arts organisations was significant. Every artistic activity now had to be assessed on the basis of value and impact and placed in a context of a strategic time-controlled plan. As Tomlin puts it, 'companies were now expected to be run like small businesses, with entrepreneurial leadership, mission statements, "diverse income streams", and sustainable strategies for growth' (2014: 6). Defended by Arts Council England as a means to ensure value for money and create cultural democratisation, the new management techniques actually created, according to Doustaly and Gray, a greater level of instrumentalism (2010). The individual organisation now had to negotiate a new portfolio of quantitative assessment criteria. Arts organisations now had to demonstrate cost-efficiency, users' satisfaction and, later, 'engagement with the arts' (ibid.). There was also the instatement of peer and self-review assessment procedures. Moreover, the paperwork for accessing funding became increasingly complex, with additional categories to quantitatively assess future activities' benefits. As Inchley points out: '[a]t grassroots level, to receive a grant of up to £10,000, it was necessary that a project met criteria such as "championing cultural diversity"' (26).

As the 2000s continued, the basis for evaluation became increasingly acute; in 2001-04, New Public Management encouraged the setting and adhering to general objectives and by 2005-08 clear quantitative targets were stated (Doustaly and Gray 2010). In an earlier article, 'Joining-up or tagging on? The arts, cultural planning and the view from below', Gray details further complexities in evaluation practices (2004). He notes that an individual arts organisation now needed to respond to:

> at least five different central government departments, four separate task forces, and ten 'arm's-length' 'sponsored agencies', as well as at least ten statutory plans and five nonstatutory ones, alongside the local authority's own corporate strategy, Best Value plan, [and] individual

> service strategies and plans, and more or less anything else up to and including the planning kitchen sink. (39–40)

The above shifts in arts management all demonstrate a proliferation of administrative labour flooding into arts practice. What is more worrying is that such repetitive self-assessment activities would have been becoming increasingly naturalised – especially with workforce turnover and a host of arts workers who had not experienced other work conditions. I agree with McGuigan who notes that '[b]y the 1990s, such devices were so familiar and commonplace in Britain that they had been normalised ideologically as the only viable means of efficient organisation in the public sector' (2005: 236). What had become dominant in arts organisations, then, was a form-filling and box-ticking state of mind that underscored every organisational activity, and the subsequent danger that arts workers would become, to a greater extent, administrators.

Arts professionals did ultimately meet the implementation of New Public Management with general dislike (Hesmondhalgh et al. 2014: 10). The New Public Management was 'seen as excessive instrumentalism [and] came under attack from within the cultural sector' (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016: 17). Like other public sector workers, including teachers, medical professionals and academics, many who worked in the public arts experienced the negative implications of the imposed bureaucracy. In an *Observer* article entitled 'To Hell with Targets' (2003), for instance, the National Theatre's artistic director Nicholas Hynter praised the funding uplift from Labour, but cast significant aspersions on the monitoring culture that accompanied it. Opinions such as Hytner's seemed to be recognised centrally; in a 2004 report for the think tank Demos entitled 'Capturing Cultural Value: how Culture has become a tool of Government Policy', John Holden notes:

> [a] growing sense of unease pervades the cultural sector as it sets about justifying its consumption of public money. Instead of talking about what they do – displaying pictures or putting on dance performances – organisations will need to demonstrate how they have contributed to wider policy agendas such as social inclusion, crime prevention and learning. (13-14)

Holden's comments reveal that arts professionals were all too aware of the re-interpretation of their practices. Again in 2004, even the Culture Secretary, Tessa Jowell, started to raise concerns about the target-driven approach in an essay on government and culture (2004). In a response published in *The Guardian* (2004), Edgar opines that Jowell's essay constituted 'a pretty major sea-change' and a 'departure from the perceived instrumentalism of recent government thinking'. And yet, contrary to Edgar's understandable hopefulness, it seems with retrospect, however, that the tide had not turned.

In 2004, Dominic Shellard's 'Economic Impact Study of UK Theatre' found that theatre now contributed £2.6 billion pounds annually to the economy and produced significant benefits in terms of local employment. Reports like these were used to demonstrate the success of New Public Management and from this point onwards, as Holden suggests, the arts were no longer discussed in terms of cultural achievement, but in terms of achievements in efficacy and cost-per-user (2004: 13-14). According to Inchley, the 'Creative Economy became a priority of both Arts Council England and the British Council, encouraging an entrepreneurial spirit and self-supporting creativity alongside subsidisation' (27). It seems that Labour's funding generosity often got in the way of arts practitioners conducting any sustained resistance and workplace organisation against these changes. Hytner and Edgar's articles in left-leaning newspapers, for instance, document and rhetorically critique the bureaucratic excesses, but offer no direct challenge to the imposed practices.

It gradually became apparent, however, that not only did New Public Management

produce disdain and public opposition; its measuring tools were starting to be seen as inaccurate, inefficient and punitive. The 2002 Arts Council report M*easuring the Economic and Social Impact of the Arts* acknowledged that not only was the term 'impact' difficult to define, but the means to evaluate it were frenetic and ever shifting (2002b). According to Hewison, the 2002 report examined every significant assessment from Myerscough's 1988 *The Economic Importance of the Arts* onwards, and although it listed many potentially useful methods, it was unable to find any consistency between any of them (2014: 124-125).

My reading is that Arts Council England had, over those years, engaged in a process of interminable goal shifting with a lack of conceptual clarity and a narrow understanding of social and economic impact. For example, various reports and articles emerged that revealed the multiple methodological issues with Arts Council evaluation tools and individual organisations' abilities to follow them through (e.g., Reeves 2002; Selwood 2002). These included the use of small samples, reliance on self-assessing, representativeness of findings, lack of a common framework, a failure to acknowledge the complexities in social findings, over-claiming on conclusions and a lack of baseline data (Reeves 2002: 102-3). Moreover, Sara Selwood's report identified further issues and argued that the 'evidence-based policy' was invalid, unsubstantiated and weak (2002: 15; see also Hewison 2014: 126). It was within this national and institutional context that, in the mid-2000s, 'play development dramaturgy', an expanded practice of literary management, developed in English theatres and companies, and it is to a study of play development dramaturgy that I now turn.

2.3 New English Play Development Dramaturgy

In the 2000s, in English producing theatres and companies with new writing or mixed repertoires, a practice known as 'play development dramaturgy' emerged. As observed in the introduction of this thesis, play development had been practiced in some English theatres and companies since the 1990s. During this decade, it was undertaken exclusively within the remit of literary management. Still active today in English theatres including the ones noted in Appendix A of this thesis (p. 306), literary management is an in-house service to which agents, agencies and playwrights submit plays to be read by a 'Literary Manager' or a team of 'Literary Associates' or 'Readers'. Literary management existed in some English theatres since the nineteenth century. In the late twentieth century, however, literary management remained a niche practice; the Royal Court, Bush, Hampstead and Soho theatres in London and Live Theatre in Newcastle were, according to Sierz, theatres with literary offices in the 1990s (2011: 29). At the beginning of the 2000s, as Luckhurst notes, there were 'nine full-time Literary Managers in London, and sixteen working part time' (200). Literary management is what Luckhurst terms a 'desk-based' practice with no production-based responsibilities (206).

In the 2000s, there was an explosion of English literary management. This chapter is concerned with exploring evidence to link its emergence to the aforementioned rise in bureaucracy. The increase in literary management, however, may also be a consequence of the expanded playwrights' marketplace and the demand created by the over-supply of would-be dramatists newly engaged in playwriting as discussed in Chapter One. Furthermore, given this increased supply, the rise in literary management could have been necessitated by the parallel 'increase in commissioning [to] have happened simultaneously […]' – a point I return to below (*Writ Large* 2009b: 120). In addition, the

rise in literary management must be considered in relation to the concept of 'dramaturgy' and its growing influence within English theatre at this time.

Reilly reminds us that '[d]ramaturgy has been around since the Enlightenment on the continent, and is actually a profession that precedes that of the director' (2013: 113). For Magda Romanska, '[t]he definition of dramaturgy as a comprehensive theory of dramatic structure is the cornerstone of modern dramaturgical practice' (2014: 2). Crucially, as Michael Pinchbeck notes, from 2000, 'the term 'dramaturgy' and the role of the 'dramaturg' started to enter the English theatre scene' as an additional practical role embedded into theatre-making (2016: 9). How did the dramaturg start to operate in relation to other familiar roles in English theatre – including director, playwright, designer, actor and so forth? In 'The Need to Keep Moving: Remarks on the place of the dramaturg in twenty-first century England' (2009), Radosavljević argues that:

> I would say the domain of a dramaturg is neither solely the map (which I would say belongs to the director) nor the story (which may start with the writer but ultimately belongs to the actor) – but the journey itself (which is an experience and therefore immaterial, speculative, personal as well as potentially shared). (50)

Radosavljević observes how, in England in the 2000s, dramaturgy was a niche practice not integrated significantly into theatre-making, but absorbed by pre-production practices of English literary management. Between 2002-2005, Radosavljević was 'only one of possibly three or four fully integrated institutional dramaturgs at the time' in England – a role discussed further below (ibid.: 45). Importantly, dramaturgy is seen during its English inception to be interpreted narrowly: as a play-text and playwright facing role. Radosavljević argues that this confluence of dramaturgy and literary management occurred because 'literariness [is] the most distinctive feature of British theatre' (ibid.: 47). This is congruent with Harvie's argument in *Staging the UK* (2005) that

'the apparent truth of British theatre as fundamentally literary is reiterated so frequently and often uncritically that it is reinforced and naturalised […]' (115). Moreover, Harvie continues, 'British theatre's "traditional textual patriotism" is also a product of the material conditions – institutional, professional, financial, […] [i]nstitutionally, most theatres are organised and staffed to produce plays by writers' (ibid.: 116).

Although there are examples, then, of production-orientated dramaturgy in early twenty-first century English theatre, I suggest that dramaturgy mostly occurred within the established material contexts of English literary management and became attached to the role of Literary Manager. As Michael M. Chemers notes, '[i]n the UK […] the dramaturg developed a different profile as more of a "literary manager," charged with investigating and developing new writing for production, including helping playwrights revise their work' (2018: 27). For example, Arts Council England's report *Writ Large* notes that: [w]hat is most notable and striking is the explosion of dramaturgical activity in English theatre during this period, not least in terms of the ubiquity of literary departments at all levels of theatrical activity' (68). These dramaturgies were narrow interpretations, focused on new ways of working with playwrights on scripts. Correspondingly, in the chapter 'Dramaturgy and Literary Management in England Today' (2006: 200-262), Luckhurst describes how, during the 2000s, 'the use of the word "dramaturg" or "dramaturgy" by industry practitioners in England denote[d] a practical involvement with theatre-making either with writers or directors or both' (206). Luckhurst notes how '[i]ncreasingly the practical realm of the dramaturg is merging with the conventional management role of the literary manager,' with Literary Managers starting to 'regard practical development skills as a vital part of their job [including] the ability to develop an idea with a playwright through one-to-one sessions and workshops with actors [and] willingness to participate in rehearsals if required' (ibid.). Similarly, Bolton argues that 'the activities that fall under the rubric of new play development

dramaturgy may be divided between two overlapping emphases, which we may in turn describe as "pedagogical" and "production-orientated"' and notes that '[b]oth emphases fall under the remit of literary management' (23).

Across the *Writ Large* and *Dunton* reports, we can see the exact practices that correspond to the dramaturgical development of the Literary Manager's remit. In a context which, I have already argued, reinforced the need to rewrite organisational policy and administrative practices, *Writ Large* notes that during 2003-2009 there occurred in building-based theatres significant 'shifts in new writing policy', the growth in 'the role of the unsolicited script', 'the growth of attachments', and 'other modes of development' including treatments and category commissions, multi-authored shows, courses, 'lock-ins', scratch events, rehearsed readings, writers' labs and studios (71; 81; 82; 86). Where *Writ Large* focused on identifying the new pedagogical dramaturgies of literary management in building-based theatres, *The Dunton Report* evidenced emergent production-focused play development dramaturgies in companies including Graeae, Paines Plough, Contact Theatre and Pentabus Theatre (32-5). The report also examines new dramaturgies at fringe theatres including Theatre 503, the Ovalhouse and the Bush Theatre (38-9). It notes an expansion of production-orientated channels including new fringe producers such as Hightide (14; 36). It also notes the emergence of pedagogical play development dramaturgies including the establishment of new writing networks such as the Bush's online forum 'Bush Green'; writers' development agencies; new dramaturgy and forms of critical intervention in a range of theatres and companies (15; 16; 16; 21).

Thus, the once-small office of literary management expanded into a practice of new play development dramaturgy with enhanced institutional significance within individual theatres and companies. *The Dunton Report* noted that: 'over the last six years there has been a perceived increase in the role of the dramaturg' (17). Similarly, in their chapter

'The Dramaturg and the Theatre Institution' in their work *Dramaturgy and Performance* (97-119), Turner and Behrndt also note that the title 'dramaturg' 'has only recently begun to be used and is often associated with the role of literary manager' (100). In line with Radosavljević's findings above, the role of the 'Institutional Dramaturg' emerged. In a chapter entitled 'Curating' in *Dramaturgy in the Making* (31-51), for example, Trencsényi argues that:

> whether they are called artistic associate, literary manager or some other variation, the institutional dramaturg's role is similar: to take care of the organisation's artistic profile, shape the institution's narrative of creating a body of work that represents its artistic values and its philosophy, and support the organisation to locate itself within the community it serves. (35)

Turner and Behrndt argue that 'it is difficult to summarise the function of the *institutional* dramaturg' [my emphasis], and yet describe the practice similarly to Trencsényi as an expanded version of literary management with a new, broader institutional remit. For example, Turner and Behrndt argue that the Institutional Dramaturg has '[m]ultiple [r]oles' including 'contextual responsibilities' as well as creative ones (119). They note that contextual responsibilities comprise 'helping to develop policy and repertoire, while acting as a critic, commentator and communicator' on artists' practice (101).

The scholarly record of play development dramaturgy, then, is that the practice emerged in England in the 2000s. It is defined as a hybrid of literary management and dramaturgical practice with a UK-specific theatrical focus on expanding practices around the play-text and playwright. Although the rise in literary management can be attributed to the enormous uplift in the demand for playwriting services and pre-production mechanisms as noted in Chapter One and above, I contend that the evolution in literary management discussed herein is also linked to the rise in contextual new public

management. As argued below, the expansion of play development opportunities in the 2000s was, for the industry and individual participants in play development, a positive shift; however, the co-constitution of these changes with a growing bureaucratic apparatus came at a cost. What, then, were the new models of play development dramaturgy that emerged from the growth in literary management and what links do they have to New Public Management?

2.4 New Models for Script Development

In the 2000s, English theatres pioneered new techniques in play development dramaturgy. These included the mass reading of unsolicited scripts, playwrights' networks, playwrights' attachments, scratch events and one-to-one dramaturgical intervention. *Writ Large* notes an up-turn in unsolicited script reading. Unsolicited script reading refers to the practice of theatres reading and perhaps commenting on scripts sent to them by playwrights, agencies and agents. *Writ Large* argues that the 'burden of reading' at the Bush was then in the region of 1,500 scripts per year; at the 'Hampstead (1,500+), NT (1,500), Soho (2,500) and even Out of Joint (800-1,000) […] WYP (500), Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse (650), the Nuffield Theatre (250-300) […] Paines Plough (500+)' (82). The actual practice of reading scripts is documented with evidence that West Yorkshire Playhouse, for example, 'reads 300 a year, whittling them down during an intensive reading day where its readers engage in a "triage" process, reading the first ten pages of a play and then selecting those which merit a full reading and a two paragraph report' (81). In my own experience as a reader at the Tobacco Factory in Bristol in the late 2000s, the same process was enacted. See below for the forms used:

SCRIPT SPACE READER FEEDBACK FORM

TOBACCO FACTORY THEATRES

*PLAY TITLE:
*READER: Lucy Tyler

GENERAL SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY:

*CRITICAL FEEDBACK:

IF YOU HAD TO CATEGORISE THE PLAY WITHIN A GENRE, WHAT GENRE WOULD THAT BE? (Can be more than one).

*BETWEEN 1 AND 5 (WITH 5 BEING THE STRONGEST AND 1 THE WEAKEST), HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE SCRIPT'S:

- Originality of Voice:
- Quality of Dialogue:
- Strength of Story:
- Sense of Character/s:
- Understanding and control of Form and Style:

*2nd ROUND?

IF UNDECIDED, STATE WHY:

ANY OTHER NOTES:

*Sections marked with a * must be completed.*

Please return completed form to: scriptspace@tobaccofactorytheatres.com

For the purposes of this chapter, I have tried to procure additional reading forms from new writing theatres from this period, but have been unsuccessful. Having used and

observed similar forms at other new writing theatres myself, however, I can attest to the fact that the form (above) is broadly representative of the methods in unsolicited script reading during this time-frame. The fact that theatres developed such processes is a positive shift that allowed an increased number of participants to access play development. For the first time, unsolicited scripts were receiving recognition. Theatres not only increased their dialogue with emerging playwrights via these processes, but, also, often used feedback as a starting point to broker new relationships with playwrights. Such mechanisms also introduced parity across practices; for example, transparent reading practices limited personal taste being the barometer against which work was assessed. While offering benefits, then, to individual playwrights and to the evolution of play development practices, the script reading processes demonstrated a number of principles recognisable from Weber's seminal account of modern bureaucracy (which I introduce in further detail below); for instance, a system of standardisation, an adherence to rules and the existence of a hierarchy with some scripts travelling up the levels of command. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on paperwork with the use of feedback pro-formas that, as noted above, significantly increase the administration in theatres and fundamentally diminish the quality and substantial commentary offered on single plays.

The *Dunton Report* also notes '[t]he emergence of online social networking sites' for playwrights as a response to writers' desires for organisations to provide 'a network between writers […] as well as fulfilling an advisory role, script library and development opportunities' (13; 17). *Writ Large* notes how 'the Bush has an ambitious new digital plan […] that will provide networking as well as feedback on new work' (73). The Bush-Green network provided an online space for playwrights to read and feedback on plays and communicate with each other about industry news. The rise in this kind of networking demonstrated another means through which play development practices

were being democratised. Available as a resource to anyone via the internet, networks de-centred play development practices from London and produced a range of free resources that satisfied the demand for inclusive and accessible training and peer-review. Arguably, however, the networks created another bureaucratic feature. Although he observed improved communication channels, Weber could not have foreseen intranets and online forums; however, these are inevitably part of the mechanisms that Graeber references (again, as explored below). It is my opinion that Bush Green-type digital networks, as well as script reading services as noted above, can be understood as an early expression of play development as an end-in-itself. In other words, the service, in Robert K. Merton's words, enacts a 'familiar process of displacement of goals whereby an instrumental value becomes a terminal value' (1957:11). With playwrights' networks such as this, the instrumental value of *being in development* supersedes the terminal value of getting a production. It is my opinion that an increase in development practices such as these, by way of their bureaucratic functions, shifted the very meaning of play development from an activity predicated on production to an activity predicated on interminable engagement.

Another feature of new play development dramaturgy in English theatres in the 2000s was a rise in playwriting attachment schemes. An attachment is a formalised, often unpaid, connection between a theatre and playwright that signals a theatre's interest in the playwright. *Writ Large* notes that 'another notable development apparent from the interviews is the flourishing of novel ways that theatres can engage with writers other than commissioning and production […]. At the start of the survey, being under commission or a "writer-in residence" were perhaps the two most common modes connecting writers to theatres' (83-4). In the 2000s, however, they note a proliferation of attachments: '[t]he model derives from the practice of the National Theatre Studio where the writer is offered a two-month relationship with the theatre

with no pressure to deliver a play […]' (84). Theatres including 'Hampstead have also started offering attachments' (73). While they might be useful to the individual playwright, attachments are structurally similar to contemporary bureaucracies' focus on self-perpetuating engagement. As playwrights note, attachments engender, in some cases, a 'frustration of constantly being "in development"' (15). In this sense, we might regard attachments as potentially beneficial to individual playwrights, but structurally bureaucratic: an interminable, rather than terminal process focused on production.

In addition to networks and attachments, 'scratch events' comprised another expression of play development dramaturgy in English theatres in the 2000s. Scratch events, 'start nights' or 'rough cuts', as they are titled by Hampstead and the Royal Court respectively, comprise public showcasings of new playwriting. *The Dunton Report* notes that Contact Theatre's 'Pitch Parties' and 'Flip the Script Nights' are good examples (84). *Writ Large* offers an ambivalent reading, however: 'while most theatres now consider "rehearsed readings" not tied to productions as a misuse of resources, "rough cuts" bring in the public and offer the writer some of the dividends of having work fully staged' (86). I suggest there is not sufficient difference between a rehearsed reading and a scratch event to declare the former a 'misuse of resources' while praising the latter. Scratch events, *Writ Large* tells us, are another 'emphasis on this interim stage between writing and a full production' (87). Therefore, like script reading, networking sites and attachment programmes, they provided access to industry for a wide range of would-be playwrights. They can, however, be read as mechanisms that emphasise the instrumental value of development, rather than the terminal value of production. That is to say that scratch events may be rewarding to the individual playwright; however, structurally, they shift play development further away from production and closer to bureaucracy.

Finally, let us look at what *The Dunton Report* calls 'the arrival of the dramaturg [and] a more interventionist notion' of one-to-one script feedback with playwrights (80).

Trencsényi defines this approach as 'professionals engaged in a dynamic dialogue-relationship with a theatre-maker […] that is characterised by a high level of communication' (xxi). Trencsényi's definition is vague as to what the material practice actually encompasses. Luckhurst, however, notes that this dramaturgy relates to 'the internal structures of a play text and is concerned with the arrangement of formal elements by the playwright – plot, construction of narrative, character, time-frame and stage action' (10). According to MacDonald, '[t]he etymology of dramaturgy suggests work, or composition, in relation to action' (2010: 93). The professionalisation of dramaturgy and the role of the Dramaturg constituted a significant turn in British playmaking; playwrights, Literary Managers, Directors and Artistic Directors benefited from the theatrical support of the new role, the democratisation of the playwright's traditional knowledge base and remit (as discussed in Chapter One) and, finally, the greater transparency lent through enhanced collaboration. The problem, however, was that the UK's established understanding of dramaturgy, as Luckhurst implies, was an Aristotelian narrative one (again, as identified in Chapter One). Scholars have noted that Aristotelian categories produced a formulaic approach to development. According to Bolton, for example, at writer groups at the Royal Court from the 1990s, '[p]articipants [were] encouraged to adhere to conventional principles of drama: protagonists, initiating incidents, quests, complications, crises, suspense, twists and resolutions' (2012: 220). I agree with Bolton's reading here since, as observed in Chapter One, these conservative categories parallel the ideology of English playwriting guides which is itself derived in part from the play development culture. But what did Dramaturgs themselves think and how did they defend the practice? Radosavljević, argues that:

> [e]ven though I was aware of the various Aristotelian doctrines on the new writing circuit […] these were concepts that we never deployed in a doctrinaire way […] I do not necessarily believe that these tenets were

> actively deployed by any of my colleagues, literary managers and dramaturgs in other theatres. (2013a: 98)

Ruth Little, then Literary Manager at the Royal Court, however, argues that Dramaturgs were aware of their adherence to Aristotelian aesthetics, but practices were changing:

> theatre-making […] is shifting dramaturgical practice away from linear, strictly causal models towards a recognition of the play as a living system, subject to complex and subtle environmental forces and feedback from within the play and beyond it (in its relationship with its audiences). (2008: 194)

From these comments, we can see that some Dramaturgs may be more willing than others to acknowledge the formal features of their practice. Although Little is confident that the influence of 'causal modes' or Aristotelian dramaturgy was shrinking, I disagree. Instead, I suggest that there remains evidence that the categories of story, character, dialogue, genre and so forth (noted on the Tobacco Factory reader's report form, for example) demonstrate the endurance of these categories. Furthermore, it is my suggestion that the use of such categories, in the context of script reading, is a potentially bureaucratic iteration of play development practice. This is because such reading practices, that make use of these categories, have been seen to be sometimes undertaken as form-filling activities achieved in economies of scale. In this and the preceding section, then, we have seen the changing landscape of play development, with the positive expansion of literary management and the establishment of new ways for theatres to work with writers. I have suggested, however, that these practices may be bureaucratic in nature, but, by what method might it be possible to address their co-constitution with bureaucracy definitively? In the section below, I suggest an approach.

2.5 Towards Bureaucracy Analysis

Bureaucracy analysis is a neo-Marxist way to locate and read organisational and administrative practices – such as, I suggest, English play development dramaturgy. According to Goldman and Van Houten, bureaucracy analysis is 'almost absent in both the classical and modern Marxist traditions.[1] In 1977, Goldman and Van Houten put forward a reading practice for the study of contemporary bureaucracy that is useful here:

> [w]hat Marxian concepts should inform the study of bureaucracy in order to provide it with the necessary theoretical foundation? Four in particular stand out: (1) the labor theory of value, (2) a focus on the forces and relations of production, (3) historical analysis regarding capitalism as a continually developing system at once resolving old contradictions and generating new ones, and (4) an emphasis on class structure and class struggle. (109)

I agree with the idea that Marx's labour theory should still inform an engagement with bureaucracy as a theoretical foundation since bureaucracy is an addition to the capitalist

[1] Goldman and Van Houten argue that 'Marxist scholars have given little attention to the bureaucratic aspects of the labour process […] managerial decision making and the institution' (1977: 108). The perceived limited study of bureaucracy in classical Marxism may be due to Marx's limited insight into business bureaucracy in *Capital Volume One*. According to André Liebich, 'Marx's references to bureaucracy are few and far between and […] together they do not add up to a theory of bureaucracy' (1982: 77). This was because, in Marx's own time, business administration was not fully developed. In the mid-twentieth century, however, scholars from the Frankfurt School including Marcuse, Horkheimer and Adorno explored the development of bureaucracy. In *One-Dimensional Man*, for example, Marcuse explores the composite parts of 'advanced industrial society that describes how changes in production, consumption, culture, and thought have produced an advanced state of conformity […]' (Kellner in Marcuse 2002 [1964]: xii). In an essay entitled 'Culture and Administration' (2001 [1972]: 107-131), Adorno innovatively aligned the production of culture with bureaucracy, notoriously arguing '[w]hoever speaks of culture speaks of administration as well' (ibid.: 131). Following this trajectory, in the 1970s, Marxist scholars studied other bureaucratic developments in capital. For example, Katherine Stone locates job ladders in the late nineteenth-century steel industry (1973).

mode of production. I suggest, however, it is worth pursuing an even more bespoke form of bureaucracy analysis – while still drawing on Goldman and Van Houten's commitment to *Capital Volume One*.

Weber's work is instructive here. Before the aforementioned Marxist readings of bureaucracy emerged in the late twentieth century, Weber wrote about bureaucracy during its infancy. His overview of modern bureaucracy in *Economy and Society* has become a touchstone for the subsequent study and practice of bureaucracy. Weber, however, is an ambivalent figure in Marxist thought – often referenced by capitalists more than radicals. He saw capitalism as the embodiment of rationality: an improvement on the preceding economic systems of slavery and serfdom (e.g. 10; 11; 13; 135; see also Habermas 1990: 2). While warning of the dehumanising consequences of an over-rationalised society, Weber saw bureaucracy as a means to maintain order, maximise efficiency, enhance quality and eliminate favoritism (956; see also Allen 2004: 111-114). Although I personally feel that Weber's reading does not account fully for the potential issues with bureaucracy, including its human cost, inefficiency and interminable goal-shifting, Weber's writing provides an indispensable bureaucratic analysis tool that can be used here in a Marxist materialist analysis of play development dramaturgy.

In a chapter entitled 'Bureaucracy' in *Economy and Society* (956-1006), Weber outlined six characteristics of 'Modern Bureaucracy'. These rules are applicable to any business, private or public sector, and any office great or small – even, I suggest, literary management and its practice of play development dramaturgy. They form a particularly useful measure, then, of the ways in which play development dramaturgy functions as a 'rational' bureaucracy that, in the way Weber envisaged, worked efficiently and productively to, as *The Dunton Report* put it, 'tackle head on issues of quality' (18).[2]

[2] The first rule of Weber's bureaucracy is that an office should possess 'rules' or 'administrative regulations' (956). The most important regulation is that employees

We can also turn to the more recent theorising of anthropologist Graeber. In *The Utopia of Rules* (2016), Graeber studies late twentieth and early twenty-first century Western bureaucracy. Therein, his argument seems to follow Merton's definition of dysfunctional bureaucracy, cited above, as 'an end-in-itself; [where] there occurs the familiar process of displacement of goals whereby an instrumental value becomes a terminal value' (11). For Graeber, bureaucracy has become entirely dysfunctional: not a means-to production, but, rather an-end-in-itself with pure deadening effects. Graeber acknowledges that in the nineteenth century, '[b]ureaucracy was seen as necessary for managing the market, managing democracy and also managing the modern corporation' (10-11). Over the course of the twentieth century, however, bureaucracy became a dramatically visible part of the everyday. In the 2000s, Graeber argues, there was a move toward a 'total bureaucratization' of Western life (18). This is described as follows:

> bureaucratic techniques (performance reviews, focus groups, time allocation surveys…) developed in financial and corporate circles came to invade the rest of society – education, science, government – and eventually, to pervade almost every aspect of everyday life. One can best trace the process, perhaps, by following its language. There is a peculiar idiom that first emerged in such circles, full of bright, empty terms like vision, quality, stakeholder, leadership, excellence,

should be given duties with the expectation that they will be undertaken continuously (ibid.). The second rule is that there should be an 'office hierarchy': the supervision of lower office workers by higher ones (957). The third is that office workers should 'predominantly work with files' (e.g., papers, forms and written documents) (ibid.). The fourth is that office workers require 'training in a field of specialisation'; they require education certificates to help them fulfil duties in specific areas and, also, to support promotion (958; 960; see also Allen 2004: 112-3). Weber's fifth rule is that the office requires 'the full working capacity of the official, irrespective of the fact that the length of his [sic] obligatory working hours in the bureau may be limited' (958). In other words, workers do not own the office, or have shares in it, but are, rather, compensated for their obligatory working hours and should prioritise them (Allen 2004: 112). Weber's sixth and final rule is that the office worker should imbibe these rules: 'knowledge of these rules represents a special technical expertise' (958). Does play development dramaturgy possess such rules? Moreover, does it have additional tropes of more recent versions of bureaucracy?

innovation, strategic goals and best practices. (21)

I agree with Graeber that the culture of bureaucracy now prevails; there is an emphasis on 'continually assessing, auditing, measuring, weighing the relative merits of different plans, proposals, applications, courses of action […] nothing is real that cannot be quantified, tabulated, or entered into some interface or quality report' (41-42). It is therefore my contention that, alongside Weber's account of bureaucracy, Graeber's concept of 'total bureaucratization' is necessary to understand the expansion of literary management and the emergence of play development dramaturgies in English theatres in the 2000s.[3] Before considering this in further detail, it is important to show that my argument is not singular in critiquing the bureaucratisation of play development dramaturgy in this vein. Rather, the aforementioned Arts Council England reports and scholarly works in theatre studies have already commenced this process.

2.6 Existing Critiques of the Bureaucratisation of Play Development Dramaturgy

Although they rarely use the word 'bureaucracy', *Writ Large* and *The Dunton Report* – as well as the aforementioned volumes by Luckhurst, Bolton, Turner and Behrndt and Trencsényi – display a tacit understanding of play development dramaturgy as a set of nation-wide administrative activities suddenly underpinning new writing. These

3 Graeber's concept of 'total bureaucratization' pertains specifically to America's major corporations in the twentieth and twenty-first century and what he sees as their 'shift in class allegiances on the part of the managerial staff" who were transferring their attention away from 'producing more or better' to 'what will make the most money for the shareholders' (18). As we see below, in the state-subsidised English theatre context, Graeber's phrase 'total bureaucratization' may usefully draw out the range and volume of bureaucratic practices, but Graeber's emphasis on bureaucracy may not apply straightforwardly in this context – an idea I return to in the conclusion.

administrative activities are seen to have both positive and negative effects on production. *The Dunton Report,* for example, presents play development dramaturgy as an infrastructure intervening in new writing practices. At first, the report presents play development dramaturgy in positive terms, then it locates more dysfunctional aspects. Of the eighty-nine organisations and 'key individuals' surveyed, 'it was almost unanimously agreed that there has been an increase in […] development opportunities': 'most [interviewees] we spoke to were very positive […] there was a sense that the investment in development programmes has had a positive effect […]' (13; 14). And yet, a different reading emerges: writers report a 'frustration of constantly being "in development"' and a fear that 'dramaturgy could be used as an excuse to not commit to production' (15; 18). The report warns that 'the investment in development of writers […] shouldn't be at the expense of getting productions on stage' (14). It reports playwrights describing script intervention as 'unnecessary and obstructive' with 'all sorts of things that aren't particularly helpful' (17). It concludes that 'critical interventions in new writing are of […] uneven quality' and suggests that 'the development of the role of the dramaturg [requires] further investment in the training and definition of the role' (31; 18). These readings reinforce the need for my examination here, especially given the exponential growth in new play development.

Writ Large presents an ambiguous portrayal of new play development dramaturgy, celebrating its proliferation as an indicator of the health of new writing whilst awkwardly acknowledging its more dysfunctional aspects as an administration. For example, it repeatedly reinforces the idea that increased play development supports production: 'in general the direction of change is to provide more opportunities for successful production' (71-2). *Writ Large* provides evidence to substantiate this: 'statistical research suggests […] that the growth in development work and an increase in commissioning have happened simultaneously […]' (120). At the same time, the report notes that the

growth in play development dramaturgies has been achieved via 'lower commitment' engagements (e.g., script reading, attachments, seed commissions, scratch nights, pitch parties etc.) that do not necessarily result in production (84). In fact, the report defends these activities arguing that '[a]ll the companies interviewed concur that writer development is best achieved through experience of production, but inevitably this can't always be squared with production slots' (76). In relation to the new emphasis on script feedback, the report notes the new 'burden of reading' (82). The administrative load is seen as one to require further resourcing: '[w]e recommend that theatres receive targeted help from the Sustain fund to preserve their literary departments and dramaturgical activity' (125). The report also notes, however, that playwrights may not value the increased script support that *Writ Large* paradoxically calls for:

> a writer noted in the margin of his questionnaire, 'How many dramaturgs does it take to change a light bulb?', and answered 'Does it have to be a light bulb?' He captures the equivocal response we discovered to what seems to be a trend towards increasing intervention in the script. (98)

One might wonder why *Writ Large* does not pursue further interrogation of some of the negative aspects of play development dramaturgy it finds to in its consultancy. I suggest this is because, as noted above, New Public Management and its bureaucratising effects (and even its critique) had been naturalised to the extent that any problematising of its inception may have been overlooked.

Luckhurst, however, describes new play development as a process in which 'a new tier of functionaires embed[ed] themselves in institutions and theatre making processes' – a statement that suggests the practice is a middle-management inspired over-resourcing, focused on the instrumental value of play development rather than the terminal value of play production (205). Like the *Writ Large* and *Dunton* reports,

Luckhurst has collected much evidence from playwrights; quoting Steve Waters, for example, Luckhurst notes that play development dramaturgy is seen to be part of 'a burgeoning culture of development and a shrinking culture of production' (213) and writes that:

> [Waters and Kustow], like others, perceive the rise of literary managers and dramaturgs as little other than an unstoppable tide of Blairite bureaucrats who implement a particular New Labour pedagogy, driven by a missionary zeal for what they believe is the moral and political enlightenment of their theatre audiences. […]. [Waters] regards the proliferation of literary managers as a Blairite attempt to extend the influence of a political decision-making machine that creates more layers of arbitration and prescription under the guise of democratisation. (213-4)

As Bolton puts it, however, 'when playwrights express dissatisfaction or frustration with the added layer of "bureaucracy" supposedly represented by literary management today, [remember] that literary management was professionalized during the 1990s largely in response to requests and recommendations advanced by playwrights a decade previously' (2011: 48). In light of Luckhurst's collected testimony, however, it is worth emphasising that the professionalisation of literary management was negotiated in a total bureaucracy that *is constitutive* of playwrights and the professional context in which they must operate (and lobby).

In a different vein entirely, Trencsényi (2015) offers an optimistic reading of new play development dramaturgy. In a chapter entitled 'New Drama Development' (67-107), two case studies show 'radical new drama development process[es]' (81). The first is the Finborough Theatre's development practices of Literary Manager, Van Badham (81-87). Badham's approach comprises a resource-intensive slow reading practice in which playwrights work with actors to understand the tacit workings of their plays. Trencsényi argues that '[c]ontroversial though Badham's process might seem', it stands

in opposition to '[t]he British understanding of theatre [which] is mainly locked into a narrative text-based tradition' (87; 82). Trencsényi then turns to Paines Plough whose 'aim is usually to develop plays that can be produced by the theatre' (88). Their approach is 'not tied to styles of genres' since they do not have a fixed performance space. With these case studies, Trencsényi offers a niche understanding of English play development dramaturgy's potential to constitute a means-to production, free of administrative burdens. In other chapters, however, Trencsényi shows how a larger building's dramaturgy encounters bureaucratic difficulties. For example, in the chapter 'Curating' (31-51), Trencsényi observes that 'institutional dramaturgs […] need to strike a balance between the organisation's machinery […] and the artists' need to have room for development' (47). There is the continued sense here that play development dramaturgy in building-based theatres 'is intertwined with the complex system of running the given organisation', but the impact of this is not explored (35).

Turner and Behrndt's (2008) account of play development dramaturgy locates the bureaucratic potential in the practice without naming it as such. The central thesis here is that English dramaturgy, during the 2000s, was still very new. Although Turner and Behrndt offer observations on historic and existent dramaturgical practices informing the English iteration, they also question how 'the idea of the "dramaturg" [might] come to prominence' in England (100). These questions encircle antagonisms; the dramaturg is seen to be a theatre practitioner 'not fully immersed in the creative process, but [one who] mediates between that process and its potential public' (101). This conflict is, at first, presented as a difficulty the individual dramaturg must negotiate: 'the dramaturg may well be concerned with many other factors apart from the immediate process of developing, planning or rehearsing a specific play' (102). Later, Turner and Behrndt query the dramaturg's administrative responsibilities further, noting that there is an 'association of the dramaturg with ideas of censorship', though stressing that 'this

concern is greatly exaggerated' (104). Despite this, Turner and Behrndt do problematise the administrative emphasis of the dramaturg's role concerning 'where to draw the line between the *implementation* of an aesthetic strategy and the *imposition* of such a strategy' (ibid.). They ask '[w]ill the dramaturg, as is often feared in the UK, insist on the rigid implementation of an aesthetic, political or commercial strategy […]?' (109). Furthermore, in later work, they ask, '[m]ight there be a persistent political problem associated with dramaturgy's determination to establish coherence and connection, given that the dramaturg has sometimes been associated with structures of power, within and external to the art institution?' (2010: 145).

From the findings thus far presented in this chapter, I agree with Turner and Behrndt that dramaturgs themselves *have the potential* to respond to their administrative responsibilities in two different ways; they

> need not be seen as policing an artistic policy, but as working in dynamic and developing relationship with it […] prepared to challenge and develop theatre institutions through this development of new writing. [They should not be] humourless preservers of particular ideologies or inflexible 'house styles', but as people involved in developing and exploring the potential for their institution and the various kinds of work it may be able to engage with. (2008: 109)

Overall, then, the existing writing on play development dramaturgy in this period thus presents a complex and contradictory picture. Literary managers and dramaturgs are at once portrayed as 'Blairite bureaucrats' whose interventions may be 'unnecessary and obstructive'; they contribute to 'a burgeoning culture of development and a shrinking culture of production' and are perceived as associated 'with ideas of censorship'. Yet, the expansion of literary management began in part as a response to demand from playwrights, interviewees' reports of development processes were overwhelmingly positive, and the statistical evidence suggests that 'the growth in development work and

an increase in commissioning […] happened simultaneously'. It is my reading that these mixed critical responses are similar to the one from the arts community regarding New Public Management noted above; the response simultaneously acknowledges the benefits of the funding (in this case, by demonstrating the increase in play development dramaturgy), as well as documenting at least some of the costs of introducing these shifts via a bureaucratic apparatus. I now want to suggest a different approach to analysing the relationship between play development dramaturgy and bureaucracy – one that takes into consideration Weber's structures of bureaucracy and Graeber's concept of 'total bureaucratization' (18).

2.7 A Utopia of Rules

The weakness of analyses that assess the bureaucratic impact of play development practices in negative terms – i.e., to what extent do Literary Managers and Dramaturgs *impose* upon or *censor* a project – is to assume that there exists a starting point beyond the realm of 'total bureaucratization'. In this section, I signal a shift in my argument. In the above, I performed an analysis that showed how evolutions in new play development were related to parallel shifts in the bureaucratic management of the arts. Moreover, I showed how the relationship between bureaucracy and new play development dramaturgy has been represented in scholarship thus far. Now, I want to propose, instead, a bureaucracy analysis in which I employ Weber and Graeber's ideas. Here I show how play development is bureaucratic on Weber and Graeber's terms. Moreover, I argue that it is also reductive to argue whether or not play development is bureaucratic; rather, I hope to show that the whole process of making a play, from a playmaker's idea to a company's evaluation report, from the 2000s, necessarily existed within a set of rules shaped by 'total bureaucratization'.

From this perspective, an understanding of new play development practices in the 2000s might begin – apparently paradoxically – by noting the increasing emphasis on post-production audience experience evaluations. So quickly did the demand for evaluative data grow in response to the expectations of New Labour's agenda that, in 2005, the Independent Theatre Council, The Society of London Theatre, and the Theatrical Management Association commissioned the New Economics Foundation to conduct 'research and create a tool usable across the whole industry to measure the impact of theatre on people's well-being' (NEF 2008: 4). As the report states, 'the theatre sector has witnessed a rising demand for evaluation and assessment of its work, and sometimes in terms of outcomes and impacts that are not directly artistic' or, as one anonymous theatre professional told researchers, 'you can make new, exciting work, but you have to dress it up as focusing on some social objective or other' (8).

The sixty-one-page report proposes feedback templates and advises on quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. It aims to improve the quality of data available in evaluating theatre, noting that some evaluations emphasise 'the measurement of factors that are (at least relatively) easy to quantify' and that 'this kind of evaluation puts pressure on theatre companies to produce work that scores well on these factors – that "ticks the right boxes"' (9). The report is itself an impressive bureaucratic enterprise that necessitated feedback from 'participants in our workshop at the 2007 ITC Annual Conference, the c.2500 people who responded to our online survey and the audience members around the country who helped with our piloting by filling in a little form' (47). Why this endeavour might – paradoxically – be referenced as a starting point for play development is that it is a mainstay of feedback culture that '[a] successful evaluation […] reflects on what went well and what could have been done differently, and *draws lessons for the future*' (40 [my emphasis]).

Indeed, it is not hard to find examples from the 2000s that confirm how being 'future oriented' had become a necessary part of the bureaucracy of evaluation in all sorts of theatrical endeavours; for instance, in 2007 Firebird Theatre – a company 'made up of 16 disabled actors, supported by two highly committed workers' – produced a fifty-one-page evaluation of their tour of an interpretation of Marlowe's *Dr Faustus,* which referenced, in addition to numerous types of feedback forms, 'a SWOT analysis to guide future work'; a likely condition for that future work, and the concluding point in the opportunities section of the SWOT analysis, is '[m]aking a "business case" to ACESW for further investment' (Firebird Theatre 2007: 2; 20). For building-based theatres, then, and touring companies alike, whatever the next thing might be, it must necessarily exist already in a context defined in part by the realm of 'total bureaucratization'.

The production and management of this bureaucratic knowledge and the demand for continuity in evaluation and planning has necessitated new specialist roles within theatres. Both *Writ Large* and *The Dunton Report* identify 'with clarity the expansion of those working with new writing in our theatre companies' (*Writ Large* 2009b: 80). *The Dunton Report*, for example, notes 'the creation of new posts specialising in literary management/new writing particularly in regional venues' (26; see also 24). For example, the report notes that at theatre company Graeae, 'in 2006, a review of staffing structure led to the creation of a new role of Literary Manager' (32). Similarly, *Writ Large* notes that all twelve theatres interviewed had a literary office and Manager. Furthermore, there was also evidence of a literary office hierarchy: 'a combination of a permanent member of staff overseeing a larger team' (80). For example, at the Royal Shakespeare Company there are 'two members of staff, the Production Dramaturg (Jeanie O'Hare) and Literary Manager (Pippa Ellis [now Hill]), but also the Literary Associate (currently Anthony Neilson) and at least one of the Artistic Associates (Roxana Silbert) with a brief for new

writing' (ibid.). In regional theatres with mixed repertoires the human resourcing of literary management is more complex:

> Caroline Jester at the Birmingham Rep is dubbed their dramaturg with Catherine Edwards designated the Literary Manager; Suzanne Bell at Liverpool is a Literary Manager/Dramaturg with only freelance support at a part time level. Alex Roberts performs that role with Out of Joint, Tessa Walker with Paines Plough. (ibid.)

Additionally, in some new writing theatres, literary management remains an office of one: 'at Hampstead, there is only one designated member of the literary department (Neil Grutchfield) […] West Yorkshire Playhouse [had] no literary department at all and since then Alex Chisholm as Associate Director (Literary) has forged one from scratch' (ibid.).

Discussing the Royal Shakespeare Company as 'a good place to observe this shift,' *Writ Large* describes 'a shift from a more passive model of the theatre receiving or commissioning plays but not necessarily shaping the nature of that work in advance, to a more proactive model of developing new plays' (81). For a bureaucracy analysis, however, the shifts in personnel reflect an increasing engagement with the terms of a Weberian bureaucracy, including the idea that literary management possesses an office and office hierarchy. There are increasingly clearly defined job roles, a designation of authority and hiring based on skill. For example, by creating literary management hierarchies, personnel can demonstrate 'special technical expertise' (Weber 1978: 958) in literary management – and this includes an understanding of, and ability to engage with, the context of 'total bureaucratization'.

Although I have argued above that bureaucracy negatively effects play development dramaturgy by shifting it towards an interminable rather than terminal process, I also have shown that the increase in play development dramaturgy has had, apparently

paradoxically, enormous benefits for playwrights, playmakers more broadly and theatres in general. The aforementioned increase in play development pedagogies had the profound effect of democratising and decentering play development, opening it out to new participants. The rise in dramaturgical practices further ensured collaboration was central to theatrical practice thus challenging paradigms of isolationist writerly development as discussed in Chapter One. Furthermore, it would be a mistake to assume that in deploying their skills these theatre professionals acted negatively on new writing – for instance, as interfering censors; rather, the deployment of their skills is what makes the production of new writing possible *within the terms of 'total bureaucratization'*. It is my opinion that the effects can be, at times, strikingly positive. Perhaps, overall, the most significant positive outcome to emerge from the increase in all play development practices discussed herein was its effect on inclusive commissioning. For instance, in a contribution to Roger Baines, Cristina Marinetti and Manuele Perteghella's *Staging and Performing Translation: Text and Theatre Practice* entitled 'Not Lost in Translation', Jack Bradley outlines his contributions as the National Theatre's Literary Manager (2011: 187-200). In a crucial turn in English dramaturgy, Bradley notes the following:

> [a]s it happened, via the NT Studio, I had routinely been working with emerging black British writers such as Tanika Gupta, Roy Williams, Ashmeed Sohoye and so on whose work then went to be produced elsewhere […]. We upped the ante and invested more. The outcome: main house productions for Roy Williams, Tanika Gupta, Kwame Kwei-Armah […]. When I left we were averaging almost two shows a year from writers of the black and other minority communities […]. The assumption now is that the programme must include work from under-represented communities. That was a slightly left field example of gently imposing a programming strategy designed to impact on the diversity of the output. (ibid.: 196)

Here, Bradley signals a shift towards 'gently imposing' metrics into the practice of play development. The outcome of such a 'strategy' is, in this case, a positive one 'designed

to impact on the diversity of the output'. It is important to note, however, that this positive shift also brings play development dramaturgy closer to the Graeberian definition of total bureaucracy since it re-centres the activity as one deploying metrics, bureaucratic vocabularies (such as Bradley's 'strategy') and continuous assessment.

The problem is that innovative strategies such as Bradley's do not only exist in the applied knowledge of specialists; rather, they come to be inscribed as institutional policy. As noted, the first principle of Weberian bureaucracy is administrative rules. A new writing policy is a set of rules around a theatre's engagement with new writing, and it is through establishing and formalising such rules that play development enters a theatre's operation as a means of regulating playwriting. Once the infrastructure is in place it is less receptive to the individual play and thus less effective in dynamically supporting the development of new playmaking.

In the 2000s, *Writ Large* noted that of their sixty respondent theatres, '36 had a new writing policy [and] 23 had a literary department' (68). *The Dunton Report* also confirms that '[m]any participants suggested that more theatre venues, across the country, have new writing policies now' (19). Crucially, *Writ Large* sees the 2000s as a period in which 'a number of theatres [were] modifying or extending their policy' (70-1). The report notes that the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, Hampstead, Paines Plough, West Yorkshire Playhouse and the Bush are 'all either in transition […] or have recently changed policy' (ibid.). New writing policy changes are seen to be driven by theatres' desires to increase efficiency and capacity for engaging with new writing. For example, the report notes that Paines Plough's 'change has to do with economics' since its policy is 'moving towards many more collaborations and co-productions' (ibid.: 71-2). At the Royal Shakespeare Company there were 'new emphases such as embedding writers in sustainable ensemble work' and at the Birmingham Rep there was an attempt 'to integrate new writing into all aspects of its

work' (ibid.). At the Bush there was simply a desire for 'increasing the capacity of the theatre to identify, and advocate for, and ultimately produce new work' (ibid.). The shift in new writing policy at these theatres demonstrates not only the increase in Weberian bureaucracy in literary management, but, also, that play development dramaturgy is a product of an era of total bureaucratisation.

2.8 Conclusion

Here, in Chapter Two, we have seen how the conditions of play development in English theatres changed dramatically in the context of neoliberal New Public Management in the 2000s. I have analysed the concomitant processes of increasing bureaucracy in arts administration, the expansion of literary management, the emergence of dramaturgy and the development of new models for working with playwrights. I have argued that all these changes were positive evolutions in play development, but that, at the same time, they must be understood as bureaucratically structured according to Weber's definition and, furthermore, as operations in the context of Graeber's theory of 'total bureaucratization'. In section 2.5, I noted that Graeber's concept pertains specifically to American corporations and their development of administrative mechanisms to increase surplus value. I noted that although the term 'total bureaucratization' spoke to the upheaval in bureaucracy in English theatres, its emphasis on surplus value may not map onto this context. In this conclusion, however, I want to revise that statement to suggest that English play development's proximity to 'total bureaucratization' may be closer than first thought. At the beginning of this chapter, I argued that New Labour valorised the arts via new public management. By tracing the impact of this ideological shift, we can see that the increased bureaucratisation of English play development is but one example of Labour's financialisation of UK economies during this period. If 'total

bureaucratization' is an interminable end in itself, its end is New Labour's holistic economisation of UK industries during this period – including the arts, but also universities (as discussed in Chapter One). This chapter has shown, therefore, how English play development played a small part in New Labour's wider neoliberal project. I have suggested that many of the bureaucratic effects of play development dramaturgy, however, were problematic for playmakers; that they reconceptualised play development as an interminable process that did not, generally, result in theatre productions. I have also suggested that it is a mistake to view the consequences of bureaucratisation as an obstruction; rather, the institutional bureaucracies were necessary to facilitate artists' ambitions, but this facilitation necessarily took place within a theatrical context shaped by total bureaucratisation.

What are the implications of these findings? The first implication is that play development dramaturgy's proximity to bureaucracy reveals another way in which English play development practices in general were co-opted by neoliberal consensus in the 2000s. This finding, in turn, has implications for the practice of play development dramaturgy itself. Because of its bureaucratic excesses, I suggest, play development dramaturgy is not a disinterested approach that works exclusively for the development of new theatrical performances. Rather, it often operates not as a means to production, but as an interminable end in itself and, thus, ends up functioning as a kind of game.

For example, as Graeber observes in the chapter 'The Utopia of Rules, or Why We Really Love Bureaucracy After All' (149-227): 'being trapped in a bureaucratic runaround feels very much like being caught inside some kind of horrific game. Bureaucracies create games' (190). Graber continues that '[e]verybody knows what the rules are. And not only that, people actually *do* follow them. And by following them, it is even possible to win!' (ibid.). As observed, English play development dramaturgy possesses rules including new writing policies and dramaturgical procedures. Moreover,

in theory at least, complying with the rules affords access to the next level. Graeber argues that the drive towards bureaucratic regulation 'derives from a tacit cosmology in which the play principle (and by extension, creativity) is itself seen as frightening, while game-like behaviour is celebrated as transparent and predictable, and where as a result the advancement of all these rules and regulations is itself experienced as a kind of freedom' (196). By highlighting the implications of play development dramaturgy, this chapter has commenced the process of critiquing building-based practices of English play development. In the next chapter, let us continue to consider how plays are developed in English new writing theatres under conditions of neoliberal governance, moving forward to the coalition period (2010-2015).

THE PLAY FACTORY?

FORDIST AND POST-FORDIST PLAY DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES IN KEY ENGLISH THEATRES IN THE 2010s

3.1 The Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition and English Play Development

In this chapter, we now turn our attention to the next phase of government. Here, I explore the influence of capital's industrial modes of production in English play development practices during the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition period (2010-2015). I ask to what extent and in what ways were play development structures in operation in key English theatres in 2014-2015 determined by the 'Fordist' and 'post-Fordist' capitalist modes of production, where 'Fordism' refers to the hegemonic form of global mechanised mass production, and 'post-Fordism' refers to the radical reformulation of production to short-term, project-based and flexible forms of labour. Although, as noted below, the evolution from Fordism to post-Fordism is often observed to be a transition that occurred in the mid-to-late twentieth century, it is my contention that play development structures in English theatres, in the coalition years, display characteristics of both Fordist and post-Fordist regimes – following a broader shift in English modes of production. The introduction below identifies and expands on the context and questions for this chapter.

The Coalition, Neoliberalism and Industrial Modes of Production

Succeeding Labour's administration under Gordon Brown, in May 2010, a coalition government, led by Conservative Party Leader David Cameron and Liberal Democrat Leader Nick Clegg, would remain in place until 2015. The coalition accelerated the neoliberal regime advanced by previous British governments. Unlike Labour, however, who advanced an economic neoliberalism based on extending the state's reach (via, for example, public services including education and the arts as observed in Chapters One and Two), the coalition advanced the neoliberal project on different terms. Its ideology can be understood as an aggressive individualism that focused on reducing the size of the state and public expenditure. According to Matt Beech, for example, the coalition 'liberals were confident that – because of their commitment to a smaller state, market forces, lower taxes, entrepreneurship and less bureaucracy – their hour in British politics had come' (2015: 5). The principle means through which the coalition scaled back public services was via their austerity programme: a set of service cuts justified on the basis that they would reduce the budget deficit in the global recession following the 2007-8 financial crisis.

Writing about these shifts in 'The Neoliberal Revolution', Stuart Hall summarises the coalition as 'the most radical, far-reaching and irreversible social revolution since the war […] it is arguably the best prepared […] and ambitious of the three regimes that, since the 1970s, have been maturing the neoliberal project' (2011: 718). The effects of the coalition's public sector reformism are widely observed, not least in the arts. For example, in 'Funding, Philanthropy, Structural Inequality and Decline in England's Theatre Ecology' (2015), Jen Harvie notes how the coalition's programme affected English theatre: 'by substantially cutting state arts funding, and by promoting increased private philanthropic giving as the principle alternatives. These activities demonstrate

this Conservative-led government's neoliberal commitment to cutting public infrastructure and bolstering private competition' (56).

The coalition's approach developed in the context of an earlier economic shift from one system of commodity production, Fordism, to another, post-Fordism. In relation to British industry, political economists often credit the conservative regime under Margaret Thatcher, from 1979-1990, as the era in which Britain moved from a Fordist to a post-Fordist economy. For example, as Bob Jessop notes, 'the […] Thatcher government […] embarked on a re-invigorated neo-liberal programme aimed at creating the conditions of post-Fordism' (1989: 21). Furthermore, Ash Amin in *Post-Fordism: A Reader* (1996) notes that 'there is an emerging consensus […] that the period since the mid-1970s represents a transition from one distinct phase of capitalist development to a new phase' (1). Amin contends that scholars broadly agree that Fordism 'had its heyday in the 1950s and 1960s' but was superseded by post-Fordism in the 1970s (9). More recently, however, scholars have suggested that, against the twentieth-century global evolutionary narrative, Fordist structures have continued to remain in place into the twenty-first century, often alongside post-Fordist regimes.

Indeed, in Britain, the coalition, and in particular its austerity programme, advanced Britain's passage into a post-Fordist economy. As Patrick Bury and Sergio Catignani put it, under the coalition, '[t]he ideological blue-print for re-organising state services was supported by developments in industrial organisation, especially the end of the Fordist mode of production' (2019: 685). I suggest the discursive impact of capital's evolution during this period should be interrogated in relation to play development practices in English theatres.

Play Development Models in Key English Theatres 2014-15

In order to attend to the presence of capital's modes of production in English play development, this chapter departs from the resource and record analysis approach adopted in the two previous chapters to examine play development through the analysis of open-ended interviews with practitioners. As noted in the introduction of this thesis, in 2014 and 2015, I undertook a study of play development at the following key English theatres: the West Yorkshire Playhouse (now called Leeds Playhouse), Plymouth Drum, the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, the Mercury Theatre, the Liverpool Everyman, the Royal Exchange Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal Court and the National Theatre. At these theatres, I interviewed Literary Managers and Associates, Dramaturgs and Directors with play development responsibilities about how play development was structured in their buildings. I wrote up the ethnographic methodology I used for the study, the transcripts of the interviews and my findings in an article entitled "'Responding to the thing that it is": a study of new play development in English theatres' (2017; see Appendix C for the full transcripts p. 318). In the article, I used the interviewees' descriptions of their activities to ask what was the structure of play development in this sample of theatres? Was it a shared structure in existence between theatres, or was it unique to each theatre?

All practitioners I interviewed were actively engaged in multiple play development projects, each with their own artistic aims and agendas that differed from my own. The open-ended interviews, however, explored the general methodologies for development and allowed for comparability and thus the analysis of responses. I concluded that, at these theatres during 2014-2015, play development operated as two shared structures. The first structure was enacted as a 'standard process', used at each theatre, in which the development of single-authored plays existed in dialogue with a pre-determined model

that understood playmaking as a journey of improvement from commissioning to production via showcasing and refinement. The 'standard process' was not quite a rigid homogenous template; its application had some flexibility and varied between theatres.

Moreover, I identified an additional structure of development that was also practiced. I called this an 'anti-model' since its central tenet was an explicit resistance to applying pre-conceived models. It advocated, instead, methodological fluidity. It was used predominantly with commissioned artists and companies who were not working towards new writing, but, rather, were producing new work: in this case, devised, spoken word or alternative forms of performance. Since this approach concerned creating an individually structured process that supported the work of each artist and their specific needs, in this chapter I will revise the term 'anti-model' and refer to this practice instead as the 'bespoke process'. The shift from the term 'anti-model' to 'bespoke process' reflects my own reconsideration of this term here. The reconfiguration more accurately describes, I suggest, what play developers were referring to when they spoke of this practice.

In this chapter, then, I analyse the 'standard process' and the 'bespoke process' respectively, considering to what extent each displays characteristics of Fordism and/or post-Fordism. I show how the presence of these capitalist modes of production negatively impacts on play development. Paradoxically, I also note that the presence of Fordist and post-Fordist qualities signals the entry of fully operational mechanisms for play development across these theatres and, as such, constitutes an evolution in the organisation of play development as discussed in the previous chapter.

Towards a Marxist Materialist Analysis of English play Development's Modes of Production

A materialist analysis of English play development's relationship with Fordist and post-Fordist modes of production can situate play development practices during the period of coalition government within, as Rebecca Charlotte Robinson puts it, 'the complex dialectic between various economic, political, social and artistic choices, forces and factors' (2012: 46). Using Marxist accounts of Fordism and post-Fordism from Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* (1999 [1926]), Hall's 'Brave New World' (1988) and others, I interrogate the extent to which the standard and bespoke processes of play development correlate to Fordist and post-Fordist modes of production.

It is important to stress that this chapter is not seeking to prove a causation between industrial shifts in British Fordism and post-Fordism during the coalition period and parallel shifts in English play development practices. Rather, it seeks to follow the example of existent methodologies in theatre and performance that have attempted to trace the discursive connection between neoliberal statecrafts and theatre and performance practices. To cite Lara D. Nielsen from the introduction to *Neoliberalism and Global Theatres* (2015: 1-21), the aim here is to 'advance theatre and performance research that negotiates complicated terrains of neoliberal governmentality' (8).

In looking at the residues of Fordism and post-Fordism in play development structures, the methodology for this chapter builds on existing work that has commenced, but has not fully realised, a materialist analysis of English play development's Fordist and post-Fordist qualities. For example, I engage Rebellato's account of Fordism in theatre in 'Playwriting and globalisation: Towards a site-unspecific theatre' (2006) and the later volume *Theatre & Globalization* (2009: 39-49). In both accounts, Rebellato develops a line of argument that contextualises the presence of

Fordism in theatre's own modes of production. As I show below, Rebellato's work demonstrates how Fordism manifested in theatre through the practices of 'McTheatre' in the 1980s (2006: 99).

Here, I take up Rebellato's argument and suggest that the porous boundaries between English public and private theatre allow the Fordist tendencies that Rebellato identifies in McTheatre to later co-opt state-subsidised theatrical modes of production including play development. I also acknowledge that Rebellato's claims could be disputed since McTheatre also displays post-Fordist qualities. This leads me to note that Fordist characteristics are often observed in post-Fordist modes of production. Might the standard and bespoke processes of development, then, adhere to an evolutionary narrative in which the more traditional standard process is Fordist and the more contemporary bespoke process is post-Fordist? Or, might both processes of development comprise post-Fordist working cultures?

This theorising is supported by Bolton's 'Capitalizing (on) new writing: New play development in the 1990s' (2012). As noted in previous chapters, in this article, Bolton observes at the Royal Court in the 1990s the overly standardised play development structures, shortened development phases and rapid turnover time between productions. This chapter, then, retraces and critiques existing scholarship, including Rebellato's and Bolton's, amongst others, that has tentatively identified – but not fully articulated – a materialist analysis in which theatre's relationship to Fordist and post-Fordist commodity production is explored.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: I first introduce Fordism and post-Fordism more fully using Gramsci's and Hall's (and other theorists') ideas. Using this lens, I analyse the aforementioned scholarship that has touched on theatre's relationship with Fordist modes of production. Following that, the final half of this chapter attends entirely to analysing the findings of my own study, documenting the ways in which the

standard and bespoke structures of play development I identified above relate to Fordist and post-Fordist modes of production. Furthermore, I focus on the various problematics and potentialities that these capitalist modes introduce into English play development structures.

I conclude this chapter by looking at a more recent model of new work development advanced by the *Incubate: Propagate* project. As noted in the introduction of this thesis, in 2017, theatre and performance scholar Liz Tomlin commenced a project entitled *Incubate: Propagate. Networked Ecologies of New Performance-Making*. This project focused on new work development structures. As such, it has a different emphasis to the predominantly playwriting focused models discussed in this chapter. *Incubate: Propagate*, however, is central to this chapter's examination of the relationship between play development and (post-)Fordism more broadly. For example, the report summarised 'the most frequently recurring pre-occupations of the sector […]' (ibid.). This included a section on 'Emerging Artist Development Structures' that outlined what structures and support networks contributors thought that artists required to bring new theatrical practice to fruition (2). In the conclusion of this chapter, I look at the relationship between – and possible extension of – post-Fordist iterations of play development I observed in 2014-2015 and the 'Emerging Artist Development Structures' from *Incubate: Propagate* in 2017. I thus begin this process with a theoretical account of Fordism and post-Fordism.

3.2 Reading Fordism and Post-Fordism

Fordism

In *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (2005) Victoria de Grazia defines Fordism as 'the eponymous manufacturing system designed to spew out standardized, low cost goods and afford its workers decent enough wages to buy them' (4). Fordism, then, is a totalising system of social reproduction in which individuals engage in the world through a circuit of highly regulated production and consumption. In 'Amateur Creation and Entrepreneurialism: A Critical Study of Artistic Production in Post-Fordist Structures' (2012) Yiannis Mylonas adds to this definition that Fordism is 'a rigid model of production, based on "hard" industry, central planning, production of scale and mass consumption' (2012: 2). Fordism originated in America in the early twentieth century when manufacturer Henry Ford saw potential for large-scale consumption of cars if only there was a corresponding mass-production method. Ford engaged a high number of unskilled workers to enact the organisational innovations of 'Taylorism', a system that advocated the separation of production into small tasks for which individual workers would be responsible. The characteristics of this method became known as 'Fordism'.

Gramsci theorised this burgeoning American Fordism. His chapter 'Americanism and Fordism' in his *Prison Notebooks* (558-620) advances on Chapter Fifteen of Marx's *Capital Volume One* entitled 'Machinery and Large-Scale Industry' (492-639). Here, Marx focuses on industrial shifts at the beginning of the second Industrial Revolution in England (which itself ran between 1870-1914), when small-scale capitalism was becoming increasingly complex and global: employing machinery and new technologies, requiring larger factories and unions. By writing about the development of Fordism in

America in the twentieth century, then, Gramsci expands Marx's initial study on the developments of capitalist industrial production.[1] According to Robert J. Antonio and Alessandro Bonanno in their article 'A New Global Capitalism? From "Americanism and Fordism" to "Americanization-Globalization"' (2000), Gramsci

> held that the Fordist labor process […] simplified necessary operations, eliminated others, and radically routinized, deskilled and intensified labor. Accordingly, managers and technicians did all the thought work and instated comprehensive top-down control, which required operatives to work faster, more continuously, more mechanically, and in more coordinated fashion. (34-5)

Gramsci not only documented the characteristics of Fordist manufacturing, his core concept of hegemony (introduced in the introduction to this thesis) also exposed the impact of Fordism on subjectivity: that it was a process that 'adapt[s] customs to the necessities of work' (596). For example, Antonio and Bonanno note that 'Gramsci argued that Fordist business elites developed novel cultural mechanisms to […] create the "standardized individuals" called for by Fordism's highly regimented forms of work' (35). This included surveilling workers' private lives and encouraging them to adopt not only the time-disciplines of Fordism, but, also, conservative, heteronormative and consumer-focused lifestyles that could support it.

Fordism is not simply an historic and specifically American mode of production; rather, it became increasingly integral to global manufacturing and remains the dominant global capitalist means of production today. Scholars not only note Fordism's

[1]Gramsci reads Fordism as an inevitable evolution in the finessing of the capitalist mode of production; for example: 'in generic terms, one could say that Americanism and Fordism derive from an inherent necessity to achieve the organisation of a planned economy' (561). Across different industries, Fordism, Gramsci understood, would introduce a 'growth of discipline and order in production' (596). Gramsci accepted that Fordism would not simply produce order, but also resource efficiency; the aim of it was 'to accelerate, through coercion imposed from the outside' (596).

entry into British manufacturing, but also the ways in which it proliferates in contemporary labour processes and shapes worker subjectivities. For example, Wayne Lewchuk's 'Fordist Technology and Britain: The Diffusion of Labour Speed Up' (1989) provides an account of the importing of American Fordism into British industries (specifically car manufacturing) in the early twentieth century. Abigail Hunter's 'The Changing Faces of Fordism: The Nature of Service Work Today' (2016) argues that Fordism remains central to British modes of production; for instance, in its American-imported fast food industry. Moreover, there is an established line of study that contends that the fast food industry's Fordist processes inspired other British industries that value its characteristic efficiency, productivity, calculability, predictability and youthful workforce turnover. This process, whereby Fordism informs social reproduction more broadly, has been called the 'McDonaldization of Society' (Ritzer 1996). According to Hunter, the principle of McDonaldization 'draw[s] on Weber's concept of rationalisation, suggesting that society is becoming increasingly dominated by principles utilised in the fast food industry' (43).

Post-Fordism

Post-Fordism refers to a reorganisation of capital that occurred as a response to a perceived crisis in its ability to continue to accumulate. It refers to a departure from Fordist modes of production, including the assembly line, but, also, the dissolution of Fordist modes of consumption and the security of ensuring one's social reproduction through work. Hall's article 'Brave New World' identified a general shift in global modes of production away from Fordism's "'classic" large-scale labour processes, division of labour and class conflicts' toward this post-industrialised form of production (24). The global economy, Hall contends, 'has just arrived at the point where it can guarantee worldwide the standardisation of the size, shape and composition of every hamburger

and every potato chip in a McDonald's Big Mac from Tokyo to Harare' (ibid.). And yet, these Fordist paradigms are now superseded by 'greater work flexibility [and] the maximalisation of individual choices through personal consumption' (ibid.). Furthermore, Hall argues that 'most commentators would agree that [post-Fordism] covers at least some of the characteristics' including 'more flexible, decentralised forms of labour process and work organisation [and] a greater emphasis on choice and product differentiation' (ibid.).

The study of post-Fordism also became a concern of the Italian 'Autonomist' strand of Marxist theorising; for instance, in volumes by Antonio Negri (2017), Paolo Virno (2004; 2009), Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2001) and Maurizio Lazzarato (1996).[2] Virno, for example, argues toward a concept of virtuosic labour in which Fordist conventions are dissolved: labour may no longer result in produced artefacts, work-place formalities are replaced with informal, creative behaviours and practices that reconfigure the working day – as Marx conceptualised it in Chapter Ten of *Capital Volume One* (2009: 59; 340-416). Moreover, more recent critiques of post-Fordism note

2 When autonomism emerged in FIAT and other factories in Italy in the 1960s, the dominant image of work remained a person in a factory. Autonomists subsequently noted that in the late-capitalist epoch the dominant concept of work had shifted; for example, work in advanced consumer societies had become more office than factory based. As Negri puts it, late capitalism is now 'built [on] new forms of accumulation, which were symmetrical to the new processes of social and cognitive production of value', which is to say that 'intellectual labour, knowledge and communication, in short, the intangible elements, become increasingly central and indispensable by comparison to the material elements' (2017: 84; 83). In other words, post-Fordism refers in part to the ways in which late capitalist labour is increasingly 'intangible'. Moreover, Lazzarato defined this intangible post-Fordist labour as 'Immaterial Labour' in an essay of the same title (1996). Here, Lazzarato argues that, '[m]anual labor is increasingly coming to involve procedures that could be defined as "intellectual"' (134). As post-Fordist modes emerged, Lazzarato contends that Fordist commodity producing would transform to accommodate new labour processes and subjectivities and the dominant form of work would shift toward conceptual and affective forms.

how contemporary workers are seen to have imbibed the disciplines of post-Fordism. Expanding further Hall's definition of post-Fordism as 'greater work flexibility', Mylona, for instance, argues that 'post-Fordism relies on a *rationality of flexibility* that blends work with free time' (24; 2 [my emphasis]). These characteristics distance the concept of capitalist 'work' from earlier conceptions including the idea of the long-term, stable career. Instead, post-Fordism radically reformulates work as short-term, project-based and, as Hall says: 'flexible' – in terms of both *type* and *timing* of work (24). Moreover, as Zygmunt Bauman notes in *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor* (2005), the project, rather than the steady job, is representative of post-Fordist reproduction (36).

Post-Fordism should not be seen as a departure from all the working practices and social relations of Fordism, however. In *Labour, Monopoly and Capital* (1998 [1974]), Harry Braverman argues that a central feature of Fordism is worker de-skilling: the dissociation between intellectual and manual labour where the worker is reduced to performing simplified tasks. De-skilling, according to Braverman, became synonymous with Taylor's scientific principles introduced by Ford into the automotive industry – as noted above. At the same time, however, Braverman argues that de-skilling does not originate in Fordism, but is, rather, an overarching feature of capitalist social relations. For this reason, de-skilling, and indeed other features of Fordism including standardisation, can continue into new regimes of accumulation. As Fabiane Santana Previtali and Cílson César Fagiani note, '[l]ike manual labour in the past, intellectual labour now also begins to undergo a process of deskilling and precarisation' (2015: 89). In other words, post-Fordism may appropriate qualities of Fordism. On reflection, then, theorists posit definitions of Fordism and post-Fordism as different systems of capitalist reproduction that, in some cases, share features common to the general principles of capitalist reproduction. How, then, do these relations translate to theatre?

3.3 Reading Fordism in Theatre Studies

In 'Playwriting and globalisation: Towards a site-unspecific theatre' and also *Theatre & Globalization* (which builds on the former work), Rebellato contends that contemporary theatre has a relationship to capitalist modes of production in the same historical moment. In sections entitled 'McTheatre' in both works (2006: 99-103; 2009 39-49), Rebellato argues that the capitalist mode of production – Fordism – entered theatre's own mode of production in the late twentieth century. In the 1980s, a new mode of theatrical production emerged for the staging of 'megamusicals' (2009: 40). Megamusicals, such as *Cats* (New London Theatre, 1981) and *The Phantom of the Opera* (Her Majesty's Theatre, London, 1986), are staged in multiple venues globally. Because of this, they require an efficiency, productivity, calculability and predictability. Referencing the 'McDonaldization of Society' (Ritzer 1996), Rebellato outlines the history of McDonald's from its origins in 1951: '[t]he emphasis was on high volume and low cost […] assembly-line production, in which every stage of the food preparation process was highly automated, standardized and fast' (2006: 100). Rebellato concludes that McTheatre is '[t]he nearest theatre has come to being mass-industrialised' (2009: 40).

McTheatre is seen to have adopted two fundamental tenets of early twentieth century Fordism: the time-and-motion study and the production line (2006: 100; 2009: 43). The time and motion study combines the tenets of Taylorism – the principles of time-keeping and the division of labour attributable – with the motion method of Frank and Lilian Gilbreth (Barnes 1980). It establishes employee productivity in which tasks are broken down into small steps and motion is minimised for efficiency. This approach can then be delivered in a theatrical production line in which individual technical and performance tasks are ordered in a way that emphasises efficiency. McTheatre thus

operates via Fordist economies so that the megamusical can be standardised globally.

Rebellato observes that Fordist modes of production are efficient and clearly enable productions to move across the global theatrical landscape. As such, McTheatre has some appeal – as Gramsci speculated Fordism would. And yet, Rebellato adopts a more interrogative materialist analysis to look at the downside of McTheatre. Regardless of its appeal to Gramscian common sense and Weberian rationality, McTheatre has significant creative costs; the '[s]tandardization means that many of the usual virtues of theatre are diminished: its liveness, the uniqueness of each performance, its immediacy, its ability to respond to place and time' (2009: 41-2). Rebellato also identifies the human cost of McTheatre's standardisation: '[i]n the McTheatre franchise, the workers have little or no control over their conditions of work; all the creative decisions were taken years ago and are locked down' (2009: 44). Furthermore, not only do these shows inhibit the creative potential of their theatre makers, they also have 'a dehumanizing effect […] that becomes part of the shows' aesthetic' (2009: 45). For example, Rebellato notes that, in shows such as *The Lion King*, actors are obscured by masks and costume (ibid.). If the actor is not dehumanised, they are certainly standardised: 'the automated sets and lighting designs mean that the actors have to move in exactly the same places that the cast moved in the original production. Try to make the part your own and you risk injury or singing in darkness' (2006: 101).

Rebellato's claims about McTheatre could be disputed; as noted above, standardisation is not solely a feature of Fordism, but, rather, as Braverman argues, a feature of the capitalist mode of production in general and therefore also a feature of post-Fordist working cultures. By acknowledging that McTheatre could be post-Fordist rather than Fordist, this chapter remains open to the possibility that the standard process of play development, discussed below, may also deploy Fordist qualities, but, actually, comprises a post-Fordist mode of production. Before turning to examine the

standard process of play development, however, let us first explore the ways in which other scholars have analysed play development in relation to Fordist and post-Fordist conditioning.

Perhaps the most relevant scholarly contribution to this line of argument is Bolton's 'Capitalizing (on) new writing: new play development in the 1990s'. Bolton identifies that English play development at the Royal Court has mimicked capitalism's modes of production. The Royal Court's '[d]evelopmental processes are underpinned by particular assumptions regarding the form(s) and function(s) of plays' (219). Development is not simply the collaborative process of working on the commissioned play; rather it is a standardising process in which the play is structured according to an established pro-forma. Bolton argues that this standardising is reproduced through a homogeneous form: as noted previously, '[t]he raft of new plays presented by the Royal Court in the mid-1990s proved indicative of characteristics that would become familiar […]' (217). In other words, Bolton observed a dramaturgical process in place in which plays were reproduced according to certain features. Development structures, however, are nonetheless seen to work according to economies of scale in which a high number of plays could be re-produced in a play development system. [3]

Bolton's reading of play development at the Royal Court shares a striking resemblance to Rebellato's understanding of McTheatre and, yet, there is a crucial

3 Catherine Love's 'A Culture of Development: The Royal Court and The Young Writers' Programme' (2015) returns to the issues relating to the formal standardisation of Royal Court plays. A further reading is generated in the acknowledgement that the 'theatre managements impose a certain structure for the writing of plays' through the writing group and its development model (114). Love identifies the standardisation in this model and cites playwright Gregory Motton's criticisms that the Court's writers' programme: 'believe it or not, […] goes so far as to include developing a set of "rules" by which playwriting ought to be governed' (113). Building on what Bolton identified as stringent formal conservatism, Love shows how this is the direct result of the Royal Court's pedagogy with a 'set of objectives for each lesson' and 'prescribing rules' (118).

difference: play development refutes *total* standardisation since it constitutes a process predicated on producing multiple plays instead of just one in repeated cycles. As Bolton argues, the differences in plays produced at the Royal Court during this period are diminished on the basis of the standardising principles deployed in development. Like Rebellato, Bolton therefore acknowledges the capitalistic underpinning of theatrical production processes. Unlike Rebellato, however, Bolton does not explicitly define these characteristics as Fordist. How might an engagement, then, with more recent play development practices proceed? It could be assumed that, like McTheatre on Rebellato's terms, play development, on Bolton's, is Fordist. At the same time, given the possibility that McTheatre may actually comprise a post-Fordist practice, it is also possible to contend that play development may constitute a post-Fordist working culture. Are the standard and bespoke processes of play development I observed in theatres in 2014-2015 therefore Fordist, post-Fordist, or perhaps both? I return to address this in relation to my own findings below.

It is worth noting before proceeding, however, that play development is not the only mode of theatrical production at the Royal Court seen by Bolton to possess capitalistic tropes. Indeed, play development works on the basis that other theatrical modes including performance, programming and commissioning also operate according to similar principles. For example, Bolton argues that capital's tropes also inflect programming: a 'scarcity of production slots can breed conservatism amongst new and emerging playwrights' suggesting the standardising effect of this approach (222). Moreover, Bolton notes the rationalisation of commissioning, with an emphasis now placed on rapid turnover and expansion: '[t]he sheer number of new plays, produced in shorter runs of only two weeks, itself indicated revised attitudes towards the debut play as a cultural event' (217). In addition, the emphasis on standardising principles in new writing production delimits the possibility of the Royal Court offering other forms of

work or, indeed, other types of writing. For example, Bolton argues that the 'continued industry indifference towards revivals of plays that "have done their job" leaves little opportunity for plays presented in one region to be re-imagined in another' (222). Such characteristics of production and consumption suggest that capital's presence in play development is connected to its presence in other modes of theatre production: commissioning and programming. What is not yet clear, as noted above, is whether these qualities of play development are Fordist or post-Fordist.

Although not explicitly referring to these characteristics as originating in capital's modes of production, Bolton ultimately addresses the problems with standardisation in play development, including its human cost:

> [t]he material and discursive practices of new play development […] have exerted influence over new writing in four key ways: by seeking playwrights who were young, inexperienced in dramatic writing, or both; by placing a premium on verbal dialogue at the expense of other theatrical vocabularies; by affirming the individual vision of a single-authored play-text over collaborative approaches to the scripting of a theatre event; and by prioritizing novelty at the expense of longevity. (222)

Bolton thus notes a mode of production in play development practices that emphasises the formal standardisation and the prioritising of the text as a blueprint. The effects of this are felt in the conservatism enacted at the level of the individual play, but also the reduction in possibility for other types of plays to be produced or processes to be enacted – including second productions. Furthermore, Bolton queries the seeking of young, inexperienced playwrights in order to enact this labour. Since we can understand, from Hunter, that young workers embody the disciplines of Fordism and therefore are central to its reproduction, the emphasis on young playwrights seems indicative here. For example, Bolton's statement on playwright demographics seems strikingly similar to

the ideal employee of the Fordist fast food industry that prioritises youth, high turnover, deskilling and limited rights. At the same time, however, it is important to note that the demographics are distinctly different, except from youth. As noted in Chapter One, commissioned playwrights during the 2000s were overwhelmingly university-educated. Fast food workers, by contrast, during the same period, were much less likely to possess degrees (Haydon 2013: loc. 1278; Schmitt and Jones 2013: 2). This differentiation, again, suggests that play development does not conform straightforwardly to Fordist principles such as the ones Hunter has in mind in relation to the fast food industry.

3.4 Fordism in Play Development Practices 2014-2015

The Standard Process of Play Development

In "'Responding to the thing that it is": a study of new play development in English theatres', I argued that in 2014-2015, 'two methods of play development were consciously applied at the nine theatres […]. First, there was a shared model of play development […] what Mark Rosenblatt [at the West Yorkshire Playhouse] describes as the "standard process"' (12). Here, I analyse whether the standard process of play development deploys Fordism or post-Fordism as its organising principle – advancing on the scholarship discussed above.

From a close analysis of the interviews (see Appendix C p. 318), it is possible to understand the standard process of development at work in these theatres on the following terms. Theatres seem to commence a working relationship with a playwright by setting the terms of the commission, including identifying what work they would like the playwright to complete, over what period they would like it to be completed and where. For example, according to Pippa Hill at the Royal Shakespeare Company, the

standard process of development would commence with 'a meeting with the writer about what [the play] might be about'. In fact, Hill suggests that there may be more than one initial meeting: 'I would have a couple of one-to-ones with them'. This process of meeting initially with the playwright, prior to commission, was also an approach deployed at the West Yorkshire Playhouse and Liverpool Everyman. According to Hayley Greggs, at the Liverpool Everyman, these initial meetings ensure that a potential commission 'fit with the ethos of our theatres and was right for our audiences now'.

Jane Pawson at the Plymouth Drum also echoed this approach, confirming that playwrights are commissioned on the basis that they can provide a play that fits into an existing idea of future work at the theatre. For the Plymouth Drum Youth Theatre, for example, Pawson commented that 'we do about three productions a year […]. We work across age ranges. We do [one play] with eight to eleven year olds and [another that's intended for] primary-aged children. [The third is] a partnership project with our youth theatre […]'. If the playwright and theatre can agree to the various terms of the commission including setting a subject matter and remit (either in line with the theatre's ethos and/or target audience), the theatre commissions the playwright and establishes what Rosenblatt refers to as 'the timeline of a play's development'. In the first instance, this involves setting a time-frame and location for the playwright's work. The standard process, according to Hill, takes 'up to two years'. The playwright will go away to write, but with the understanding that they will return for a subsequent series of development meetings. According to Suzanne Bell at the Royal Exchange Theatre, these meetings might take place 'on our stage, or in a rehearsal room'.

The development phase then commences with the theatre establishing a managerial role in relation to the playwright's on-going task of writing the play. This involves isolating the playwright in order that they can complete their writing, but first creating a task-based framework in which the playwright can do this. The process of playwriting is

thus broken down into drafting stages, with the playwright understanding that they will return for feedback on the completion of each draft. Bell commented that this approach was determined by the writer's understanding of what works best for them; however, Bell also identified that trust is important in determining the setting of these deadlines: 'most of the writers that we have under commission come from quite a long relationship within the company, [for example] we currently have under commission Simon Stephens [*Blindsided*, 2014] [...]. [Development models] depend on the process of the writer'. Greggs also attested that the playwright's existing reputation and rapport with the theatre informs the way in which the theatre will divide up the playwright's task of writing. Referring to playwright Stephen Sharkey, for example, Greggs argued that '[w]e've had a really long relationship with him and we know his work really well. [He] pitched to Suzanne [Bell, the then Literary Manager] […] and because we trust his work ethic, and we trust his work would be right for our stages, we went ahead and commissioned him'.

Once the parameters of the playwright's work are set, the development then continues. The playwright's returned work undergoes an auditing process in which feedback and showcasing are used to evaluate the playwright's approach. For Tom Lyons at the National Theatre the process is broken down as follows: '[t]he writers] do the first draft. And then we read that first draft [and] then that process becomes redrafting, notes, possibly readings in the studio'. Feedback for the playwright is offered, then, from creative collaborators at pre-determined markers in the process. In the early stages, for instance following a first draft, feedback may be delivered in smaller meetings between the playwright, director and dramaturg. According to Rosenblatt '[t]here will be a director and/or dramaturg and actors giving suggestions […]'. The playwright returns to their individual mode of working in order to re-do their writing according to these suggestions. As Hill says, 'what often happens after that first workshop is that the writer

would go and feed in all that [new] information [into] a second draft'. The next stage is for the playwright to reveal the effects of this editing, showing a revised draft to the theatre, often to a larger audience of collaborators. According to Hill, this 'often entails a group of actors, the director and me in the room'.

Chris Campbell at the Royal Court defined the feedback process on the same terms, describing how, in this second phase of development, actors enter the process in order to test out the playwright's work. Campbell says there will often be 'a reading at the end [leading to a redrafting]'. This reading of the playwright's work usually involves an extended engagement with the theatre. According to Hill, for example, this phase might comprise 'a week-long workshop'. Campbell spent some time justifying the need for these repeated interventions that lead to redrafting, suggesting that it is the theatre's opportunity to address problems inherent in the playwright's process:

> [s]ome writers, [such as] Tim Price whose play is on now [*Teh Internet is Serious Business*, 2014] used to write a draft every week. Some people take ages and eventually produce a different play. What's interesting about drafting is there are a couple of writers who are so fertile that we try to stop them writing new drafts. Some people can turn out something that is essentially a different play. And, also, it's very interesting because I've talked to so many writers, and watched so many writers work, it's absolutely astounding to me how often they don't know what is good in their own work. I think some of them would admit it. It's partly being so close and partly the joy of creation.

Campbell suggests here the ways in which theatre-staff rationalise the regulated interventions into the playwright's process: the play developers provide something lacking in the playwright's ability to self-assess their own practice. The showcasing and feedback is not only seen as remedial for the playwright, but also for the play. For Tony Casement at the Mercury Theatre, for example, the feedback and showcasing becomes a valve in which the formal qualities of the play might be enhanced in ways suggested by the theatre. For Casement, these qualities include imbibing the play with 'things for

actors to get their teeth into, that have strong emotional content, authentic relationships [and are] theatrically dynamic.' For Hill, this approach has a similar remit 'giv[ing] the writer fuel – for characterisation […], but to also ask questions about the shape of the play and where we are with it'.

The final stage in the development is to audit the extent to which the playwright has met the terms of their commission by introducing other theatrical systems as a means for evaluation and progression. If these experiments in integrating systems, including movement, sound, lighting and design, do not yet suggest an internal coherence on terms determined by the theatre, the playwright will return to their task and make changes to their work. Hill describes this approach as follows: 'we commissioned Ella Hickson to write [*Wendy and Peter Pan*, 2013]. We had two workshops where we were really looking […] to see how the script was working. And then we had one mixed workshop – script and stage craft […]. We needed to find a theatrical language […] [t]hat's a kind of rough outline of a model'. As a footnote, Hill also argued that previews offer the theatre a final opportunity to assess and make changes to a new theatrical work in performance. How do these descriptions of the standard process of play development in key new writing theatres thus conform to the Fordist or post-Fordist mode of production?

Reading the Standard Process of Play Development

The standard process of play development seems to reflect characteristics of Fordist production. It is worth remembering, however, that, as noted, post-Fordism imbibes qualities historically regarded as Fordist. As a result, the standard process of play development may actually operate according to post-Fordist principles. Let us take a closer look.

The standard process reflects characteristics of standardisation – the most obvious characteristic of Fordist production; the play passes along a production line, assessed *en route* through a series of small tasks for which individual workers are responsible. This process is represented as one that, as Bell says, 'depend[s] on the process of the writer' – what works best for them and their existing modes of practice. Such a comment reveals a positive evolution in the organisation of play development observed in Chapter Two in operation in the preceding decade. It enhances, for example, levels of planning and rationalises production. Its systematisation is intended to support the productivity of the playwright who returns work at regular intervals thus enhancing the efficiency and success of the theatre's commissioning and programming models. Moreover, the process enhances planning and resource efficiency for production, allowing theatres to plan for human and material costs by seeing the work and its requirements develop incrementally. The evaluation process in development can also limit economic risk in playmaking since suggestions can be made on a cost basis; for example, if a playwright has written excessive characters or design features into their play, these can be omitted or reduced. The standard process of development, then, particularly the feedback and showcasing stage, allows these theatres to introduce what Hunter argues are the benefits of Fordism in contemporary production: efficiency, productivity, calculability and predictability. Paradoxically, however, the standardisation also prioritises the autonomous, flexible and self-organised work of the playwright – key attributes of post-Fordist working. This demonstrates that the standard model might appear Fordist, but may actually be rooted in a post-Fordist culture of work.

The standard model, as noted above, has clear benefits for the theatre; however, it may have a negative effect on the playwriting process, the form of the play and the playwright. As Bolton and Love observed at the Royal Court, the standard process of development understands development as a finessing process in which playwrights are

commissioned on the basis that they will work in specific ways and give their work specific qualities. This, in turn, has an effect on the formal qualities of the play, embedding into it what Bolton describes as 'characteristics that would become familiar' including formal tropes, especially character and narrative structure (217). The aim of this mode of production seems to be to suggest a Fordist mode of consumption: like Ford's cars, the consumers of new writing have come to expect a particular product from the new writing brand and it is this standard process of development that ensures it.

As with McTheatre's standardisation, there seems to be human cost here in which 'the workers have little or no control over their conditions of work' (2009: 44). It is possible to observe that, in the standard process of development, creative decisions are, to use Rebellato's words, 'locked down'; playwrights relinquish control over their process since their role is one that responds to what Antonio and Bonanno refer to as the managerial 'thought work' (2009: 44; 34-5). As the development continues, the playwright's control is seemingly diminished further since they are encouraged to edit their work to the theatre's needs in ways the system of feedback and showcasing makes possible. This suggests that the standard process of development, again, operates on Fordist social relations. At the same time, however, the emphasis on demarcating the playwright's work into projects and phases may bring into the standard process post-Fordist qualities.

Playwrights may acquiesce to these ways of working, I suggest, for four intersecting reasons. One, because the obvious motivation here is remuneration and, therefore, these are the necessary conditions; the playwright can decide autonomously whether they enter these arrangements. Two, because they are an inexperienced playwright. Three, because they believe this structure to be in line with the ideal iteration of play development advanced in English playwriting guides (as discussed in Chapter One).

Four, some playwrights may have internalised the disciplines of Fordist production that remain hegemonic in the industries – and institutions – in which they have worked and studied. English play development structures, as Bolton observed, are particularly well positioned for attracting playwrights who are 'young, inexperienced in dramatic writing, or both' (222). The young playwright has been seen to be central to the notion of new writing, but, in the context of a Marxist account of Fordism, I suggest that this capitalist structure used in play development benefits from a high turnover of young, inexperienced workers – as does the fast food industry as noted by Hunter – albeit with a different demographic of youth. Experienced playwrights may perhaps engage with the standard process of development, however, on the basis that the process *seems* to be constructed around the traditional idea of the playwright as a romanticised figure working in isolation. Theatres, then, may rationalise this model of play development on the basis that it is a historically received idea of playwriting process and, yet, in the context of a Marxist materialist analysis, we can see that it also works on behalf of the theatre and its economic base.

Overall, then, it is certainly possible to read the standard process of play development as post-Fordist due to its clear demonstration of production and consumption trends associated with this mode of production. At the same time, however, I suggest that it is predominantly Fordist principles that structured the standard model of play development at key English new writing theatres in 2014-2015. First, Fordist paradigms structure the social relations and stages of play development. This development approach, as argued above, clearly possesses the benefits of economies of scale, but as Bolton notes, produces repetitive and what Knowles calls 'culturally affirmative' products (2009: 56). As we have seen, prior to commissioning playwrights, theatres negotiate an understanding of the work to be undertaken, documenting with the playwright the nature of the work they will do for the theatre,

what the playwright's individual task is in the wider process of playmaking, how their task ought to be undertaken, over what time and in what locations it is to be undertaken. If all this is agreed, the development of the playwright's commission can commence and does so on further Fordist principles: the theatre exerts a managerial presence in development, initially isolating the playwright and their script from other theatrical systems. This creates a task-based structure in which the playwright will continue to write drafts of their play alone. The development then continues on Fordist terms: the playwright's task-based drafts are audited in a standardising process in which the theatre's 'thought work' is embedded via feedback. Furthermore, showcasing is used as a means to assess and evaluate the playwright's receptiveness to the theatre's thought work. Finally, the playwright is asked to (repeatedly) re-do their task if it does not meet with the thought work of the theatre.

Scholars suggest that standardised playmaking has negative effects. My work in this section, however, advanced on this reading to determine these standardising principles as Fordist (with the potential to be post-Fordist as noted above) and, furthermore, offered an understanding of how this mode of production specifically problematises – and also benefits – play development. It is my overall opinion, however, that the Fordist (standard) process of development rationalises theatricality according to a logic that actually seems to inhibit the focus on artistic process and instead advances economic imperatives. Moreover, I suggest playwrights are compelled into working in these Fordist structures for a particular reason. This Fordist structure resembles the imagined ideal working model of the playwright identified in English playwriting guides in Chapter One. Since the playwright, if they subscribe to the traditional idea of their role, understands themselves to work autonomously, playwrights are willing to engage in this working structure that seems to allow them to work in the 'ideal' way. Development structures thus seem to operate on these 'ideal' terms in order to enact a Fordist mode

of production already internalised by the playwright for the economic benefits of the theatre. It is important to note that the economic benefit of deploying the standard process does not correlate to Marx's notion of profit through the extraction of surplus value from workers' labour, however. Rather, I suggest that by using the standard process theatres ensure that they can limit economic risk by producing theatrical commodities with stable and established use values.

During the mid-2010s, theatres' use of the standard process of play development was seen to be both entrenched as well as shifting toward a new model. Love, for example, identifies that 'collaborative ways of working are gaining momentum at the same time as a certain structure of playwriting – with a notion of the author firmly at its centre – is reinforced' (122). This chapter understands the newer, bespoke process of play development at these theatres to be key to evidencing the shifting economic rationality of theatre's modes of production towards that of post-Fordism.

3.5 Post-Fordism in Play Development Practices 2014-2015

The Bespoke Process of Play Development

In "'Responding to the thing that it is": a study of new play development in English theatres', I also identified that: 'there was another model of development that was practiced and protected across each theatre […]. [I]t advocates methodological fluidity and celebrates the importance of finding a bespoke strategy for each piece of art' (14). In this section, I analyse the bespoke model in further detail and address the ways in which it conforms to a post-Fordist mode of production. From the aforementioned interviews I undertook with play developers at English theatres in 2014-2015, I suggest that the emergence of a bespoke process can be seen in practices at these theatres in

two ways: in the development of 'new work' (i.e. other forms of theatre distinct from new writing) and, furthermore, the way in which the standard process of development was becoming increasingly bespoke itself.

In relation to the development of new work, I observed how a bespoke mode of development was now applied at theatres. At the West Yorkshire Playhouse, for example, Rosenblatt described the bespoke approach that was being undertaken with the company RashDash:

> now we're embracing a much more collaborative process […]. And there is determination to explode that [standard process]. One of our associate companies called RashDash are two theatre makers who dance, and sing, and write text. [They're working with a] writer who we have on attachment here, Alice Birch, to create a piece [*We want you to watch*, 2015]. Their process is much more complicated [and] time consuming. It's a group of people working out [questions such as] "who is doing this?", "whose idea is leading this?" […]. And a lot of this is to do with the fact that text is not always at the centre of the process. It's text and movement and form […]. So that's a very different model, but equally that has lots of R&D support and we provide that.

The bespoke process is presented here by Rosenblatt as a self-organised, non-hierarchical working arrangement between theatrical collaborators determined by the artists themselves. The playwright, inside the bespoke process, in this case Alice Birch, is seen to be working alongside and in consultation with RashDash, rather than isolated from them: developing the play-text not as an individual unit, but as a thread that is sewn into the other theatrical systems that RashDash are building simultaneously. The question, then, 'whose idea is leading this?' is important; there seems to be an acknowledgment that, in the bespoke process, traditional ideas of the play and playwright and the assumed power structures surrounding them (discussed in Chapter One of this thesis) are herein reappraised. As Rosenblatt says: 'text is not always at the centre of the process' and there is a 'determination to explode' preceding conventions.

The playwright, nor their play, nor the standard process of development, then, is leading this particular approach. For example, Rosenblatt's presenting this model as a decentring of power suggests that the standardised play development markers surrounding the playwright, including the processes of redrafting and gradual inclusion of individuated theatrical units, are omitted. Instead, the first feature of the bespoke model of development seems to be a non-hierarchical, collaborative approach that equalises contributors. Furthermore, the bespoke process is seemingly synchronous, rather than linear; theatrical systems are co-developed rather than introduced following the isolated completion of the script.

The presentation of the bespoke process as a non-hierarchical arrangement also extends to the theatre's role. Rosenblatt's account, for example, seems to suggest that oversight from the West Yorkshire playhouse is omitted from at least some of the development activity since their contributions are not emphasised. Instead, what is presented is an account in which the conventional social relations between the theatre and artists, including quality assurance mechanisms, are reduced. There seems to be the presentation of a decentralised, informal, non-managed and non-regulated theatrical practice in which the commissioned artists work collaboratively, but independently, to develop the work. The implication, then, is that power structures and managerial forces are absented from the bespoke process; however, Rosenblatt clearly has strong knowledge and oversight of the development. Rosenblatt's own understanding of the process suggests that the theatre's governance is not necessarily absent here; rather, social relations are represented in a way that plays down conventional play development power structures. The bespoke process is, then, presented as informal, egalitarian and hierarchy-free on all fronts, though as we have seen these qualities are not a departure from capital's mode of production, but characteristics of a post-Fordist evolution. For example, as Hall noted, post-Fordist modes of production operate via 'more flexible,

decentralised forms of labour process and work organisation' (1988: 24). Here, the de-centralising of theatrical social relations in development is seen to be paramount to the bespoke process.

The bespoke process, unlike the Fordist, standard model, does not maximise efficiency via the production line's time and motion principles. Instead, Rosenblatt contends that the bespoke process is 'more complicated [and] time consuming'. Here, then, the artists seem to determine their own time-keeping as a new means for maximising efficiency. This evolution is characteristic of a post-Fordist negotiation of working time, as we have observed, in which the capitalist mode of production has shifted from a demarcated working day to a more fluid arrangement that, as Mylona observes, 'relies on a rationality of flexibility that blends work with free time' (2). The temporal arrangements of the bespoke process engender a further post-Fordist quality to this play development structure. They contribute to a more project-focused approach – itself another post-Fordist working principle according to Bauman, as noted above. The notion of the project reinforces, I suggest, the rejection of conventional work scheduling and deadlines. Rosenblatt emphasises the project-based approach, again, as a series of questions (e.g., 'who's doing this?'). These questions are not easily answered and, therefore, suggest an endurance and interminability to the project framework as well as a focus on immaterial, abstract and conceptual labour. For example, the abstract and philosophical qualities to the questions require both persistent and repeated attention, suggesting a protracted need for examination. Moreover, they are also cerebral and thus portable; for example, even when the artists aren't 'working', they will be able to take these questions with them and reflect on how they might be addressed. The bespoke process thus deploys 'continuous development': a durational approach that resists the conventional demarcated, material, task-based and time-keeping model of standard play development and, instead, ensures efficiency through the process of

reflexively tracking formal and informal abstract aspects of play development. What we can start to see here is that bespoke play development *seems* to be free from the formal constraints of work, but, paradoxically, the labour efficiency of artists is produced in different ways – a point I return to below.

The bespoke process of play development can also now be observed within the standard model currently being deployed for single-authored plays. For example, Pawson emphasised that, even with playwrights on pre-designed writing briefs for the Youth Theatre, there was now an understanding that the process should possess the qualities described by Rosenblatt above: that the play development should be flexible, non-hierarchical, time-fluid, project-focused and immaterial. Pawson said '[w]e want it to develop organically from what they're interested in. Sometimes we ask 'what's the next play you want to write?' and if it's something that we might be interested in then we'll go from there. That's the emphasis. We place it on the writers'. Pawson thus reimagines the standard process here on increasingly post-Fordist terms: it is presented as artist-led, without demarcated managerial quality assurance and, furthermore, determined by questions that represent theatrical labour as flexible with diffuse time-keeping arrangements and a project base. A complex social relationship is thus created in which the theatre once again plays down the managerial role (in this case, the tightly framed commissioning of the Youth Theatre's brief) and represents the playwright's labour as a set of entrepreneurial freedoms including the self-setting and organising of theatrical practice.

Casement, Greggs and Bell also presented an increasingly bespoke interpretation of the standard practice of play development. As Casement says: '[i]t depends what [play] it is, but broadly speaking, it's [our] imaginative response to the material […]'. Greggs noted that 'it depends so much on where plays come from'. Moreover, Bell noted that, when working with playwrights, there was now an emphasis on challenging how their

process should be demarcated and undertaken. Bell commented that '[s]ome writers want workshops where actors completely pull apart their script and they work very freely and improvise, and other writers just want a group of actors for half a day to read their work […]. Some writers want a workshop with a movement director or a sound designer just so that they can unlock something'. Bell's comments suggest that it is the playwrights themselves that are driving more flexibility into the standard model of development, nudging it to operate as a bespoke model of development on the terms described above by Rosenblatt. By requesting workshops with other collaborators including movement and sound designers, playwrights are, as Love suggests, forcing the development structures at these theatres to operate on increasingly bespoke terms that embed further collaborative and non-hierarchical practices into the process.

Reading the Bespoke Process of Play Development

It is perhaps Tessa Walker at the Birmingham Rep who offers the most instructive example of the bespoke development process. Walker argues that:

> [t]here really is no one way to do it. Plays are living, breathing things and they'll ask very different things of you as a director, as an actor, as someone working with the play in development. The answer is I don't really know [how to develop a play], but I do know that they—and the people that are writing it – will need different things […]. There isn't a way to develop plays, but, there is, I suppose, an attitude with which you respond to the thing that it is for whatever it means at that moment […].

I suggest that Walker advances an idea of play development as a post-Fordist mode of production and consumption. For example, as Hall noted, post-Fordism has evolved in relation to 'the maximalisation of individual choices through personal consumption' (24). Presented as a mode of production with heightened individualism awarded through

flexibility, we can understand Walker's concept of play development within the post-Fordist paradigm. First, Walker presents the play as a unique artefact that 'will ask very different things of you […] as someone working in play development'. The play as a unique artefact, then, necessarily demands a post-Fordist approach to production since they 'need very different things'. The artist, then, can consume play development on post-Fordist terms since it offers them the requisite of choice that Hall suggests is now a necessary condition of exchange in late modernity. Furthermore, this emphasis on choice created in play development can thus be passed on to the consumer of plays at the point of spectating, reinforcing the post-Fordist codes in Walker's envisioning of play development. Finally, Walker's statement that '[t]here isn't a way to develop plays, but, there is, I suppose, an attitude with which you respond to the thing that it is for whatever it means at that moment […]' locates a shift toward a post-Fordist mentality in play development. The bespoke concept of play development is seemingly internalised as an 'attitude' that play developers can adopt: thus ensuring the post-Fordist exaction of play development practices. But what are the benefits of this approach to theatres and, more broadly, to capital?

First, it is important to note that Walker's statement demonstrates how compelling post-Fordist modes of production in play development currently sound. As was noted at the 2009 ICA 'Art and Post-Fordism conference', in contemporary arts practice, an increase in casual, project-based and highly individuated labour processes are often prized because they give the 'allure of freedom [and] flexible working hours'. The bespoke 'attitude' that Walker describes is alluring since it understands post-Fordist qualities as common sense, desirable and indeed increasingly necessary conditions of theatrical practice. After all, the aforementioned characteristics of the bespoke model seemingly offer the artist freedom, flexibility and a unique response to their practice. Furthermore, as Bell shows us, these conditions are in line with what artists desire as

composite features of commissioned play development. As with Rosenblatt, Walker makes clear that this revised 'attitude' contrasts starkly to the oppositional model of standard play development which, paradoxically, does not individuate theatrical practice in the way play developers and artists now see as best practice. It is important to remember, though, that it is *because* of its post-Fordist qualities that the bespoke mode of development appears to be an improvement on the standard model.

The bespoke process, however, benefits theatres in different ways than the standard process. Both the standard process of play development and the bespoke process can be seen here to constitute capitalist modes of production and thus afford theatres with an economic rationality in their artistic practices. The standard process, because of its Fordist characteristics, is economically viable because it has the capacity to produce plays through economies of scale. Its features, as we have seen, establish a systematic approach to enacting play development that produces plays in bulk. As noted, this is undeniably an evolution in the efficiency of play development dramaturgies discussed in the preceding chapter. The problem for this model, especially for play development, is that it reduces difference in end product, resulting, as observed, in homogenous dramatic forms that increasingly dissatisfy new writing consumers and playwrights inside the process. The bespoke model of play development, by contrast, is economically beneficial for different reasons; it is a mode of production that is predicated instead on producing in range. The post-Fordist qualities emphasise heterogeneity and difference in theatrical practice and create a high level of variation in their conception of both the theatre-maker and resulting play (thus addressing agendas of diversity as discussed in Chapter Five). Crucially, in 2014-2015, play developers in key English theatres indicated that this bespoke model of play development seemed to be congenial to play developers and artists alike since these conditions are currently those experienced in late capitalism and thus feel 'right'. It is my opinion, however, that this model works for individual

theatres, and thus capital more broadly, because it produces the diverse range of products that, as Hall remarked, is required by contemporary consumerism.

The problem with the bespoke model of development is that it seems appealing, but, actually, stealthily reduces play development to economic imperatives. The connection between theatres and artists is reconfigured into a social relationship structurally similar to the debtor-creditor. The theatre, as creditor, awards freedom and flexibility to the artist to produce what they want. This is evidenced in the aforementioned comments from Rosenblatt, Bell, Pawson, Gregg, Casement and Walker. Even when the artist is supported, however, the social relationship is one of tacit governance and control; the artist is awarded freedom to develop the play on their own terms; however, this strategy – like the debtor relationship – devolves risk and responsibility to the artist. For example, Pawson's comment is telling of the risk placed on the artist alongside artistic freedom: '[s]ometimes we ask 'what's the next play you want to write?' and if it's something that we might be interested in then we'll go from there. That's the emphasis. We place it on the writers'. Pawson's comment thus suggests that, in order to take up the freedom offered from theatres, artists must make themselves vulnerable to liability, the risks of not pleasing the theatre: not being contracted or not reproducing their ideas. The risk does not end at the point of commission; the continued freedom of the artist inside play development is replete with precarity. The bespoke process, in this way, seems to have limited value for the artist because it is not a sustainable way of operating. Paradoxically, the bespoke model has clear financial benefits for the theatre since it not only outsources risk, but also reduces overheads and resource implications in lessening the in-house requirement for dramaturgical support.

The bespoke process, then, as we have seen, operates via post-Fordist characteristics. Furthermore, in 2014-2015, this process seemed to be becoming increasingly hegemonic in key new writing theatres; for example, Bell suggested that playmakers were

increasingly requesting more flexible working arrangements. By explicitly stating the bespoke practice as their mode of play development, then, theatres demonstrate to artists that their models are conducive to current conceptions of play development best practice. As I have shown, however, these post-Fordist conditions have benefits for artists and theatres, but they also downsides. Since the post-Fordist mode of production is internalised, these downsides may be less visible and thus more difficult to recognise in the same historical moment. How, then, can scholars continue to identify economic rationalisation in play development processes? Furthermore, how – if ever – can new modes of play development be deterred from economic rationalisation?

3.6 Towards New Modes of Production in Play Development

In this chapter, I explored structures of play development in key English theatres in 2014-2015. Here, I found that the standard process of development engaged Fordist tropes that could, alternatively, be read as post-Fordist ones. Furthermore, I showed how the bespoke process of development engaged post-Fordist qualities that had been more broadly emphasised by the neoliberal governance of the coalition.

My reading overall is that the operation of the standard and bespoke models of play development during this period was both beneficial and problematic to the culture of English play development more broadly. As noted above, the standard process introduced an unprecedented level of organisation, efficiency and connection between theatres' play development, commissioning and production models. It undeniably supported playwrights by scaffolding their practice. The bespoke model of play development, by contrast, also offered a number of benefits to English play

development. It introduced the flexibility artists needed in the development of new work with theatres. Furthermore, the bespoke working practices were certainly offered as a response to artistic calls for dynamism inside the processes of play development. It is important to recognise the benefits of these models of development and, furthermore, to note their demonstrable efficacy in developing high quality new work and writing at these theatres during this period.

At the same time, however, this chapter has acknowledged these models' respective commitment to capital. The standard process, for example, meant that commissioned artists worked for long periods in isolation since their practice was deconstructed into units as stipulated by the theatre. Play development was imbibed with auditing and quality assurance mechanisms that meant commissioned artists would repeatedly be requested to return to their practice on the theatres' terms. The ushering in of the bespoke process, however, did not solve any of these issues. Rather, the shift problematised institutional play development further. Theatre staff argued that by introducing the bespoke model, they were responding to artists' calls for further flexibility in the play development process. In some ways, they were; the bespoke model shifts the mode of production from an emphasis on scope to range thus allowing theatres to produce different forms of work and host artists with different practices. The problem, however, is that the bespoke model devolves risk and liability, deregulates working conditions, creates precarity, diminishes artists' security and, furthermore, increases working hours.

The main finding here, then, is that institutional play development structures are inherently problematic since they are predicated on economic rationality. At the same time, however, they proliferate because theatre staff and artists do not recognise them to be problematic. For example, this chapter has shown how the bespoke model of play development continues to be perceived as best practice. Moreover, I believe that more

recent publications also demonstrate this. Tomlin's *Incubate: Propagate* report, introduced at the start of this chapter, for instance, shows that artists consider something similar to the bespoke model of play development to be the optimum model. It is important to reiterate again that the *Incubate: Propagate* project was specifically focused on new work development structures and, therefore, remains distinct from the mainstream – predominantly playwriting-focused – development structures discussed in this chapter. At the same time, however, I suggest that the report's write-up of contemporary artistic preferences in development holds similarities to the bespoke model of play development discussed herein. For example, after wide consultation with funders and artists on emergent play development practices, the report summarised 'the most frequently recurring pre-occupations' in the sector (1). This included a section on 'Emerging Artist Development Structures' that outlined what structures and support networks contributors thought that artists required to bring new theatrical practice to fruition (2). Tomlin outlined eight best practice elements that contributors felt should be present in artist development structures: 1) 'for structures to be open to the specific needs of the artists and projects'; 2) 'for structures to be bespoke'; 3) for the emphasis to be on artistic development rather than end product […]'; 4) 'for artists to be pushed to stretch their thinking through collaborations across disciplines, backgrounds and cultures etc.'; 5) 'the importance of distributed centres of activity, and fluidity between networks and collectives; 6) 'the importance of finding time: to think – allotment rather than hothouse […]'; 7) 'how can we combat – in both HE and Industry sectors – the need to know what the thing is, before the thing is […]?'; 8) 'the specific role of mentoring emerging artists both practically and emotionally […]' (2).

It is interesting to note some clear overlap between the bespoke processes of play development discussed in this chapter and *Incubate: Propagate's* contributors' ideal play development structures two years later in 2017. In the first two points, there seems to

remain an emphasis placed on ensuring play development is 'bespoke': tailored specifically to the needs of the individual process and artist. Furthermore, points three, four and five all explore the need for development to be reflexive, engaged in process, have a 'fluidity' in relation to time and space. These points seem to reflect the paradigms of the bespoke process discussed here. For example, both Walker's and Rosenblatt's descriptions of play development map closely onto the ideas contained in these points. The idea of 'fluidity' in the report, however, and the scope suggested by moving play development 'between networks and collectives' demonstrates an even more expansive understanding of flexible working practices than noted by play developers in this chapter. What this might suggest is that the bespoke process of development has continued to become even more elastic, awarding artists the flexibility they are asking for, but with the aforementioned implications.

Artists call for these structures of play development on the basis that they reflect hegemonic modes of production that are more broadly perceived as best practice. I am keen to establish, however, what artists really feel about these structures of play development and, furthermore, how they are shaped by them. In Chapter Four, we turn to look more closely at the ways in which artists approach the play development structures explored here and how they, themselves, are constrained by neoliberal governance within these structures.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ARTIST AS HUMAN CAPITAL?

ARTISTIC SUBJECTIVITIES AND ENGLISH PLAY DEVELOPMENT IN THE 2010s

4.1 Neoliberal Subjectivity, English Play Development and the Coalition Government

In this chapter, I turn to explore the self-conception of commissioned artists in English structures of play development, or what Thet Shein Win describes as 'artistic subjectivity': the 'idea that what [artists] produce is, in part, a reflection on themselves' (2014: 2). In particular, I ask how artistic subjectivity operated within the structures of play development at key English theatres in the mid-2010s. For this purpose, I draw on a second set of interviews with artists commissioned in 2014-2015 at the West Yorkshire Playhouse (now Leeds Playhouse), Plymouth Drum, the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, the Mercury Theatre, the Liverpool Everyman, Royal Exchange Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal Court and the National Theatre (see transcripts in Appendix D p. 323). By interviewing artists about their experiences of play development, I intended to capture a snap-shot of practices from artists' perspectives and, as a result, explore artistic subjectivity inside these modes of production. The interview approach I deployed, as noted in the introduction to this

thesis, extends the second methodology used across this work for the collection of data on play development. By interviewing commissioned artists, I gathered a fuller picture of play development in each building including detailed accounts of individual processes for comparative analysis. It is important to note, however, that the received testimonies were subjective and retrospective. In other words, they comprised what the artists disclosed about past play development experiences and, furthermore, how they chose to frame their own research questions and creative agendas in interview. Thus, analysing these testimonies not only involved being mindful to the differences between artistic processes and my own academic agenda; it also involved being mindful of the implications of artistic self-representation in relation to contemporaneous neoliberal social, economic and political contexts. These are outlined below. With such methodological conditions in mind, this chapter thus seeks to use the collated testimonies from artists on play development to explore the *self-presentation* of artistic subjectivity: how did a group of commissioned artists present themselves in acts of play development in mainstream English theatres in the mid-2010s? Furthermore, how does this self-presentation map onto discourses of neoliberal subjectivity?

In interview, I noticed a similarity in how artists conceptualised what they produced in play development in relation to themselves. Without stating it explicitly, all artists described play development as a task in which they engaged two different versions of themselves. One version was a business-orientated version that scored a commission, approached it with professionalism and delivered a strong product. The other version was an artistic version – consumed with making. Unlike the business-orientated version, the artistic version did not always work to time, they made mistakes, they sometimes failed to produce work for the theatres and, in some cases, produced work that was not in line with the commission. This complicated picture of artistic subjectivity in play development became the starting point for this chapter. It was my feeling that

commissioned artists brought with them into play development two antithetical versions of artistic subjectivity: what I am calling the 'business version' and 'the artistic version'. Is artistic subjectivity in play development therefore hybridised? If so, how can those versions – and their antagonisms – be further defined and analysed here? What can they tell us about the relationship between English play development and neoliberalism in the 2010s?

In order to read artistic subjectivity in English play development, I use a methodology that departs from Marx's concept of labour power in *Capital Volume One* and moves towards a Foucauldian understanding of 'neoliberal subjectivity' and 'human capital'. 'Neoliberal subjectivity' is what, I suggest, artists unconsciously describe when presenting the business version of themselves. Here, I return to Brown's *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (2015) – a volume introduced in Chapter One. As an examination and extension of Foucault's *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979* (2008), Brown contends that 'neoliberal subjectivity' can be understood as an evolution from the preceding 'liberal subjectivity'. Liberalism refers to a political doctrine that advocated individual freedom via the state's laissez faire approach to capitalist accumulation. According to Jeremy Gilbert, for example, 'neoliberalism […] encourage[s] particular types of entrepreneurial, competitive and commercial behaviour in its citizens […] which the liberal tradition has historically assumed to be the natural condition of civilised humanity, undistorted by government intervention' (2016 [2013]: 12). Within political economic thought, the liberal subject was defined according to Adam Smith's conception of 'homo economicus' in *The Wealth of Nations* (1986 [1776]). Although Smith did not use the term, homo econmicus, for Brown, is 'the figure famously drawn by Adam Smith […] that of a merchant or trader who relentlessly pursued his own interests through exchange' (32). In the *neo*liberal framework, however, as Harvey puts it, '[t]he role of the state is to create and preserve

an institutional framework appropriate to [capital's] practices' (2005: 2). In the late-twentieth century, the liberal subject of homo economicus was transformed. Foucault's thesis is that, in the shift to neoliberal governmentality in the mid-twentieth century, homo economicus became ubiquitous. As an evolution on Foucault, Brown argues that, today, we are no longer simply homo economicus, but have 'been significantly reshaped as financialised *human capital*' (2015: 32 [my emphasis]). In this chapter, then, I read the business versions of themselves that artists present in play development through Brown's concept of 'human capital'. I contextualise Brown's concept by returning first to show how it departs from Marx's understanding in *Capital Volume One*. By tracing the tensions, or even contradictions, between Marx's and Foucault's ideas, I develop further this thesis's engagement with theorising on neoliberalism. I then analyse Foucault's ideas, before returning to Brown's. Together, these accounts, I argue, advance the use of (post-)Marxist materialist analysis in the study of English play development.[1]

To support my interrogation of the artist as a unit of human capital in play development, I also analyse existing critiques including Jen Harvie's *Fair Play: Art, Performance and Neoliberalism* (2013), Nicholas Ridout's *Passionate Amateurs: Theatre, Communism and Love* (2013) and Bojana Kunst's *Artist at Work: Proximity of Art and Capitalism* (2015). Harvie's volume focuses on the nature of participation in contemporary art and performance, exploring how UK Labour and coalition governments entrepreneurialised UK-based artists. Ridout's work, by contrast, analyses

[1] Furthermore, as Tony Fisher and Kélina Gotman note in the introduction to *Foucault's Theatres* (2020: loc. 160-728), with the recent publication of the lectures Foucault delivered at the Collège de France, 'an opportunity has arisen – and with it a new appetite for revisiting and challenging the old shibboleths that have come to be attached to Foucault's name' (loc. 339). For example, Fisher and Gotman note that we now appreciate how 'incisive and prescient his thinking was in regard to questions raised by contemporary forms of economics (particularly neoliberalism)' (ibid.). In the field of Theatre Studies, they note that Foucault's ideas – although frequently referenced – could be brought further into the discipline's theorising.

a range of theatre-making and theatricality, predominantly in twentieth-century Europe, elaborating on its potential to produce instances of human community that operate against the historical circumstances of capital. Kunst's title identifies the status of European artistic work under capital in a range of performance fields (choreography, dance, performance art), exploring the effects of post-Fordist conditioning on artistic subjectivity. These works have different aims and geographies and, furthermore, do not cover mainstream English play development; however, they each support an examination of the ways in which artists performed neoliberal subjectivity in play development in the mid-2010s. For example, each volume demonstrates – to a greater or lesser extent – the ways in which (neoliberal) capitalism has co-opted artistic subjectivity. They respectively show, to use Theron Schmidt's words from 'Troublesome Professionals: On the Speculative Reality of Theatrical Labour' (2013) how 'artists, performance based or otherwise, can no longer claim some vantage point outside of advanced capitalism, but, it may be argued, are its most exemplary labourers' (2013: 15).

Harvie, Ridout and Kunst, however, do not simply demonstrate the ways in which artistic subjectivity has been re-shaped by (neoliberal) capitalism. Rather, they also engage – and, indeed, in some cases focus on – the ways in which artists might operate outside capital's subject constructions. For Harvie, for example, artists might challenge neoliberal subjectivity by adopting the role or practice of craftsmanship (2013: 99). For Ridout, European artists throughout the twentieth century have challenged capital by adopting the approach of the 'passionate amateur' (2013: 4). Similarly, for Kunst, European artists have 'at least as a manifest way of stepping on the brake […] elude[ed] the temporal totality of capitalism' by playfully performing qualities including laziness and 'non-work' (2015: 187; 183). By exploring how artists might evade the constraints of neoliberal subjectivity, then, these volumes support my engagement with the other

qualities that artists bring into play development that seem beyond their performance as human capital. Such perspectives, I suggest, demonstrate the claim of neoliberalism on artistic subjectivity, but, crucially, allow for the possibility that artists may resist, or, rather, *perform resistance to*, their conception as human capital in play development.

It is important to note, however, that, in the context of the coalition government, playmakers, alongside all UK-subjects, would be under enormous pressure to conceive of themselves as units of human capital. The Cameron-Clegg Anglo-Liberal model for growth was predicated on stimulating further labour power in Britain, through using the reserve army of unemployed, but also through broadening the notion of work according to post-Fordist paradigms. For example, the 'Work Programme', a nation-wide initiative intended to get unemployed people back to work, was a flagship welfare-to-work scheme, instated in June 2011. It was, as Jay Wiggan puts it, 'ostensibly about securing job outcomes across a diverse body of non-employed labour power using economic rationality to drive performance' (2015: 385). The Work Programme is one example of the neoliberal economic rationality that was characteristic of coalition policy. According to Craig Berry, for instance, under the coalition '[f]inding a job – any job – [was] prioritised above all other considerations' (2014: 606). Berry argues that, in response, citizens were compelled to develop rapidly as neoliberal subjects: '[i]ndividuals therefore, had to be both correctly incentivised to accept available employment opportunities, and capable of adapting to potentially volatile labour market conditions once in employment' (ibid.: 594).

An ideal expression of the neoliberal subject prominent during the coalition period was the entrepreneur – the individual capable of adapting to the volatile labour market by ensuring their own self-employment and taking on their own financial risks. According to Nima Sanandaji, 'one of the most striking features of the economic recovery has been the record 4.5 million Britons who are now self-employed. Ian

Duncan Smith claimed that this was evidence that the coalition was "reviving Britain's entrepreneurial spirit'" (2014). Indeed, in 2014, The Centre for Entrepreneurs in Britain released 'The Entrepreneurial Manifesto' which celebrated the growth of entrepreneurialism in Britain. In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005), David Harvey contextualises the emphasis on entrepreneurialism in the twenty-first century across the Euro-Atlantic world; neoliberalism, he argues, is the 'theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms […]' (2). The coalition's neoliberal project, then, can be partly understood as an embodied process advanced *within* subjects – perhaps including playmakers. Despite the overwhelming potential, therefore, for artistic subjectivity to manifest as human capital in play development, I suggest that, following the arguments of Harvie, Ridout and Kunst, it is possible for artists to present expressions of artistic subjectivity that – to a certain extent – resist neoliberalisation. Overall, I argue that artists do manifest as human capital in play development, but I also suggest, alongside the scholarly narrative, that they might struggle against this conception of themselves.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: in section 4.2 below, entitled 'Reading Neoliberal Subjectivity', I elucidate further a reading practice on neoliberal subjectivities using the aforementioned volumes. In section 4.3, I analyse the explorations on artistic subjectivity from Harvie, Ridout and Kunst. Next, in section 4.4, using the transcripts of the aforementioned interviews with artists, I analyse the ways in which they *did* conceive of themselves as human capital in play development. I also attend to the ways in which they seemingly resisted or, to coin Kunst's phrase, 'stepped on the break' of neoliberalism's conception of themselves. Finally, in section 4.5, I present a conclusion of this chapter's findings.

4.2 Reading Neoliberal Subjectivity

Artistic subjectivity in play development can be analysed through the concept of neoliberal subjectivity. In this section, I put on hold the discussion of artistic subjectivity in play development at the aforementioned English theatres in order to introduce ideas surrounding neoliberal subjectivity that can then be applied to my reading below. Before analysing 'neoliberal subjectivity', it is important to emphasise that this theorising departs from this thesis's reliance on Marx's *Capital Volume One*. Instead, it moves into a post-Marxist understanding of the effects of neoliberalism on human subjectivity. This is because Marx's theorising, as shown below, has limitations as concerns the effects of capital on the (contemporary) human subject.

When Marx was writing, he was ambivalent as to whether human subjectivity was implicated in the capitalist mode of production. For example, in *Capital Volume One*, Marx's materialist focus understands humans' *material* roles in capital; the worker, for example, is seen to contribute to capitalism *physically* through manufacturing. This is obvious since the labour power Marx observed was factory work. The physical performance of the worker will become abstracted in exchange, but it is the worker's *physical* performance in the factory that is important to capitalist production.[2] In the *Grundrisse* (1973 [1857-61]), however, Marx's preparatory notes for *Capital*, Marx considers whether human subjectivity is, in fact, relevant. For example, he uses the term 'fixed capital', to describe the way in which, not only machines and equipment, but also

[2] In Chapter Ten 'The Working Day' (340-416), for example, Marx argues that the worker is 'nothing more than personified labour time' (352). Moreover, capitalism is dialectically predicated on the ways in which the worker's physical performance can be exploited and abstracted; Marx argues that '[c]apital is dead labour which, vampire like, lives only by sucking living labour and lives the more, the more labour it sucks' (343). We can say that in *Capital Volume One*, then, Marx understands human subjectivity to be determined and damaged by capitalism, but not central to its mode of production.

the workers' knowledge and skills, as well as their physicality, are involved in commodity production (712). According to Jason Read, Marx's recognition that not just the physical body, but also social knowledge is deployed in capitalist reproduction

> reveals something of a future that Marx could barely envision […]. Capital no longer simply exploits labor, […], but puts to work the capacities to create and communicate that traverse social relations. […]. [P]roduction takes place outside of the factory […]. Because of this fundamental displacement, subjectivity becomes paramount, subjectivity itself becomes productive. (2009: 32-3)

As we have observed in Chapter Three, by the twentieth century, the capitalist mode of production *had evolved* – as Read suggests – in ways Marx could barely envision.

Foucault takes this theorising forward. He rejects Marx's labour theory and, instead, advances new ideas concerning the ways in which human subjectivity is implicated in capitalist reproduction. In *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979*, Foucault contended that liberalism's laissez-faire approach to the market was shifting. The market was no longer based on exchange but, rather, increasingly predicated 'toward the multiplicity and differentiation of enterprises' (149). In addition, Western governments were increasingly shaping citizens as contributors to market enterprises. From the 1950s onwards, Foucault observed how states were reshaping citizens as subjects whose sole purpose was to participate in market activities. This process could be defined as 'biopolitics': through their consent to be governed, citizens were transformed into neoliberal subjects whose very consciousness supported capitalist reproduction. As Colette Conroy puts it in *Theatre and the Body*, 'Foucault suggests that the body is used as a way of placing human beings within a regulatory system' (2010: loc. 463). Since the regulatory system was the market, Foucault argues that '[w]hat is sought is not a society subject to the commodity […] [t]he homo economicus sought

after is not the man of exchange or man the consumer; he is the man of enterprise and production' (147; 149). What Foucault means by this is that Marx's concept of capitalist reproduction, via physical labour-power and its abstraction in exchange, has evolved. In the twentieth century, capitalism is embodied by individual subjects. As Peter Fleming notes in *The Death of Homo Economicus, Work, Debt and the Myth of Endless Accumulation*, 'contemporary capitalism wages a psychological war as much as a pecuniary one' (2017: loc. 136). Capitalism is no longer reproduced through applied physicality, but, rather, has inserted itself into human subjectivity, with the subject itself forced to carry forward the project of capitalism. In her volume *Wages Against Artwork: Decommodified Labor and the Claims of Socially Engaged Art* (2019), Leigh Claire La Berge clarifies Foucault's re-conceptualisation of work and subjectivity:

> [f]or Foucault, the change is categorical, prescient, and normative: labor will cease to be an operative epistemological category for the self-understanding of social reproduction. When Foucault writes that labor is dissolved 'into capital and income' his incipient anti-Marxism has left him to make a remarkable statement. Namely the self-narration of a subject as one who is compelled to sell his or her labor under less than free conditions has expired. Now the subject will understand herself as possessor of 'human capital' who seeks a return on her investment. (2019: 23)

La Berge contends that Autonomist theorists, namely Negri (2017) and Hardt and Negri (2001), 'ultimately end up borrowing from Foucault' in what would become an anti-Marxist trajectory of theorising at the end of the twentieth century (ibid.). For example, she contends that 'multiple theorists from various and conflicting traditions argued from a new understanding of the relationship between capital and labor' (ibid.). The Foucauldian tradition not only inspired the Autonomist thinkers, then, but also a range of other theorists including Brown.

In *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, Brown offers an expanded account of Foucault's reading of neoliberal subjectivity. In a chapter entitled 'Foucault's *Birth of Biopolitics* Lectures: Charting Neoliberal Political Rationality' (47-78), for instance, the concept of 'human capital' is expanded. Under neoliberalism, Foucault understood that 'labor rendered as a commodity transmogrifies into labor rendered as self-investing human capital' (48). Brown contends that we can understand ourselves today not as workers, but as 'human capital':

> [w]hen competition becomes the market's root principle, all market actors are rendered as capitals […]. The transformation of labor into human capital and of workers into entrepreneurs competing with other entrepreneurs obviously […] eliminates the basis for alienation and exploitation as Marx conceived them. (65)

Here, Brown elucidates Foucault's conception of the neoliberal subject. When exchange is replaced by competition as the dialectic of capitalist reproduction, human subjects are envisioned not as the labour power which, as Marx's value theory has it, is congealed in objects through commodity production; rather, as I read it, humans become human capital by consuming their own labour power. Thus, as Brown puts it, '[p]roductivity is prioritized over product; enterprise is prioritised over consumption' (65-6).

Brown contends that Foucault's concept of neoliberal subjectivity as human capital still stands today. All humans are inevitably constructed as human capital and 'human capital's constant and ubiquitous aim, whether studying, interning, working, planning retirement, or reinventing itself in a new life, is to entrepreneurialize its endeavors, appreciate its value, and increase its rating or ranking' (36). Second, like Foucault, Brown's definition of human capital is based on the characteristics of entrepreneurialism. All humans, Brown argues, 'maximise their capital value in the present and enhance their future value, and both persons and states do so through

practices of entrepreneurialism, self-investment, and/or attracting investors' (22). Third, the key focus of human capital's entrepreneurialism is competition: '[t]oday's *homo economicus* is an intensely constructed and governed bit of human capital tasked with improving and leveraging its competitive positioning and enhancing its (monetary and non-monetary) portfolio value' (10). Fourth, Brown reminds us that human capital's entrepreneurialism may not always involve monetisation; 'the point is that neoliberal rationality disseminates the *model of the market* to all domains and activities – even where money is not an issue' (ibid.).

Reshaped as units of human capital, this theorising suggests that individuals have been coerced into working *more*, and working more entrepreneurially, but, also, developing a new ethics that determines how we approach our lives. Read, for example, argues that 'everything for which human beings attempt to realize, from marriage, to crime, to expenditures on children, can be understood "economically" according to a particular calculation of cost for benefit' (28). Lentin and Titley also understand human capital to have developed a new ethics; in 'Good and Bad Diversity: the Shape of Neoliberal Racisms' in *The Crisis of Multiculturalism: Racism in a Neoliberal Age* (2011: 160-192), they argue that:

> [i]ndiviudal morality is thus judged according to our capacity for 'self care' […]. Despite the increasingly structural constraints over individuals, neoliberal governmentality paradoxically constructs 'free' subjects who, because rational action is cast as an achievable, guiding norm, police themselves according to a rational assessment of the costs and benefits of certain acts. (163)

This account similarly conceptualises units of human capital as competitive entrepreneurs, then, who have carved out a new ethics of self-care and a logic of cost for benefits. What makes Lentin and Titley's reading particularly useful, in my opinion, is not simply its clarity in describing the characteristics of neoliberal subjectivity,

however. It is the compassionate reading of the struggle implicit in humans performing as capitals. Their account helps us to understand the reasons *why* neoliberal subjectivity is performed prolifically; since it 'paradoxically constructs "free" subjects' (ibid.). Brown is similarly attuned to the difficulties and struggles of humans in performing as human capital; in particular, she locates minority groups including single mothers who are 'framed to fail in the project of becoming a responsibilized neoliberal subject' (107). It is not simply their documenting of the characteristics of human capital, I suggest, that make these volumes a useful lens for exploring performances of artistic subjectivity in play development. Since I have suggested that artists not only perform the business versions of themselves, but also artistic versions of themselves, it is central that these authors – like Harvie, Ridout and Kunst below – allow for the possibility of resistance beyond neoliberal subjectivity.

4.3 Reading Artistic Neoliberal Subjectivity

Discourse on the proximity of artistic and neoliberal subjectivity had already begun at the end of the twentieth century. For example, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello's *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (2018 [1999]) highlighted the ways in which artists had been co-opted by neoliberalism and were performing as its ideal subjects (139). In the sphere of theatre and performance, there are no existing examinations of the intersection between neoliberalism and artistic subjectivity in play development; however, scholars have explored artistic subjectivity and neoliberalism more broadly. Here, I attend to the aforementioned accounts of Harvie, Ridout and Kunst. I show how these volumes (with their different aims and emphases) accept how (neoliberal) capitalism has reshaped artistic subjectivity. Furthermore, I analyse, as noted above, the ways in which each author hypothesises on the possibility of artistic resistance. I pay attention to how

scholars have explored artists as units of human capital and, furthermore, how they have presented challenges to these frameworks through analysis of craftsmanship (Harvie), passionate amateurism (Ridout) and non-work (Kunst). By exploring these antagonisms, these works offer a line of thinking that I will continue in the examination of artistic subjectivity in play development below.

In Chapter Two of *Fair Play: Arts, Performance and Neoliberalism*, 'The Artrepreneur' (62-108), Harvie analyses how the UK-based creative industries and its artists were re-shaped by neoliberalism. The 'Labour government's advocacy of the creative industries was picked up by the Conservative-led coalition government, which signalled its understanding of culture as embedded in industry […]' (69). Taking up the theorising identified in the previous section, Harvie notes that: '[a]s Michel Foucault and others have argued, political ideologies such as neoliberalism are not principally imposed through top-down government "controls", but rather through "governmentality" […] that people internalize' (3). The focus of Harvie's chapter, then, is on the effects of neoliberal governmentality on artistic subjectivity; the focus reflects 'the ways neoliberal capitalism infiltrates and reconfigures *structures, practices* and *subjectivities*' (65 [original emphasis]).

Harvie contends that in the 2000s, 'artists are being […] reshaped as "artrepreneur[s]"' (64). Post-industrial economies 'want both more creative industries and more entrepreneurial innovation and risk-taking; the perfect hybrid of these requirements is […] entrepreneurial artists' (65-66). Harvie highlights the significance of Arts Council England's report *Supporting Growth in the Arts Economy* (2011c). The authors, Tom Fleming and Andrew Erskine, 'lecture artists/"micro-creative businesses" on how "arts organisations and practitioners are realigning the way they work [to] adopt business models"' (71). Harvie's conclusion is that '[f]unding regimes

in particular regularly exhort artists to model creative entrepreneurialism' as part of the wider project of valorising the arts – as discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis (62).

The 'artrepreneur' is thus defined as an artist of any discipline who demonstrates work ethic, innovation, flexibility, self-assurance and brand marketability – a human capital by another name. In a section entitled 'Entrepreneurialism's benefits for the arts' (74-78), Harvie identifies the artrepreneurial cost per benefit mentality: 'there is much to be gained – or at least protected – for artists in becoming more entrepreneurial, including enhanced self-sufficiency and independence' (75). Artrepreneurialism is seen to allow artists to practice through 'innovating – but also increasingly […] foster[ing] such business-related skills as raising, managing and diversifying sources of finance; cultivating institutional and/or personal development' (74). The central emphasis, however, is to show the 'effects of hegemonic expectations imposed on artists to model entrepreneurialism' (62). Such a mandate is seen to damage artists and the arts in three ways: '[o]ne, it insists that art prioritizes self-interest and individualism. Two, it requires art to acquiesce to create destruction as an apparently inevitable by-product of innovation […]. And three, it obliges art relentlessly to pursue productivity, permanent growth and profit' (62-3).[3]

[3] Sven Luttickken also describes the same neoliberalisation of the artist in this period not as 'artrepreneurialism', but as the artists' 'general performance': '[a]s an artist or writer or curator, you perform when you do your job, but your job also includes giving talks, going to openings, being in the right place at the right time. Transcending the limits of the specific domain of performance art, then, is what I would call *general performance* as the basis of the new labour' (Sven Luttickken quoted in Lesage, 2012: 16). Both readings are linked to the conditions of employment in this period. Indeed, much Cultural Studies scholarship during the Coalition period was dedicated to exploring the impact of the employment conditions in the Creative Industries. In 'A Very Complicated Version of Freedom: Conditions and Experiences of Creative Labour in the Cultural Industries' (2011), for example, David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker identify that 'artists tend to hold multiple jobs; there is a predominance of self-employed or freelance workers; work is irregular, contracts are shorter-term, and there is little job protection; career prospects are uncertain; earnings are very unequal; artists are younger than other workers; and the workforce appears to be growing' (2011: 34).

In a section entitled 'Craftsmanship, inefficiency, collaboration and egalitarianism' (97-107), Harvie identifies 'how contemporary artists resist being wholly appropriated as tools of neoliberal capitalist skills training and ideological modelling' (63). To resist the effects of artrepreneurialism, artists 'might be both seen as, and encouraged to become, instead, craftspeople' (97). Harvie argues that craftsmanship displays qualities that challenge entrepreneurialism's drive to profit. These include an emphasis on working 'with difficulties, resistance and ambiguity'; to not prioritise 'efficiency and productivity, but simply quality'; for practice to be conceived as a process 'not "as a fixed set of things"'; and, furthermore, that '[c]raftsmanship is egalitarian' (92; 97; 98).

Harvie reads craftsmanship in the practice of artists Heather Ackroyd and Dan Harvey, Steve McQueen, Grayson Perry and Jeremy Deller. Further qualities of craftsmanship emerge including 'material consciousness' and 'ethic[s] of care in the composition'; 'inefficiency'; slow development of expert knowledge; 'various challenges to conventionally hierarchical relationships' (100; 102; 100; 102). Harvie concludes that '[w]hat is crafted across these artists' work is not so much commodities that will result in individual financial profit – though admittedly there will be some of that [but rather] practices of collaboration and models of egalitarianism that refuse both neoliberal self-interest and the social atomization […]' (106). *Fair Play* thus not only demonstrates the ways in which neoliberalism shapes artistic subjectivity in the 2000s, then, it also demonstrates how artists might circumnavigate such a process. Might a similar analysis be undertaken in relation to English play development and artistic subjectivities therein? What other scholarship could support this?

Ridout's *Passionate Amateurs: Theatre, Communism and Love* is distinct from Harvie's *Fair Play*, but reaches similar conclusions regarding artistic subjectivity under capital. Ridout's volume 'look[s] at the theatre as a place and a practice where it might be possible to think disruptively about work and leisure, about work and love, and about the

apparently separate realms of necessity and freedom' (4). Exploring (predominantly) industrial and post-industrial capitalist European and American contexts in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Ridout is not concerned, like Harvie, in substantively demonstrating the effects of (neoliberal) capital on (contemporary) artistic subjectivity in a particular locale. Rather, his concern is to trace a subversive figure throughout theatre's history that, paradoxically, resists capital's claim on artistic subjectivity. Somewhat reminiscent of Harvie's craftsman, Ridout seeks to locate the personification of 'passionate amateurs' in theatre.

The figure of the passionate amateur is realised across a range of diverse analyses (some of which are discussed below), commencing in Chapter One 'Theatre and Communism after Athens' (5-32). Here, the passionate amateur is established as 'the person, either knowingly or not, in pursuit of […] resistance to the establishment of our now dominant understanding of the relations between work and time' (6). That is to say that '[t]he most important of capitalism's "defining qualities" is its organization of all human life around wage labor, in which human activity and creative capacity are primarily valued for what they can contribute to the accumulation of capital' (7). The passionate amateur, Ridout claims, is a figure similar to the romantic anti-capitalist who personifies 'a resistance to industrial capitalism, articulated on behalf of values, practices, and experiences, often those of a premodern, preindustrial, rural life, that industrial capitalism seemed determined to destroy' (6). Ridout suggests not only that the passionate amateur exists in theatre's history, but that theatre in general performs what he refers to as a 'detour' in the trajectory of capital (9). First, theatre

> can offer an image or enactment or repetition of some aspect of the past – or, indeed, any time that is not the time of the 'present' that the time of theatrical 'presences' replaces – in order to negate something of our present reality. Second, within the social and economic structure of industrial capitalism, it offers this negation of the present

> by way of an experience that is not normally experienced as work, but as some kind of nonwork or 'play'. Of course it is no such thing: it is work for those who make it, just as the nonpresent past or future summoned into the present by the act of theatre-making is also no such thing, but rather the present itself, experienced otherwise. The detour taken through the theatre leads through a past that is not past and is accomplished through work that looks like it is not work. This is why the theatre is a particularly good place for the passionate amateur or romantic anti-capitalist who wants to find some way of undoing, even if only for a moment, the time of her work and the work of time upon herself. (ibid.)

Passionate amateurism, then, finds potential in the theatre. Theatre can – seemingly or symbolically – challenge capitalism's conflation of the relationship between time, work and leisure – even if the opposite is true. For Ridout, however, theatre has anti-capitalist or, rather, communist potential. The present, in theatre, can be experienced by participants as being paused. In this pause, playmakers and spectators alike can experience a 'nonwork or 'play'. This idea is, as Ridout admits, a romantic one, obviously not materially representative of the reality of playmaking which *is* work; nonetheless, it allows playmakers to take a significant 'detour' from capitalist rationality. It opens up to them the possibility of playmakers becoming passionate amateurs who actively (or unconsciously) resist their subjective relationship with capital. Although Ridout is speaking specifically about the theatre here, there are clear similarities between Harvie's description of the craftsman (above) and the passionate amateur; for example, the emphasis on working inefficiently or slowly and pausing capitalist concepts of time. Similar ideas are picked up by Kunst in her consideration of the term 'non-work', as we shall see below.[4]

[4] Ridout's figure of the passionate amateur under post-Fordist capitalism, found in Chapters Four and Five, is perhaps most instructive in relation to my own thinking (86-110; 111-137). In Chapter Four, 'Of Work, Time and Revolution', Ridout analyses the presentation of passionate amateurs in Jean-Luc Godard's film *La Chinoise* (1967). He argues that '[t]he hunch of this chapter is that *La Chinoise* is an experiment in the possibilities of theatricality as a mode of being politically situated somewhere between […] categories of work and action' (89). '[U]ncertain of their place in an emergent new

In *Artist at Work: Proximity of Art and Capitalism*, Kunst thematically elaborates on similar questions to Harvie and Ridout, but, again, in a different context. Exploring predominantly (Eastern) European practices of performance, dance and choreography, *Artist at Work* aims to examine 'the relationship between art and work, as well as [reflect] on the characteristics of artistic labour, in order to show how art approaches capitalism' (176). In a chapter entitled 'Visibility of Work' (134-175), Kunst is interested, in line (to a certain extent) with Harvie and Ridout, in tracing the effects of – and resistances to – neoliberal artistic subjectivity. Perhaps most in line with Harvie, Kunst argues that neoliberalism now fundamentally shapes artistic subjectivity. In a non-UK context, for instance, Kunst argues that, today, 'the artist becomes the ideal worker for contemporary capitalism; the artist is actually supposed to serve as the basis on which

economic order (what will come to be known as post-Fordism)', the characters of Godard's film make 'an attempt to unravel the logic and the temporality of work under capitalism' (89; 99). In other words, there is an attempt to 'interrupt the work-time rhythm of the Fordist economy by working on holiday time, and to produce precisely nothing, neither cars nor a new social order' (99). Here, Ridout is finessing his idea of what it is to be a passionate amateur in the current economic regime; an individual, but perhaps more likely a group of individuals, who directly challenge the working rhythms of the capitalist economy by working in non-work time and, furthermore, challenging the will to produce – perhaps producing nothing at all. Ridout concludes that '[t]o be an amateur, then, is to not-not work' (106). Furthermore, in Chapter Five 'Of Work, Time, and (Telephone) Conversation', Ridout explores the Nature Theater of Oklahoma's *No Dice* (2008) to expand on our understanding of the practice of passionate amateurism under post-Fordism. Drawing predominantly from the work of Virno (2004), Ridout argues that passionate amateurism in the twenty-first century may continue to manifest as 'non-work', but it may be apparent in 'the role of conversation, or "idle chatter"" and, most crucially, community (114). Via performance analysis, Ridout argues that 'getting together and eating some hot dogs sometime, having a little conversation, for the sake of it, might, for the time being, be a worthwhile way of spending one's time. Of being, in time, with others, "in SOCIETY"' (136 [original emphasis]). He concludes that '[l]odged within work itself, then, is something that […] makes work today possible and equally […] carries the potential to undo the terms upon which wage labor is established […]' (137). Passionate amateurism in a post-Fordist context, overall then, might be made manifest in all activities that undermine conventional relationships between work, time and productivity – particularly through practices that emphasise unproductive sociality. Might there be, in the framework of English play development (itself a theatrical practice of post-Fordist capitalism), evidence of passionate amateurism?

the contemporary fetishisation of creativity and creative neoliberal flexible subjectivity should be modelled' (143).

Kunst explores the effects of neoliberalism on artistic subjectivity by way of a single case study. She focuses on the ways in which Belgian philosopher Dieter Lesage summarises the practice of the artist Ina Wudtke. According to Kunst, Lesage

> describes what Wudtke actually does when she works as an artist. 'You are an artist and that means: you don't do it for the money. That is what some people think. It is a great excuse not to pay you for all the things you do. So what happens is that you, as an artist, put money into projects that others will show in their museum, in their Kunsthalle, in their exhibition space, in their gallery. So you are an investor. You give loans nobody will repay you. You take financial risks. You speculate on yourself as an artistic asset. You are a trader. You cannot put all your money into one kind of artistic stock. So you diversify your activities. You manage the risks you take. You would say it differently. I know. You say you suffer from a gentle schizophrenia. You have multiple personalities.' (134)

Kunst argues that, by empirically stating her activities, which 'move between organization, production, dissemination, networking, the presentation of the artwork and the artist herself, in a fast repetitive rhythm', Lesage 'indicates the profound changes in the work of the contemporary artist that have been taking place over the last few decades' (135). Although contextually dissimilar, then, from Harvie's account, it is possible to observe how both scholars observe shifts in artistic practice and thus artistic subjectivity.[5]

[5] Kunst, like Harvie, continues to note that artistic 'work is highly flexible and mobile, taking place simultaneously at different levels. It is impossible to differentiate between […] artistic work and its presentation, between the making of the work and its public dissemination, or between the materiality and non-materiality of the artistic work' (135). Reminiscent of Brown's arguments concerning human capital, Kunst also notes that '[i]t is also impossible to draw a line between [Wudtke's] numerous activities, her professional and private lives, the creation and organisation of her work […], her work and her pleasure. All her activities are united […]' (135).

Like all aforementioned scholars, Kunst also places emphasis on the (symbolic) possibility of artistic resistance to neoliberal subjectivity. In the conclusion to *Artist at Work*, entitled 'On Laziness and Less Work' (176-193), itself a revision of Kunst's earlier article 'Art and Labour: On Consumption, Laziness and Less Work' (2012), Kunst develops a line of theorising not dissimilar to Harvie's ideas on craftsmanship and Ridout's on passionate amateurism. Kunst sets out two key ways in which she thinks that artists can be 'disobedient' to the logic of capital (178). The first disobedience concerns the relationship between art and the economy (178) that is beyond the scope of this chapter's concern. The second argument, however,

> concerns the artist's relation to work, especially the usefulness and productive nature of that work, which affects every dimension of an artist's life […]. Contemporary work is strongly marked by transformation and flexibility; this does not actually open up new possibilities though, but frequently results in even more rigid and exploitative working conditions […]. Many artistic practices and ways of working should therefore be viewed as a resistance to this kind of definition of all activities through human work; for this reason, many contemporary artistic works are interested in methods of creation that have an interesting and incestuous relationship with laziness and non-work: mistakes, minimum effort, coincidence, duration, passivity, etc. (183)

The characteristics of artistic creation suggested by Kunst, including laziness and non-work are not the characteristics of human capital. Indeed, they diverge entirely from human capital's focus on entrepreneurialism, competition and cost for benefit self-care. Instead, they correspond to qualities of craftsmanship noted by Harvie, in particular, the emphasis on inefficiency and slowness. More obviously, however, they are aligned with Ridout's description of passionate amateurism. In vocabulary that mirrors Ridout's, for instance, Kunst claims that artists that challenge capitalist constructions of time and productivity can similarly resist capital's subject formations.

Kunst cites an example of non-work in practice. In a photography series ironically entitled *Artist at Work*, 'the Croatian conceptual artist Mladen Stilinović is depicted in his sleep [sic] in his bed, covered with a blanket and in various sleeping positions' (183). For Kunst, 'Stilinović's text […] can also be read as a process of affirming the methods of artistic creation that have emerged outside the capitalist art systems, or at least a manifest way of stepping on the brake, as an attempt to elude the temporal totality of capitalism that connects the acceleration of contemporary time with the visibility of work' (187). Like Harvie and Ridout, then, Kunst offers a complex portrait of neoliberal artistic subjectivity. In line with scholarship proceeding from Foucault, artists are broadly seen to perform as human capitals. At the same time, however, there are paradigms and personifications that hint at artistic resistance to neoliberal subjectivity. This chapter follows such cues to similarly identify the ways artists present themselves in play development.

4.4 The Artist as Human Capital in English Play Development

In this section, I build on the aforementioned theorising that seeks to demonstrate the ways in which artists perform as units of human capital. Using the transcripts of interviews I conducted with playmakers at key English new writing theatres (see Appendix D, p. 323), I show how, under capital's influence, playmakers unconsciously approached play development as a performance of human capital that commences with attracting investors and demonstrating brand marketability, showcasing work ethic and flexibility, and, above all, enacting entrepreneurialism. With reference to the principles of craftsmanship (Harvie), passionate amateurism (Ridout) and non-work (Kunst), however, I also demonstrate how artists rhetorically resist their conception as human

capitals. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, such a reading is obviously distinct from the aims and agendas of the interviewed artists. Each artistic project I encountered was determined by its own aesthetic agenda and creative/critical aims beyond the scope of my interest in artistic subjectivity and its relationship to neoliberalism.

It is worth bearing in mind here that there is also a methodological difference between my work and the aforementioned scholars. Harvie, Ridout and Kunst respectively analyse documents, performances and existing critiques of artistic work to make claims about artistic subjectivity across broad geographical contexts and time periods. Here, I analyse artists' testimonies in England in 2014-2015. Volunteered statements, however, rarely yield an accurate representation of the true effects of neoliberalism on subjectivity. As a result, what is to be examined here is *the self-presentation of artistic subjectivity in play development and its proximity to neoliberal subjectivity*. In the below, then, I develop an account of how artists presented themselves in English play development at key theatres in 2014-2015. I also argue that adopting the traits of human capital may benefit artists even if, at the same time, the traits are – seemingly or symbolically – resisted.

Attracting Investors and Brand Marketability

In interview, each artist described the process of achieving their commission and thus entering into play development. In order to commence a facilitated play development phase in key English theatres, playmakers must attract theatrical investors and demonstrate brand marketability. Although this sample is not broadly representative of all commissioned artists, I noticed that all the playwrights and playmakers I interviewed described a general performance of attracting investors through brand marketability. Personal branding is the practice of marketing people and their career. It is closely

aligned with the qualities of human capital, artrepreneurialism and artistic visibility as defined by Brown, Harvie and Kunst respectively. It focuses on self-presentation and subtle self-commodification. In the realm of mainstream playwriting, the playwright's brand may be largely reliant on an established repertoire of economically successful performances, but, also, on established social relations in the professional theatre-making community.

Tim Price, whose play *Teh Internet is Serious Business* was in development at the Royal Court in 2014, evidenced how possessing – and reiterating – one's brand is key to securing a commission. As a playwright with a history of stage plays and strong connections to Directors, Designers, Literary Managers etc., Price said he simply 'wrote to [the Royal Court] and said that I wanted to do a play about [the] Anonymous [movement]'. The implication was a commission swiftly followed. Price's approach, I suggest, demonstrates the ways in which a playwright's brand supports their access to play development. It shows play development's connection to competitive paradigms of neoliberal subjectivity in which playwrights must compete for production slots on the basis of to what extent their brands and networks are established. In line with Harvie, I suggest there is much to be gained by playmakers in securing and maintaining a personal brand. For example, with brand power, playmakers (and their brokering agents) 'foster such business-related skills as raising, managing and diversifying resources of finance; cultivating institutional and/or personal development' (Harvie 2013: 74).

For other, less-established artists, their more modest brand seemed to create more precarious terms on which they could secure production: more a case of, as Luttickken puts it, 'being in the right place at the right time' (in Lesage 2012: 16). For example, playwright Lee Mattinson secured a commission in 2014 for *Crocodiles* at the Royal Exchange Theatre by entering a competition. This involved a self-organised trajectory including completing the play without commission in advance, facilitating a read-

through and self-securing collaborators including director, Ng Choon Ping. Similarly, for RashDash's *We Want You To Watch* (2015), at the National Theatre, their more modest brand initially limited their access to commission. Their approach comprised self-organised and funded engagements with different venues prior to commission that culminated in a coverage process at Battersea Arts Centre. Moreover, they were requested to provide live demonstrations of their prospective brand marketability at invitation-only showcasings. These live showcasings of brand potential seem currently unevenly integrated into the commissioning of new work.

Playwrights had to similarly showcase prospective brand marketability. For example, Danny Matthews' play *Scrappers* (2013) at the Liverpool Everyman was commissioned only after a rigorous drafting and showcasing process in the writers' group. Both playwrights and playmakers were, therefore, expected to undertake unpaid work prior to commission via pitching, entering competitions and showcasing to demonstrate their own (and their projects') prospective viability. Since established playmakers have historically found production more readily accessible, we cannot necessarily claim these performances as especially neoliberal. As we continue to analyse the nuances of brand demonstration, I suggest artistic subjectivity in play development, however, becomes increasingly aligned with that of human capital.

For example, activities including pitching, entering competitions and showcasing bear striking structural resemblance to the compulsory performance of the human subject as Brown describes it. Brown argues that units of human capital must 'maximise their capital value in the present and enhance their future value […] through practices of […] self-investment and/or attracting investors' (22). Furthermore, the general performance of the artist is predicated on 'leveraging its competitive positioning and enhancing its monetary and non-monetary portfolio value […]' (10). Commissioning structures thus seem to ask playmakers to *become* human capital; the more human capital

in evidence, the more likelihood of entering play development. New projects, it seems, are assessed by both artists and commissioning theatres, as Read puts it, 'according to a particular calculation of cost for benefit' (28). In other words, the artist will agree to perform as human capital to the extent to which a potential opportunity for commission arises from it. On the other hand, the commissioning theatre will commission work on the basis that artists demonstrate their adherence to their performance as human capital via, in the first instance, brand power. It seems that artists do achieve a commission via a performance as human capital, supported by the theatre, but this performance is not naturalised and is replete with difficulties and uncertainties.

Although it was clear that brand power in play development was key to attracting investors, in interview, playmakers were often at pains to emphasise that development *did not* start with the demonstration of brand marketability. Rather, play development was emphasised as having commenced with moments of coincidence: a characteristic of 'non-work' and feature of the 'doing less' performance according to Kunst (2015: 183) and of non-productive sociality according to Ridout. In interview, for example, Greenland of RashDash discussed how their collaboration with Birch started as a coincidence:

> the [Creative Director at Transform Leeds] and West Yorkshire Playhouse said 'what do you think is the thing you could really do with to move forward with your work?' We said 'work with a writer'. We started to put together a short-list of women writers. Alice [Birch] was on that list [of feminist writers we wanted to work with]. When we met, we really got on and we had loads of similar political and radical feeling.

Even though RashDash seemed to represent the commissioning of Birch as informal, romantic (in Ridout's sense) and even non-hierarchical, this assembling of creatives, however, is not quite the same as Kunst's understanding of coincidence or, indeed,

Ridout's description of passionate amateurism. This is because Birch's entry into the project ostensibly supported the productive labour and skilling-up of RashDash by locating human capital's qualities including branding and professional development. Furthermore, it was a decision to support the development in an efficient way arranged by the theatre. Even though artists emphasise their non-productive social relations, then, in ways akin to Ridout's description of *La Chinoise*, we can see that collaborations inevitably intersect with attracting investors and brand marketability in ways structurally determined and thus beyond the control of individual artists.

It is the same for playwrights. Matthews also argued, for example, that his commission by the Liverpool Everyman started as a coincidence. Although *Scrappers* was Matthews' first produced play, he had studied for a degree in Drama at Liverpool John Moores University, gained a place on the Everyman's prestigious writing programme and had received numerous staged readings. As a result, it can be assumed that he had a solid understanding of theatrical practice and brand marketability on the Liverpool writing scene. Furthermore, following the production of *Scrappers*, Matthews went on to work as Creative Learning Producer at The Dukes, Lancaster, where he teaches and facilitates playwriting. Despite this, Matthews suggested, during interview, that he had 'no preconceptions of what a piece of theatre should be. It was just me talking about thoughts and feelings'. Similarly, Steven Camden argued that being commissioned to make a piece of theatre was a coincidence, rather than a career plan:

> I'm not from a theatre background. I'm also not massively enamoured by a lot of the theatre that I've seen in terms of feeling myself represented, and [the issues], and people, that I grew up with […]. It was never about 'one day I'll have a play on at the National or wherever'.

By this point, Camden was one of the UK's most acclaimed spoken-word artists who had toured globally; he was a lead artist for Ministry of Stories and The Roundhouse poetry collective and, by 2013, creative director of BearheART, a story-based creative projects company. By underplaying their brand marketability and emphasising, instead, coincidence, artists seem to aim to rhetorically resist the paradigms of human capital. This is perhaps inevitable and entirely justified. At the same time, it is possible to see that, regardless of the resistant presentation, play development is guided by the artists' business visions for creative projects. Artists may choose to represent themselves as resisting neoliberalism's parameters, in much the same way that other groups of workers – including academics, say – may do. They are, however, inevitably and unconsciously shaped by the frameworks of human capital.

In play development, then, the artist's career trajectory is carefully organised according to market logic. Artists adopt human capital's confident approach to planning and undertaking life activities, but, paradoxically, also present qualities of their practice that constitute a rejection of the philosophical framework of neoliberal subjectivity. The emphasis on multiple types of coincidence in play development demonstrates artists' attempts to present themselves outside the terms of human capital including its focus on hustling and brand power. At the same time, however, these performances – since they are rhetorical – do not map onto the paradigms of craftsmanship, passionate amateurism and/or non-work, though artists are clearly aware of the value in presenting their labour through these optics.

Work Ethic and Flexibility

In interview, playmakers revealed key information about their working practices in play development, in particular the extent to which they demonstrated work ethic and

flexibility: two key characteristics of 'artrepreneurs' as noted by Harvie (64). In most cases, this was achieved by playmakers responding rapidly, following initial meetings, to the theatres' commission briefs. For example, in all cases, playmakers committed to a development time-line and schedule. In some cases, the tasks against which playmakers had to demonstrate their work ethic were complex and, in my opinion, stretched the limits of the contract. For example, when playwright Oladipo Agboluaje was commissioned to write *Immune* (2015) for the Plymouth Drum, '[he] was under the illusion that it would be "come in, sit down, and then [go away] and write whatever you want to"'. In reality, however, the commission involved developing a play for performance by three Youth Theatres simultaneously – in other words, three commissions for the price of one.

Immune thus required an expanded remit around Agboluaje's role that included delivering workshops with the three Youth Theatres and responding creatively to the material the young people generated. In addition, Agboluaje's process necessitated working flexibly between three locations in Plymouth, Northampton and Leeds. Agboluaje noted that 'I wasn't solely the writer. I was also the workshop facilitator […]. It was much more daunting than I'd [anticipated]'. Agboluaje's comments suggest that the expected qualities of human capital – their work ethic and flexibility – not only inform the playwright's work allocation, but, also, fundamentally revision the playwright's labour as solitary and self-set as discussed in Chapter One. Instead, as is proper for human capital, the playwright is expected to work more, demonstrating their capacity for labour in any way dreamt up by the commissioning theatre.

Moreover, playwrights also described how they demonstrated work ethic by attending as closely as possible to the terms of the brief they had been set by theatres. For example, at the Royal Shakespeare Company, for *The Christmas Truce* (2014), playwright Phil Porter also had to display human capital's work ethic and flexibility in

developing an approach that accommodated the theatre's stipulations. Porter noted how he was 'sent a pack. It was about Bruce Bairnsfather who was a humourist, cartoonist, and originally from Stratford. He actually worked in the theatre – he put up their original lighting. He'd written about the Christmas truce. I knew that he would be a part [of the play], but how I used him was up to me […]'. Although Porter emphasised the self-determined nature in which he could respond to the brief, there was also a sense that the 'pack' constituted a way in which Porter must display his qualities as a neoliberal subject, showcasing an expanded approach to work and the playwright's increasingly elastic flexibility in terms of interpreting the theatre's requests.

The approaches described by playwrights, I suggest, demonstrate an emphasis on extra work added into the process, with the commissioned writer either being suggested or self-suggesting further ways in which they might demonstrate the qualities of human capital. Again, the commissioned artists' performance as human capital is not naturalised; rather, it often presents as a surprise or difficultly to the artists. Nevertheless, this extra work in play development seems congruent with the coalition's emphasis on working more – and even, as Berry puts it, on 'finding a job – any job […]' (606). Moreover, the emphasis on additional work seems to embed Luttickken's idea of the general performance into play development; networking does not stop at the commissioning phase, but is rather carried into the project as a central working practice in which the playmaker must be tasked with workshops and additional engagements as part of the process. Human capital is thus always on duty; as Brown argues its '*constant* and ubiquitous aim […] is to entrepreneurialize its endeavors' (36). The emphasis on demonstrable work ethic and flexibility in play development also connects with Harvie's reading of the artrepreneur who must continue to demonstrate work ethic and flexibility at all times. By modelling human capital's work ethic and flexibility in play development, however, artists may benefit substantially. They can cultivate a significant amount of

good will from collaborators by working more flexibly. In addition, they can foster a range of innovations in their practice (such as working across several commissioned projects at once) in ways that generate further interest and enhance brand power and the likelihood of future work. Work ethic, then, has value in play development in terms of stimulating future investment. Moreover, consideration of future opportunities is, for Brown, a key feature of human capital.

There was one common feature, however, of play development that seemed to resist the presentation of work ethic and flexibility. Playmakers discussed the ways in which they did not keep to time and often delayed or extended the development process. As noted in Chapter Three, at the Royal Shakespeare Company, Hill 'look[ed] for a main stage play to be developed over roughly two years', and, yet, in Arts Council England's *Writ Large Report*, it was noted that playwrights rarely work to time in play development. For example: '[n]early all the theatres interviewed note a tendency for commissions not to be delivered on time (perhaps because – as has been mentioned – writers subsidise one under-paid project with another)' (2009b: 90). Despite the clear need to develop a play within a time-frame, all artists I interviewed seemed to have extended their time in play development for various reasons. Price's play development, for example, was extended because he independently decided to complete a higher than usual number of drafts: '[t]hen I did loads and loads and loads of rewrites and then we went into rehearsals'. As Campbell, then Literary Manager of the Royal Court, also observed, 'Tim Price, whose play is on now [*Teh Internet is Serious Business*, 2014] used to write a draft every week'. For other artists, the lengthy duration of development was due to limitations in funding that extended the process. Zeldin noted that he 'had no money to do *Beyond Caring* [2014]. It was done in an unstructured way over a long period of time. [It was initially developed with The Yard]. The Yard Theatre were amazing in supporting the development'. Similarly, the development of RashDash's *We Want You to*

Watch (2015) was extended due to limitations in seed-funding. Helen Goalen of RashDash noted that, once Birch was on the team, they 'all went to see some work together in Germany. We went to "Find Festival" at The Schaubühne.' Greenland added, '[n]o-one paid for us to go there. There was no bursary for tickets and flights. Before *We Want You to Watch* was funded by the National, RashDash had funded the early development itself'.

By decelerating play development, playmakers seemed to articulate parallels with the qualities of craftsmanship, passionate amateurism and non-work defined by Harvie, Ridout and Kunst above. For example, craftsmanship, as noted, often implies inefficient use of time with periods of inactivity; passionate amateurism, for Ridout, especially in a post-Fordist economy, is predicated on features including an attempt to 'interrupt the work-time rhythm […] and to produce precisely nothing' (99) and, furthermore, an emphasis on idle-chatter and non-productive activity. Similarly, Kunst's conception of non-work as the presentation of 'laziness' and 'minimum effort' is central to the conception of the ways in which artists may resist their co-option by neoliberal subjectivity predominantly because, as Ridout notes so persuasively, such acts challenge the time-disciplines of capitalism.

In play development, we see that playmakers are keen to show that they haven't internalised the time-disciplines of neoliberal subjectivity to the extent that they privilege economy and speed above the content and form of their commissioned work. Moreover, they do not seem to be forced, by themselves or theatres, to adopt the time-disciplines of neoliberalism. For example, even though they have limited funding in early development, artists including Zeldin and RashDash do not seem to operate via economic principles that might have stipulated, for example, that a research trip to Germany for collaborators was unnecessary. As a result, by extending the development process, even before funding and a commission, artists seem to signal that play

development operates outside the cost per benefit mentality of human capital. At the same time, however, it is important to point out that, in extending and self-investing in their own practice (often in ways that extend the development), playmakers may inadvertently be adopting the qualities of human capital. For example, extending the development of a commissioned play, I suggest, cannot be read as an act of resistance according to the frameworks provided by Harvie, Ridout and Kunst. Since the activity remains a productive one (evidenced by the subsequent premieres of the plays), the delay does not constitute a performance of 'non-work' in the vein, perhaps, of Mladen Stilinović. Furthermore, by expanding the time-frame of the project, artists do not evade the time-disciplines of neoliberal capitalism as per Ridout's stipulation. Paradoxically, by expanding the time-frame of the project to, for instance, fit in a development trip, artists may be investing further in their presentation of work ethic and flexibility and thus in their human capital.

Entrepreneurialism

Playmakers also demonstrate entrepreneurialism in play development; for instance, by approaching play development with the utmost business professionalism, responding to feedback in the most docile of ways and, furthermore, maintaining strong business relations by praising their host theatres. Playwrights demonstrated business professionalism in responding to theatres' critiques and working practices. Porter sums this up as follows: 'I would say what I wanted to do with [the script] in conversation with Pippa [Hill] and Erica [Whyman]. Then Erica and Pippa would have discussions and feedback to me […]'. This process involved Porter demonstrating a high level of personal assurance in accepting feedback. This self-assurance is performed in the solitary writing and preparatory process. More-established playwrights responded to

feedback without any evidence of emotional labour. For example, of feedback and rewriting, Price simply stated: '[t]hen I did loads and loads and loads of rewrites and then we went into rehearsals'. Similarly, of his play *Crocodiles*, Mattinson said: 'the final week of rehearsal was with the Royal Exchange. They were coming in at this point and seeing runs and giving notes […]. Up until press night it was still getting changed […]'. Mattinson suggests here more pressure from the theatre (correlative perhaps with his more modest brand as discussed above). At the same time, however, it seems that, like Price, Mattinson reports a business-orientated approach in dealing with feedback. For less-established playmakers, however, the less secure their performance of entrepreneurial confidence is. Matthews, for example, described his process as follows:

> [t]hey wanted me to prepare a draft for the director [Matthew Xia, who is now Associate Director at the Royal Exchange Theatre]. There were deadlines for me to hand the play to [Matthew] […]. The draft that I handed in at that next deadline ended up being a lot worse […]. The Everyman really did prepare me for it, but I don't think I [knew] how to prepare myself. It was [hard] because it was about airing my thoughts and feelings. I don't think I'd prepared myself for that.

Matthews' perception was that his new draft had become 'a lot worse'. It is unclear to what extent this opinion was shaped by the feedback he received, but that feedback was not read by Matthews as subjective; rather, he accepted it as the stipulated requests made by the service user for the service that Matthews was providing. Matthews thus attempted to respond in the most business-appropriate way possible, but his response demonstrates the artists' struggles as they appropriated the tenets of human capital in their dealings with theatres.

Artists, however, showcased entrepreneurialism in praising the theatres they worked for, maintaining good business relations at all times. Price argued, for example, that the Royal Court 'is the most extraordinary writer-orientated space so they just said

"[w]hatever you need to get this done – we'll sort it.'" A similar sentiment was expressed by Zeldin who commented that 'I love working at the National. They're all so supportive. I'd received real resource and real support, technically, logistically but, also, morally [for *Beyond Caring* and, later, *Love*]'. This positive reporting seems intimately connected to the playmakers' performance as human capital since there is a sense that business social relations govern the ways in which artists speak about their host theatres.

Playmakers also performed with business professionalism in enthusing about the process of play development. Agboluaje was able to, for instance, reconcile the potentially alienating aspects of his commission by outlining the social benefits of this experience because

> [i]t was exhausting, but it was really, really interesting. Rather than just write something and call it 'for young people', you realise when you meet a young person, when you've spoken to them, when you worked with them over a period, developing work together has a positive effect. It makes a difference.

Similarly, Camden framed his role in the development of *Back Down* (2015) as one in which 'there was a real family feel to it. Tessa was the older sister, I was the younger brother, in terms of the hierarchy, and you had these three even younger brothers [the actors]. It was lovely. It was really, really great. It worked.'

In addition to Agboluaje and Camden, most other artists also described the social relationships of play development as ultimately rewarding and familial. For example, Price attributed the success of *Teh Internet is Serious Business* at the Royal Court to the friendship between Chloe Lamford (Designer) and Hamish Pirie (Director). He described the collaboration as '[t]hey weren't just good working relationships, but they were good friendships too'. Of collaborating with Birch, Greenland from RashDash said, '[w]hen we met, we really got on and we had loads of similar political and radical

feeling'. Furthermore, Mattinson described the thrill of working closely with director Ng Choon Ping: '[w]e'd send each other YouTube videos, pictures, bits of poems […]'.

While no doubt these sentiments are genuine, by speaking passionately about the social relations of play development in these ways, playmakers demonstrate perhaps the most significant benefit in performing as human capitals in play development. By committing to a performance of entrepreneurialism that heightens the positive feedback they offer theatres and other artists, playmakers ensure their future success in the professional theatrical community, but also secure for others the same benefits. By endorsing each other and often being complicit in the commissioning of one another (for example, Pirie with Price), artists invest in each other's human capital. This is perhaps a particularly interesting dimension of neoliberal subjectivity in play development. The emphasis on sociality, for example, could perhaps be read as an indication that artists are aligning with Ridout's passionate amateur who similarly strives for sociality and collaboration and, simply, passing the time together (136). Crucially, because the focus here seems to be on mobilising sociality for productivity, the evidence suggests that, rather than resisting the terms of human capital, playmakers often acquiesce to them.

In interview, however, artists often seemed to resist the terms of entrepreneurialism by emphasising how disorganised their relations with collaborators were and, furthermore, how sometimes the process led to failure rather than success. Rather than present their work as an entrepreneurial endeavour, for example, artists were keen to stress that their processes were determined by features similar to Kunst's emphasis on mistakes. Artists, for example, said they often made mistakes in their research phase. RashDash described how they had 'a splurge of all of that material on pornography that we were going through'. This 'splurge', which involved showcasing and discussing the resources they had collated, allowed them to make discoveries of how to move forward,

using finds as devising material. It often, however, resulted in dead-ends and changes in direction. Likewise, Mattinson described how he collated 'YouTube videos, pictures, bits of poems, bits of other plays' to find, again by a series of trial and error, material that would support the process. Mattinson's random acts of collection, that also led to dead-ends, were informed by a desire to 'build up the feelings, and the tensions, of the play' – to find things that enabled a meta-language around the project to emerge. Rather than read these deviations as resistant 'mistakes', however, these processes could be understood as aesthetic strategies to create an in-vogue commodity. Indeed, the emphasis on making mistakes and, more broadly, research and development in general is often observed as a central practice of entrepreneurial design, often aligning with, for example, traits including speculation and risk.

Artists, however, continued to emphasise the mistakes in their process – not to seemingly highlight their entrepreneurialism, but, often, to demonstrate their resistance to the terms of human capital. For Camden, for instance, the process of play development was extended because he made a mistake in his handling of the commission. He noted that:

> [w]hen I first talked to Tessa [Walker – the director], I said that what I'd be really interested in is writing my mum. I'd never really seen her being represented. I started writing that as a monologue, but it wasn't coming. At the same time, I was writing a novel about a boy who's from Birmingham who falls in love with film and has these two friends [*Tape*, 2015]. In one of the scenes in the novel, the characters mentioned this trip. I wanted to explore that more. I ran with it and wrote some dialogue. That's how it came out. And I said to Tessa, 'look, there's no woman in her late fifties in this!'

Camden's approach here could be framed as one of 'doing less' in which mistakes constitute a means to evade the performance as human capital and its search for perfection, efficiency and rationality. At the same time, however, it is more accurate

perhaps to assess this decision in the context of human capital's emphasis on speculation, risk-taking and trialing ideas as part of development. Camden himself frames the shift as a kind of entrepreneurial strategising by noting how '[he] ran with it'.

Artists are perhaps most resistant to presenting as human capitals in play development, however, in the associated terrain of failure. Failure is a quality of passionate amateurism according to Ridout whose passionate amateurs 'produce precisely nothing' (99). In interview, artists spoke about moments that they perceived as categorical failures, but these do not conform to the terms of passionate amateurism. In development, for playwrights, especially, there is a sense that the failure of a draft is an important catalyst for being propelled into the new draft. For example, as we have seen, Matthews was keen to demonstrate his failure in receiving difficult feedback in drafting stages at the Liverpool Everyman. Matthews' perceived failure, which produced an emotional response stronger than a perceived mistake, was read as a means to improve on the next draft. In this sense, the failure experienced by the playmaker in development is a productive failure that can be taken up by the artist. By experiencing productive failure, however, artists do not map subjectively onto the paradigms of passionate amateurism. Although this failure seems distinct from human capital's prioritisation of winning and success, its productivity implies it cannot constitute a resistance to the terms of neoliberal subjectivity.

Another example of a productive failure is playwright Mattinson's final redrafting of the work for actor Sarah Gordy: 'we cast Sarah Gordy in the role of Matilda. Sarah Gordy has Down's syndrome. We had to cut back the amount of text to make it work for Sarah [...]. Sarah was involved in the process every step of the way. We'd go through the script with her daily […]. I had to kill a lot of darlings for that, but it was so worth it for Sarah […].' Mattinson's use of the phrase 'kill a lot of darlings' is itself a short-hand for the productive failure of rewriting for the inclusion of Gordy. Mattinson kept failing

at making the script accessible for Gordy, but this process of failing was read as a productive way of collaborating with Gordy in co-developing an approach that enhanced the inclusivity. Again, I suggest that the productive failure inherent in Mattinson's redrafting process demonstrates the ways in which artistic subjectivity conforms to, rather than resists, the frame of neoliberal subjectivity.

Reading Artists as Units of Human Capital in Play Development: An Overview

Overall, I suggest that, in play development in key English new writing theatres in the mid-2010s, artists in this sample were encouraged to conceive of themselves as neoliberal subjects. By demonstrating brand marketability, work ethic, flexibility and entrepreneurialism, it seems that artists' self-presentation is in line with that of human capital. Moreover, we have seen how these qualities benefit artists during and following the commission, supporting both the individual project and career trajectory. If they are established, playmakers rely on their brand marketability to secure a commission. If they are emerging, playmakers must develop their brand marketability through a series of competitions, showcasing and events. Inside play development, playmakers must demonstrate their human capital via work ethic and flexibility that fundamentally reframes and stretches their roles. Finally, playmakers must demonstrate entrepreneurialism in their social responses to the theatres' feedback and in their self-proclaimed gratitude to the theatre and enthusiasm for the social relations on the commission. This rhetorical emphasis on justifying how much they love their work ensures that the playmaker is conceived as human capital, perhaps, as Brown puts it, in order to 'enhance their future value' (22).

In play development, I suggest, playmakers are compelled to conceive of themselves as human capital and are thus awarded the prize of freedom in development – as per the neoliberal subjectivity paradigm. They perform the qualities of human capital to achieve

this freedom which is experienced as artistic freedom. However, in line with the above reading of neoliberal subjectivity, we can understand the freedom awarded in play development to be the pay-off for the artists' self-investment and correlative to the extent to which the artist develops their brand marketability, work ethic, flexibility and entrepreneurialism. I read the re-framing of artists as units of human capital in play development as a complex evolution in practices during this period. As we have seen, neoliberal subject formation does benefit the individual artist (when successfully adopted). At the same time, it has resulted in additional labour for the artists and dilutes English play development into a hybrid activity that is not simply about playmaking, but also about business acumen.

I have also shown throughout how artists frequently rhetorically resisted the neoliberal conception of themselves and thus the neoliberal conception of play development. Artists, as we have seen, often verbally align their practice to qualities of craftsmanship, passionate amateurism and non-work. They emphasise how decisions were made by chance, how they worked slowly and inefficiently, how they made mistakes and how, often, the process was replete with failures. These rhetorical emphases, I have argued, do not align artistic subjectivity in development with the forms of resistance described by Harvie, Ridout and Kunst. They might be seen, instead, as artists' conscious attempts to distance themselves from neoliberal frameworks or, paradoxically, as evidence of a limited awareness of the extent to which neoliberalism governs all subjects.

4.5 Conclusion

Using a range of scholarship on neoliberal subjectivity, I analysed the transcripts of interviews with artists regarding their practices of play development. I explored artists'

statements concerning their processes to identify to what extent they performed as units of human capital in play development. In using these frameworks, I extended existing readings of artistic neoliberal subjectivity. My reading overall is that, in key English theatres during this period, the artists I interviewed performed as human capital. This is because, as noted above, performing as human capital presents artists with a range of benefits. In play development, artists can make use of, advance and strengthen their brand; they can showcase work ethic, flexibility and entrepreneurialism – in short, they can deploy and develop all the skills that advance their future investment and stock. Furthermore, I also argued that, by positively reviewing the theatres and other artists, artists can invest in each other's human capital and thus support and sustain each other. Artists, in my opinion, did not simply perform as human capitals in play development to benefit themselves and others; they did so because they were both consciously and unconsciously responding to the hegemonic focus on entrepreneurialism during this period and, indeed, to funders' emphasis on adopting such a performance.

It is my feeling, however, that there is a sense of unease in operating in this way. For this reason, I have also shown how playmakers rhetorically resist their envisioning as units of human capital in play development by aligning their performances with craftsmanship, passionate amateurism and non-work. Moreover, artists argue that they are led by schemas including coincidence, duration, chance, mistakes and moments of failure which undermine the terms of human capital. As I have shown, however, the rhetorical resistance to neoliberal subjectivity is not materially effective; although artists might *present* resistance to the terms of human capital, these resistances are not truly radical on the terms suggested by Harvie, Ridout and Kunst since they are mostly productive and thus ultimately work towards the successful (economic) completion of the project. This reading shows that, in English play development structures, artists perform as human capitals in line with the frameworks of neoliberal subjectivity. What

starts to emerge then, over these four chapters thus far, is how play development is imbued in deep and dynamic ways with neoliberalism: via its texts and semantics, its bureaucratic strategies, its modes of production and its capacity to shape subject positions. In the next chapter, I continue to explore how English play development practices were informed by the discursive features of neoliberalism including its co-option of diversity discourses.

CHAPTER FIVE

SHIFTING STANDPOINTS: NEGOTIATING DIVERSITIES IN ENGLISH PLAY DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES IN THE 2010s

5.1 English Play Development and New Diversity in Coalition Britain

In this chapter, we continue to focus on English play development practices under the neoliberal governance of the Cameron-Clegg coalition, turning our attention to discourses of diversity and how they came to affect play development following the 2010 Equality Act – defined below. This thesis has yet to explore what Davina Cooper calls 'diversity politics': 'a broad, discursive space that emerged out of the very particular social, cultural and political conditions of the 1980s and 1990s' and its effects on English playmaking (2004: 5). 'Diversity politics', Lentin and Titley argue in their chapter 'Good and Bad Diversity' in *The Crisis of Multiculturalism: Racism in the Neoliberal Age* (2011: 160-192) 'eschews liberal notions of tolerance, and resituates minority identities and practices in the public sphere independent of the contingencies of benevolent recognition' (180). This chapter thus turns to explore the integration of diversity politics in English play development practice in the 2010s. In the sections below, I identify the political context in which diversity politics emerged and outline this chapter's intentions in terms of exploring their connection with English play development in the context of neoliberalism.

Governing Diversity

In the twenty-first century, the UK has seen successive socially liberal governments each purporting an engagement with diversity. According to Peter Ratcliffe, 'New Labour administrations since 1997 […] all espoused the notion of "One Nation" as an inclusive citizenship' (2004: 8). As Vicky Squire notes, '[e]arly in New Labour's first term of Government, diversity was celebrated within the national "community of communities" through a conception of multicultural Britain as "Cool Britannia"' (2005: 56). Lentin and Titley argue that, increasingly, as its equality agenda matured, 'New Labour think tanks searched for ways of replacing the outmoded and discredited discourse of multiculturalism with modes of recognizing difference that could be reconciled with a new focus on cohesion' (185).

The most significant example of Labour's social liberalism manifested in its 2010 'Equality Act'. According to the UK Government, the Equality Act legally 'protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society' (2015). Protected groups now include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (ibid.). As Liz Tomlin notes, 'New Labour's social inclusion agenda […] was hugely significant in shaping arts policy' (2014: 4). Correspondingly, in 2011, Arts Council England launched a new policy document based on the Equality Act entitled *The Creative Case for Diversity* (2011a; *The Creative Case* henceforth). *The Creative Case* was a revised approach for diversity in the arts, including theatre, based around a renewed approach to resituating many of the protected groups referenced in the Equality Act into the sphere of English artistic production and consumption.

The Creative Case was implemented during the coalition government. Its uptake by the Clegg-Cameron cohort is perhaps an expression of what Paul Dorey describes as

Cameron 'promoting a more socially inclusive and compassionate Conservatism' (2007: 137). For example, during his tenure, the self-styled 'liberal conservative' Cameron also took, as Richard Hayton and Libby McEnhill note, 'an inclusive approach to "equality issues", and a commitment to the positive freedom or "freedom to," including his stance on equal marriage rights for same-sex couples' (2015: 132). *The Creative Case* was thus a discursive extension of the socially liberal position purported by the coalition on diversity. It was also, I suggest, a document that harboured other ideas about diversity.

Reading Diversity: *The Creative Case*

In this chapter, I suggest that *The Creative Case* possesses two conflicting ideas on diversity that have impacted on English play development practices in the 2010s. One 'diversity' inherent in *The Creative Case* is what I am calling 'new diversity'. New diversity is a term I use here to refer to a diversity that is part of a '*new* spirit' of capitalism (Boltanski and Chiapello 2018 [1999] [my emphasis]). Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello deploy the idea of the 'spirit of capitalism' to explain the evolution in dominant capitalist ideologies. They identify three successive spirits of capitalism with the new one, at the time of writing, a 'project-based' spirit. Project-based, or post-Fordist neoliberal capitalism endorses citizens in expressing individuality – where diversity is often enhanced through social progressivism and corporate social responsibility. New diversity, as discussed further below, then, can be defined as a socially-advanced egalitarianism that valorises all citizens as agents with quality and potential for excellence, thus ensuring equal access to the market. As such, scholars can trace its presence in corporate capitalism (Kazmi, Leca, Naccache 2015), but also in the initiatives of quangos including Arts Council England. For example, in a chapter entitled 'On Quality: Disability and Aesthetic Judgements' in *Theatres of Learning Disability* (2015:

79-111), Matt Hargrave uses the term 'new diversity' in this vein to articulate the spirit of diversity advanced in *The Creative Case*.

Hargrave's chapter is concerned, overall, with unmasking underlying assumptions about the relationship between quality, disability and aesthetics as they are advanced in UK Arts policy. He notes how '*The Creative Case* indicates a policy shift from diversity as social deficit to diversity as human value' (83). The document is seen to 'represent […] a shift that mirrors the move from art as an advocacy tool to art as a complex system of representation' (ibid.). For Hargrave, then, *The Creative Case* blends the 'neoliberal process of building an individualised, entrepreneurial workforce prepared to work for little (or nothing)' with vocabularies of 'diversity' and 'quality' (84): '[t]he report enfolds diversity and quality to the point where they both vanish. Excellence (the new quality) is only apparent if relevant; and relevance is (currently) diversity; so to be excellent one must be diverse and everyone is diverse; and so on, until the criteria collapse on themselves' (85). Hargrave highlights a range of issues with the conflation of neoliberal self-valorisation and diversity in *The Creative Case*, including how it unintentionally endorses a return to 'traditional values' that, paradoxically, omit underrepresented artists because their practice cannot be seen as universal (ibid.; 86-89). Hargrave thus argues:

> *The Creative Case for Diversity* might appear to give the 'diverse artists' (a ridiculous term) what they want: escape from the silo of the social agenda; recognition that 'they' are integral to the mainstream; even a promise that the work will be the recipient of increased critical reflection. The ultimate result is a *new diversity*, which is a more sophisticated version of the old diversity: a surface difference, which belies the reality of crushing homogeneity. (109 [my emphasis])

For Hargrave, then, 'new diversity' is a complex neoliberal economic process integrated into the arts for constructing an individualised and entrepreneurial workforce that results *not* in an advancement of minority arts, but, rather, a reinforcement of traditional

and universalist ideals that paradoxically exclude diverse groups. His term 'crushing homogeneity' demonstrates that new diversity not only fails to promote difference in the arts; ironically, it produces widespread uniformity. To extend this logic, then, new diversity might be defined overall as a diversity of neoliberal governance that advocates abstractly for equality, but materially reinforces homogeny and inequality.

Here, I use the term 'new diversity' as a means to articulate the neoliberal dimensionality of *The Creative Case's* diversity. I draw on a range of additional contemporary scholarship concerned with new diversity to explore further the relationship between *The Creative Case's* diversity and neoliberalism including the aforementioned volume by Lentin and Titley, Jeremy Gilbert's essay 'What Kind of Thing Is Neoliberalism?' (2016 [2013]: 10-32) and Paul Gilroy's "'…We Got to Get Over Before We Go Under…" Fragments for a History of Black Vernacular Neoliberalism' (2016 [2013]: 33-54). Since this theorising persuasively presents the links between neoliberalism and new diversity, it allows me to make observations on the potential impact of new diversity in *The Creative Case* on English play development.

I also argue that *The Creative Case* additionally possesses another type of diversity derived from 'standpoint feminist theory': a 1970s and 1980s branch of Marxist-feminist theorising. Standpoint theory commences from the observation that knowledge production has historically excluded women and minorities. Standpoint contends that there is a need to produce an alternative knowledge built on what women and minority groups know. As Donna Haraway argues, standpoint acknowledges the 'politics and epistemologies of location, positioning and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims' (1988: 589). The practical use of standpoint theory, entitled 'standpoint theory building' produces a diversity altogether different from new diversity. It is my contention, however, that both new diversity and what I call 'standpoint diversity' are present in *The*

Creative Case. I show, furthermore, that both new and standpoint diversity can cascade into play development practices. In particular, I hope to show that standpoint diversity, when integrated into play development, can give rise to a number of positive effects. By engaging standpoint theory and the aforementioned theorising on new diversity, I extend this thesis's Marxist materialist methodology and develop new ways to explore how and why diversity is integrated into English play development. Standpoint theorising, as noted in the introduction to this thesis, does not diverge from a classical Marxist framework since it upholds the principles of historical materialism – as discussed below. At the same time, it does seek to add nuance to Marx's representation of the role of minority groups inside the capitalist mode of production. In using standpoint theorising then, this chapter expands beyond this thesis's overarching commitment to historical Marxism to advance an exploration of the relationship between diversity and English play development.

This chapter thus asks how English play development practices evolved in relation to *The Creative Case*. How does *The Creative Case* define diversity and how does it suggest diversity should be integrated into theatre's mode of production – namely its play development practices? In other words, I seek to ascertain how theatre-makers have responded to *The Creative Case* or, rather, how they have integrated its sometimes antithetical diversities into play development. The aim, then, is to show that, in the twenty-first century, there are different framings of diversity, that two such framings appear in *The Creative Case* and, furthermore, that artists must negotiate different framings of diversity in their play development.

Reading Diversity: Play Development

The play development phases to be analysed here are Barbados and Friends Association (henceforth BAFA), Sitelines (sic) and the University of Reading's development of *Being Gordon Greenidge* (2017; forthcoming tour); Dante or Die's on-going development of *Kiss, Marry, Kill* (forthcoming); and Andy Smith's development of *Summit* (2017; 2018 tour). None of these projects, as discussed below, were explicitly focused on exploring or advancing diversity politics. At the same time, they became of interest to this chapter since their developments respectively engaged with diversity politics around identities including ethnicity, sexuality and d/Deafness. *Being Gordon Greenidge*, for example, premiered on the 12th October 2017 at Reading School's cricket pavilion. The play explores the life of the West Indies batsman Gordon Greenidge (1951-) and experiences of migration from Barbados to Reading. *Kiss, Marry, Kill* focusses on the first gay marriage in UK prisons between inmates Mikhail Gallatinov and Marc Goodwin, both currently serving life sentences in Full Sutton Prison in East Yorkshire. Linked to the aforementioned legalisation of same-sex marriage, *Kiss, Marry, Kill* attends to LGBTQ+ experience with the hope of a premiere at Reading Gaol – site of Oscar Wilde's imprisonment. *Summit* premiered on 8th May 2017 at The Brighton Fringe Festival. Presented as an emergency gathering, it explores the possibility of a non-hierarchical performance of British Sign Language, English and a third language (Farsi at the premiere).

Being Gordon Greenidge, Kiss, Marry, Kill and *Summit* were all seed-funded and facilitated as part of a project I led entitled 'Diversity through Development' (2016-2019). In partnership with South Street Arts Centre, Reading, I received Arts Council England funding to seed-fund six plays with diversity themes. I facilitated the development of these plays at The University of Reading where I observed the playmaking processes. It

is because of their complex presentation of diversities in development that I include analysis of these works here.[1]

This chapter is structured as follows: in section 5.2, I build a methodology for reading *The Creative Case* and the aforementioned case studies from standpoint theory, tracing its origins in – and deviations from – Marx's *Capital Volume One*: the pivotal text of this thesis's methodology. In 5.3, I develop an additional lens by conceptualising new diversity in relation to the neoliberal. In 5.4, I read *The Creative Case* using those theories. In the subsequent three sections, I attend to how theatre-makers materially integrate diversity into play development. In section 5.5, I address *Being Gordon Greenidge*. In section 5.6, I explore *Kiss Marry Kill*. In section 5.7, I turn to *Summit*. In section 5.8, I conclude this chapter by evaluating what these examples suggest about the ways in which diversity has been materially integrated into play development during the 2010s.

5.2 Standpoint Theory

The Creative Case can be read in two ways – either as a liberal text upholding the principles of new diversity or, rather, as a radical text propounding the benefits of

[1] By including these case studies, this chapter engages the final methodological approach for studying play development used across this thesis. As noted in the introduction, drawing on works including Tomlin's *Incubate: Propagate: Networked Ecologies of New Performance-Making*, I initiated two projects for studying play development, including the aforementioned 'Diversity through Development'. As well as operating as the project's Principle Investigator, I was also a named Creative Producer and, in *Being Gordon Greenidge's* case, the named Dramaturg. The project therefore not only enabled me to observe play development in a detailed way; it allowed me to trial a number of development strategies with artists. At the same time, with the confluence of roles, the project positioned me in complicated ways. I was sometimes insider, sometimes outsider, sometimes facilitator and seed-funder, sometimes observer. The multiplicity of roles inevitably impacts on the nature of evaluation here. The accounts of development, therefore, that I offer below, are careful to emphasise the different (and pre-existing) aims of each artist that diverged entirely from the project's focus on play development and diversity politics. I have also been careful to remain unbiased in my writing, focusing on the ways in which the development stage can be observed to reveal an understanding of diversity politics in play development – even if this is not a central concern of artists.

standpoint diversity. Standpoint feminist theory emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as a means to explore the production of knowledge. It presented a method for attending to the experiences of marginalised groups including women (see Smith 1974; see also Collins 1986: 14). Standpoint feminists wanted to find what Donna Haraway called the 'situated knowledge' of these groups: their real knowledge derived from lived experience (1988). By collecting situated knowledge, standpoint feminists built a method that illuminated the realities of the lives of the oppressed and the structures of domination surrounding them.

Standpoint theorists needed a method to draw out situated knowledge. For early standpoint feminists, *Capital Volume One's* historical materialist method seemed most appropriate since its offers a touchstone example of generating knowledge on the conditions and experiences of the proletariat under capital. As Haraway notes: 'Marxist starting points offered a way to get to our own versions of standpoint theories […]' (1988: 578). Yet, the adoption of historical materialism required further consideration. Nancy Hartsock, for example, found Marx's gendered legacies troubling – as she notes in a chapter entitled 'Reoccupying Marxism as Feminism' (1998: 73-104). Historical materialism had the potential to be a total method for exploring the realities of all marginalised groups, yet, for Hartsock, Marx had failed to look across to the lives of women and other groups. Consider, for example, Hartsock's compelling re-imagining of the proletariat below:

> [t]o paraphrase Marx, we follow the worker home from the factory, we can once again perceive a change in the *dramatis personae*. He who before followed behind as the worker, timid and holding back […] now strides in front while a third person, not specifically present in Marx's account of the transaction between capitalist and worker (both of whom are male) follows timidly behind, carrying groceries, baby and diapers. (2004 [1983]: 41)

I agree that Marx's labour theory – seen across *Capital Volume One's* Chapters Six and Seven – seems, when read in the context of standpoint theorising, to not sufficiently account for women, seemingly analysing only the experience of the male worker (270-306). Moreover, I think that Hartsock locates, as Brown puts it in *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, the fact that '[a]s provisioners of care for others in households, neighborhoods, schools and workplaces, women disproportionately remain the invisible infrastructure for all developing, mature, and worn-out human capital – children, adults, disabled, and the elderly' (2015: 105). Indeed, according to Heather A. Brown (2012), feminist revisions to Marx's labour theory, such as Hartsock's above, were central to the standpoint project. Jaggar and Hartman, for example, also argue that 'Marx's […] theory is gender-blind'; 'it sees women's work as outside production, the market and is thus non-productive' (2004: 67). Heather A Brown's feeling, however, is that 'Marx's discussion of gender extended far beyond merely including women as factory workers' and that 'there are potential openings within Marx's overall theory of society that may be amenable to a feminist interpretation' (3; 4-5). It is important to recognise, then, that standpoint, in its earliest incarnation, had an uneasy relationship with Marx's historical materialism, particularly the labour theory, but nonetheless imbibed its central tenets.

Hartsock argues that standpoint should take up historical materialism and extend the 'proletarian standpoint' to a 'deeper going' analysis on all marginalised groups, especially women (2004: 36). She argues that

> like the lives of the proletarians according to Marxian theory, women's lives make available a particular and privileged vantage point on male supremacy, a vantage point on which we can ground a powerful critique of the phallocratic institutions and ideology which constitute the capitalist form of patriarchy. (ibid.)

Through a feminist interpretation of Marx's labour theory, Hartsock sets out the methodological principles of standpoint, confirming the approach as a historical materialist analysis of the situated knowledges or vantage points of marginalised groups whose perspectives could provide powerful critiques of capitalism and the patriarchy. Hartsock continues:

> I hope to show how just as Marx's understanding of the world from the standpoint of the proletariat enabled him to go beneath bourgeois ideology, so a feminist standpoint can allow us to understand patriarchal institutions and ideologies as perverse inversions of more humane social relations. (ibid.)

Hartsock's idea to 'go beneath' hegemonic modes of conceiving the world became the starting point of standpoint feminism. As Sandra Harding comments, 'standpoint projects would "study up" […] see "beneath" or "behind" the dominant ideologies that shaped everyone's lives' (2004: 6). Harding elaborates on what might constitute the systems of oppression that standpoint projects must see beneath:

> [a]ndrocentric, economically advantaged, racist, Eurocentric, and heterosexist conceptual frameworks ensured systematic ignorance and error about not only the lives of the oppressed, but also about the lives of their oppressors and thus about how nature and social relations in general worked […]. (2004: 5-6)

By seeing 'beneath' conceptual frameworks, standpoint projects, Harding argues, start to produce a systematic alternative to hegemonic modes of conceiving the world and develop what Patricia Hill Collins describes as an 'oppositional consciousness' (in Harding 2004: 1-2). Standpoint, therefore, might be summarised as an approach based on the following principles:

1. To acknowledge the problem of bias and the need for more 'subjects of knowledge'.

2. To empower the theory building of marginalised groups: draw out knowledge and strive for inclusion rather than bias.
3. To acknowledge that standpoint theory-building cannot be done on behalf of marginalised groups; rather it is a collaborative method that seeks to platform and empower marginalised groups through the construction of new knowledge.[2]

Standpoint feminism makes new knowledge in a process called 'theory building': 'the examination and understanding of personal or subjective experience' (Hartsock 1998: 40). By using methods including interview, observation and reflection, standpoint theorists empower the collection of information from themselves and/or other marginalised peoples to attend to the historical omission of their perspectives. Hartsock describes theory building here:

> [w]e drew connections between personal experience and political generalities about the oppression of women: we took up our experience and transformed it through reflection. This transformation of experience by reflection and the subsequent alterations in women's lives laid the

[2] The first principle of standpoint relates back to the discussion above, but all the points are seen more clearly in relation to another early standpoint account: Dorothy Smith's 'Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology' (1974). In relation to her own discipline of sociology, Smith argues that something has been missing; something 'has been left out, overlooked' (7). What has been overlooked according to Smith is the perspectives and study of women in sociology. Smith argues that '[t]he first difficulty is that how sociology is thought – its methods, conceptual schemes and theories – has been based on and built up within the male social universe (even when women have participated in its doing)' (ibid.). According to Smith, her discipline is based on a bias where the 'male social universe' is presented as fact (ibid.). As we can start to see, then, standpoint is not simply a critical engagement with Marx, but rather a historical-materialist method – built on an engagement with *Capital Volume One* – that applies to other contexts. Smith suggests that an alternative sociology would prioritise finding what is missing: '[a]n alternative sociology must be reflective, i.e. one that preserves in it the presence, concerns and experience of the sociologist as knower and discoverer' (11). Here, Smith is suggesting that standpoint not only needs to acknowledge bias, but must also find the 'presence, concerns and experiences' of marginalised subjects. This leads standpoint to be conceived as a process that actively participates in the construction of alternative subjects of knowledge.

> groundwork for the idea that liberation must pervade aspects of life not considered politically important in the past. (1998: 19)

By collating observations and experiences of marginalised groups, standpoint theorists can then subject their observations to interrogation in ways that render their findings useful to a broader process of political liberation. In other words, through a process that listens to, incorporates, attends to and reflects on the experiences of marginalised groups, standpoint lays the ground work for political change. Crucially, for the purposes of this chapter, standpoint theory provides, I suggest, a Marxist lens for analysing the intellectual position of one type of beneficial diversity in *The Creative Case* and the subsequent practice of individual playmakers. As noted above, however, I see standpoint diversity in *The Creative Case* as problematised by the presence of new diversity.

5.3 New Diversity

New diversity, I suggest, is distinct from standpoint diversity. The former, as we shall see below, has a neoliberal economic base, whereas the latter is an antithetical diversity that seeks to undermine capital's hegemonies. In relation to new diversity, Lentin and Titley reaffirm that it is 'widely recognised' that the 'normative and inclusive sense of diversity has deep affinities with the "new spirit of capitalism"' (180). One feature of neoliberalism hitherto undiscussed in this thesis is its manifestation as socially progressive; it is an anti-racist, quasi-feminist, hypercompetitive field to which all subjects should have access. As a result, neoliberalism is itself a form of new diversity. As Gilbert explains in his essay entitled 'What Kind of Thing Is Neoliberalism?', '[p]erhaps what is most strikingly novel about neoliberal theory is its commitment to […] widening property ownership and distribution and securing equality of access to the

competitive labour market for members of disadvantaged social groups, irrespective of their class or ethnic background' (14). We can understand states (and thus quangos, institutions, organisations, individuals etc.) to activate new diversity, therefore, as a vehicle through which to engage (subjects) with the market.

Obama's administration is a touchstone example. In *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, Brown notes how the Obama administration linked social liberalism with economic growth:

> [m]ore accessible mortgages enabling 'responsible young families' to buy their first home will 'help our economy to grow'. Investing in education would reduce the drags on growth caused by teen pregnancy and violent crime, to put 'kids on a path to a good job,' allow them to 'work their way into the middle class'. (25)

What Brown touches on here is how diversity became increasingly interlinked with what Gilroy refers to as 'vernacular neoliberalism' (33). In "'…We Got to Get Over Before We Go Under…" Fragments for a History of Black Vernacular Neoliberalism', Gilroy reframes the liberally progressive new diversity discourses of New Labour and the coalition by reminding us of the economic base to their social engineering. Gilroy argues that in Britain under New Labour there was a 'rising tide of interest in entrepreneurship in Britain's "minority ethnic" communities – a possibility which dovetailed readily with the ideology of New Labour and […] their "corporate populism"' (ibid.). Gilroy adds that under Labour the advancement of neoliberal subjectivity was structurally supported across the public and private sectors by new diversity discourses through processes including 'avowedly meritocratic, corporate diversity […] polychromatic, heterocultural vitality […] and cohorts of diversity management' (34). Since the coalition's 2012 'multicultural triumph' of the Olympic Games opening ceremony, institutional and cultural '[s]ignifiers of diversity [are] instrumental in securing that golden panoply of

merited success' (37). Contemporary Britain 'sanctions the ideology of hustling […] and summons up the disquieting prospect of today's black and multi-culti [sic] Britons not exactly as ideal, neoliberal subjects but as people whose testing life experiences can increase their vulnerability to the seductions of a vernacular neoliberalism' (ibid.). As Lentin and Titley note, 'diversity provides a thematic dimension to neoliberal individualization of working conditions, but also, with its inscription in the project of the actualizing self, elective community and putative freedom from hierarchy, diversity is a moral promise' (242). Sarah Ahmed's critique clarifies this. In *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (2012), Ahmed argues that

> [t]he shift to the language of diversity could thus be understood in market terms; diversity has a commercial value and can be used as a way […] of marketing. Others have called this the 'Benetton model' of diversity in which diversity becomes an aesthetic style or way of 'rebranding' an organisation. More specifically, and perhaps given the widespread use of 'business case' arguments for diversity within public and private sector organisations, 'diversity' has been identified as a management term […]. (53)

I find Ahmed's critique here particularly useful in clarifying the ways in which new diversity often manifests. Since *The Creative Case*, for example, self-consciously resists the 'business cases' for diversity that preceded it, it might be tempting to assume that it is free from new diversity or what Ahmed terms 'official diversity' – the managed diversity with economic value (52). Acknowledging that new diversity is, however, inevitably present in *The Creative Case* is important. In the following section, I read *The Creative Case* through standpoint and new diversities showing how both are present.

5.4 The Creative Case: Standpoint and New Diversities

The Creative Case for Diversity emerged from the thought-work of two neoliberal governments. As such, it is a carrier of the aforementioned dialectics of capital that deploy new diversity as a means for transmitting neoliberalism. It is also, in my opinion, a document that discursively produces beneficial standpoint diversity. In this section I read *The Creative Case's* hybrid diversity. In doing so, I prepare for a subsequent analysis that reads the potential presence of these diversities in English play development practices in the 2010s.

The Creative Case constituted a revised approach to diversity in the arts. Before its emergence, there was a longstanding debate about public funding's relationship to diversity. In an article entitled 'State Support of Artists: The Case of the United Kingdom in a New Labour Environment and Beyond' (2007), Victoria D. Alexander argues that from its origins 'a tension existed in the Arts Council between the goals of "raising" and "spreading". "Raising" implies a focus on high standards of aesthetic excellence […]. "Spreading" refers to increasing audiences for and access to the arts by bringing art to the people' (187). The dichotomy between 'raising' and 'spreading' has meant that the implementation of diversity has remained a problem in English arts.

As Jerri Daboo has argued, 'the Arts Council has produced many reports that have each attempted to "solve" the "problem" of the "lack" of diversity in theatre productions, playwrights, actors and audiences, offering "solutions" through developments in policy and practice' (2018: 3). Naseem Kahn's seminal account 'The Arts Britain Ignores: The Arts of Ethnic Minorities in Britain' first articulated the problems of representation in 1976. Later, a suite of documents emerged including *Towards Cultural Diversity* (1989); *The Landscape of Fact: Towards a Policy for Cultural Diversity for the English Funding System* (1997); and *Cultural Diversity Action Plan* (1998). All

respectively argued a 'business case' for diversity: the economic advantages of including all communities in the production and consumption of the arts. We can view these previous documents, then, as open expressions of new diversity. *The Creative Case*, however, acknowledges the 'worth' of previous approaches, but notes that its own approach would be different (3). It would not directly acknowledge its economic logic to encourage diversity. Instead, it would subsume the market value of its own new diversity and present a compelling account of the moral and creative worth of standpoint diversity. *The Creative Case* thus sets itself apart from preceding approaches that openly articulate a new diversity and celebrate difference according to value. In *The Creative Case*, diversity is redefined as 'crucial to the arts because they sustain, refresh, replenish and release the true potential of England's artistic talent, regardless of people's background' (3). *The Creative Case* thus became an initiative for encouraging arts providers to embrace a hybrid diversity: a hybrid of openly standpoint and covert new diversity.

A short document (at sixteen pages), *The Creative Case* is a polemic that articulates the historic bias of English arts production and looks for ways to include new groups of people in the arts. As such, I suggest that *The Creative Case* attempts to distance itself from an articulated neoliberal positionality vis-à-vis diversity and, instead, aims to construct a standpoint diversity that is oppositional to economic imperatives. For example, it acknowledges the problem with bias in the arts or what it refers to as 'structural barriers and antiquated and exclusive approaches' (8) and the need to build more subjects of knowledge to disrupt these hegemonies (1-12). A section entitled 'a new vision' (13-16) engages in theory building, articulating the ways in which the arts might find the hitherto omitted situated knowledge of minorities in England.

The Creative Case thus commences from a position consistent with the standpoint observation that certain groups in England have historically been – and continue to be –

omitted from the sphere of arts production and consumption. It proceeds from an understanding that 'there is generally a lack of profile and critical debate on work produced by diverse artists' (16). In other words, there is a lack of 'particular and privileged vantage point[s]' from minority groups (Hartsock 2004: 36). This is strikingly similar, then, to the starting point of standpoint where, half a century earlier, in the work of Smith (2004 [1974]), for example, there was an emergent understanding that hegemonic structures failed to include marginalised groups in the historical and epistemological record. For example, *The Creative Case* acknowledges five core minority groups from which the English Arts could build an oppositional consciousness that genuinely profiles situated experience. These groups are immigrants and migrants (10; 11); working class people (9); people who are neuro-diverse or differently-abled (13); women (14); and those who identify as LGBTQ+ (16). These groups overlap significantly with groups newly protected in the Equality Act.

The Creative Case attends to each of these groups, demonstrating the poor historical attitudes to representing their stories and fostering their making. It is observed, for instance, that there is a limited artistic record of telling stories from immigrant and migrant communities – especially those who emigrated from the Colonies in the twentieth century. 'Post-World War II immigration', it argues, has forever changed the essence of British life – so why do we still largely struggle to properly articulate that phenomenon within the arts?' (10). In addition to acknowledging the limitations in the situated knowledge of immigrants and migrants in the arts, *The Creative Case* acknowledges, as Smith did with the discipline of sociology, the lack of acknowledgement of the contributions of minority subjects in its models of practice. *The Creative Case* notes that 'we have yet to fully incorporate the full contribution of artists who migrated to this country on the development of our modernist movements' (11). In addition to acknowledging the standpoint of immigrant, minority and colonial subjects

who moved to Britain in the twentieth century, *The Creative Case* acknowledges the omissions of further minority groups. There is a section exploring the difficulty low-income individuals experience (9); a section that 'open[s] up these commonly neglected areas of inquiry' including the work of neuro-diverse and differently-abled artists (13); women (14); gender non-conforming and queer artists (16).

By noting that these groups have been largely omitted from English arts production, *The Creative Case* notes, as standpoint did, the 'androcentric economically advantaged, racist, Eurocentric, and heterosexist conceptual frameworks' (Harding 2004: 5-6). There is, throughout *The Creative Case*, an acknowledgement that diverse groups have been 'neglected' and 'oppressed' and have 'faced discrimination' (13). The art of marginalised groups has been 'placed in the margins through structural barriers and antiquated and exclusive approaches' (8) and the 'distribution and consumption of the creative product [is] being delivered in the main through a network of exclusive clubs' (9). Although there is no detailed analysis on what constitutes the 'network of exclusive clubs', there is a sense that what *The Creative Case* is acknowledging here is similar to Smith's acknowledgment of how an objectivist 'male social universe' and its 'biases' are actually presented as representative (7; 9). Vocabularies such as 'exclusive' suggest an acknowledgement of the elitist and financially hierarchical aspects of the arts that exclude people who are not wealthy from participating as producers or consumers.

The Creative Case sets out 'a new vision' (13-16), however, that sounds suspiciously similar to the tenets of new diversity. It argues that arts producers might engage in theory building: in other words, that they materially integrate the standpoint of the five minority groups identified in the report into their arts production. The new vision commences with the urgent demand that '[w]e need to develop a total approach to the arts that allows us to reassess artists whom we consider to display excellence, and uncover aspects of their lives that the establishment template cannot hold […]' (13). By

acknowledging the limitations for integrating situated knowledge of minorities into the 'establishment template', *The Creative Case's* vision *commences* from the standpoint proposition that the institutions and ideology of the English arts are actually structural barriers – similar to those noted by standpoint feminists about their disciplines and the 'phallocratic institutions and ideology which constitute the capitalist form of patriarchy' (Hartsock 2004: 36). According to *The Creative Case*, this theory building will include 'the chance that a proper place can be given to those artists today who are fighting against their work being devalued or being exoticised, and for its true potential to be recognised' (14-15). Further advice to National Portfolio Organisations on theory building includes 'uncovering artists' (14). *The Creative Case* ends by suggesting that arts providers now should

> dismantle the barriers that exclude the widest participation in the arts. Issues of class, gender, race and disability discrimination or stereotype have prevented working-class people, women, Black and minority ethnic and disabled people, lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgendered people and other groups from enjoying quality artistic experiences as creators and thereby growing their professional reputations. (16)

The vision of *The Creative Case*, seen in the above, is perhaps where the document departs from standpoint diversity and moves towards new diversity. Standpoint theory has a clear methodology for collating and integrating the situated knowledge of minority groups. *The Creative Case*, by contrast, is a limited document in the specificity it provides for how, exactly, it imagines its diversity to be integrated into the arts. This limitation for how arts providers might theory build, I suggest, is an expression of new diversity's superficiality – an example of one of the '[s]ignifiers of diversity' as described by Gilroy (37), or the ruse of the 'Benetton model' described by Ahmed (53). Furthermore, since its intellectual position is not new and its methodology is scant, we can see how the 'new vision' of *The Creative Case* aligns with Hargrave's reading of new diversity as 'a

more sophisticated version of the old diversity' (109). By not providing a methodology, then, *The Creative Case*, I believe, comes close to revealing its neoliberal imperatives. Overall, the document therefore possesses a hybrid vision of diversity built from its engagement with principles of standpoint diversity, but also its acceptance of new diversity.

Arts Council England have somewhat articulated the complexities in the hybrid diversity they put forward. For example, a range of material barriers to T*he Creative Case's* interpretation have been noted. The first is the unconscious bias of those who may be interpreting the document. As former Chair of Arts Council England, Peter Bazalgette, commented in his 2015 keynote, 'Diversity and the Creative Case: One Year On': '[w]e all know it's about changing minds, not a quick fix […] [w]e have to do better […] [i]t takes effort to challenge one's assumptions and the innate tendency to default to the choices we are most comfortable with'. Thus Bazalgette suggests that *The Creative Case* may be impeded by entrenched views and pre-existing biases that make standpoint theory building difficult to accomplish. The second barrier Arts Council England has noted is the material limitation in expertise of those interpreting *The Creative Case*. In the 2013 report, *Equality and Diversity within the Arts and Cultural Sector in England*, for example, it is noted that

> [o]ne of the challenges outlined in the evidence review relates to the fact that despite their commitment to equality and diversity, many arts organizations don't have the expertise or resources needed to design and implement effective approaches […]. (77)

This comment suggests what Hargrave calls the 'crushing homogeneity' inherent in the positionality from which the document stems (2015: 109). For example, rather than produce its desired effect, *The Creative Case* may reinforce historic universalist values and

ironically prohibit diverse production and consumption in the arts. Despite its problems however, *The Creative Case* must be interpreted by organisations and individual theatre makers. In the next sections, I explore how theatre makers are materially implementing the standpoint and new diversities found in *The Creative Case* into their practice. In particular, I show how each case study offers a different use of standpoint diversity. It is worth noting that the Arts Council England funded project 'Diversity through Development', in which the following works were developed, did not stipulate any application of diversities, but constituted, rather, a supportive mechanism for the development of and engagement with the projects.

5.5 Reading Diversity in BAFA's *Being Gordon Greenidge*



John Luther, Chris Udoh and Benedict Sandiford at Reading School Cricket Pavilion.

Being Gordon Greenidge was a co-production between Barbados and Friends Association (BAFA), Sitelines (the producing arm of South Street Arts Centre) and the University of Reading. At a Cricket Pavilion at Reading School, BAFA curated an immersive Bajan cricket gathering, led by BAFA's treasurer, George Franklin, during which several performances exploring West Indies cricket were staged and screened. First, a play written by local playwright Benedict Sandiford was staged, followed by a documentary screening co-produced by BAFA and the Film, Theatre & Television Department at the University of Reading. The documentary focused on Bajan elders living in Reading and told the story of their migration. *Being Gordon Greenidge* won the 'Made in Reading' Award (2018) and resulted in a lasting creative relationship between BAFA and Sitelines. In this section, I analyse the ways in which the development of *Being Gordon Greenidge* materially integrated standpoint and new diversity into its development.

Acknowledging Situated Knowledge



Cyrilene Small's interview for Louise Chandler's *Our Journey So Far* (2016)

Being Gordon Greenidge made use of an existing methodology developed by BAFA. The group had previously received a Lottery grant to make a documentary entitled *Our Journey So Far* (Chandler 2016). *Our Journey So Far* comprised a series of interviews with BAFA elders who shared their own childhood memories of Barbados and their experiences of migrating to Reading. It deployed verbatim and documentary techniques including participatory story-telling, interviews and confessional style direct address to locate and share the story of the community group (see above example). Furthermore, it developed a method for collectively rendering the narratives of members through the repeated articulation of the spatial geographies of Reading; i.e., the overlapping reference to street names and locations.

Being Gordon Greenidge aimed to be an extension project of *Our Journey So Far*, with a similar aim of collating and sharing stories of the group members' respective migration to Reading in a new documentary, this time interweaving individual stories with the biography of batsman Greenidge and his comparable migration to Reading and subsequent stardom. Furthermore, rather than present this new documentary as a screening, BAFA and Sitelines collaborated to produce the live event at Reading School's cricket pavilion. The aim was to deploy BAFA's established oral-storytelling methodology to structure the event. A Bajan cricket party would provide the frame for a reminiscing experience about West Indies cricket and its role in diasporic experience in Reading. The play about Greenidge and the documentary would also be performed and screened.

Taking up Chandler's method, the process of *Being Gordon Greenidge* began with Franklin and Sandiford undertaking interviews with BAFA elders in the summer of 2017. As with *Our Journey So Far*, interviews would be held in BAFA elders' homes. Sandiford reflected on this process:

> [a]nd so, it was about having proper conversations, taking our time to let the elders know what we were trying to achieve […]. I met people who I hope are going to be friends for life and had really honest conversations […]. I met them for coffee, I went round their houses and had these conversations […]. (2017)

Following the testimony collection, the Film, Theatre and Television department at the University of Reading held a series of screenings and editing sessions with BAFA to edit the accounts that would be presented in the new documentary. These meetings provided an opportunity not only to work on the documentary, but also to commence devising the live aspects of the event. BAFA members commenced a process of devising a means for staging the cricket party. During this period, there were also a number of site visits to the pavilion to support the conceptualisation of the event.

Using standpoint theory as a lens, it is possible to see that *Being Gordon Greenidge* integrated a standpoint diversity into its methodology. Rather than deploy a new method for the project, the assembled artists chose to deploy BAFA's existing creative methodology, used already on *Our Story So Far*. This approach enabled the project to integrate the existing situated knowledge of BAFA in both form and content. BAFA's existing familiarity with documentary style story-telling and interview technique allowed *Being Gordon Greenidge* to extend and further develop the chosen mode of applied practice for the group. It allowed the project to make use of BAFA's existing modes of creating, including listening, interviewing and reflecting to 'draw connections between personal experience and political generalities' (Hartsock 1998: 19). Furthermore, the method generated, in terms of content, the situated knowledge of the BAFA community: a means to tease out and collect the personal narratives. Seen through the gaze of standpoint theory, BAFA's documentary approach enabled the group to undertake theory building: 'the examination and understanding of personal or subjective experience' (ibid.: 40).

Therefore, by using BAFA's established standpoint methodology, *Being Gordon Greenidge* – via its standpoint approach – constituted a 'diverse' project according to the terms of *The Creative Case*. For example, *The Creative Case* argues that 'there is a limited artistic record of telling stories from immigrant and migrant communities – especially the stories of those encouraged to emigrate from the Colonies in the twentieth century' (2011: 10). *Being Gordon Greenidge*, I suggest, commenced a process of integrating standpoint diversity into its development by starting from a position that attended to the situated knowledge of BAFA and its elders, with the situated knowledge being both the group's established creative methodologies and personal narratives.

Building Narrative on Situated Knowledge

Having completed the editing of the documentary, Franklin and Sandiford realised that a large amount of collected oral history would be now omitted from the final event. They therefore asked the elders if their recorded testimony might be used as the basis for the play-text of *Being Gordon Greenidge*. For example, Franklin and Sandiford asked one (anonymised) Bajan elder if they could have informed consent to use his testimony as a basis for the play's central (fictional character) Colin. Because of his experience as a playwright, there was a collective decision that Sandiford should work with the testimony alone to produce the play-text. Based on the testimony, then, Sandiford wrote the below monologue:

> I moved to Reading in '66, my father, he come here to work in the hospital, and 2 years later, me 2 brothers and sister come and join him. We're rebuilding Britain. Invited. Working the buses, the trains and the post office. Nurses, hospital porters, Making the Mother Country great again! Anyways, this was the first place I call my own in England. I come from Speightstown, St Peter. Half an hour from Bridgetown. Speightstown sometime called little Bristol, because in the earliest days of settlement it was a big port, ships laden with the sugar left for Bristol. Was the first major port in Barbados connecting the colony with the

> Mother Country. Now it's twinned with Reading. (BAFA and Sandiford 2017: 1-2)

Using standpoint theory as a lens, it is possible to argue that the use of recorded testimony as creative raw material constitutes another way in which *Being Gordon Greenidge* integrated standpoint diversity into its development. Indeed, such an approach to scripting may generate further ways in which Bajan epistemology is restored. For example, the method seems to operate in line with Smith's desire to articulate what 'has been left out, overlooked' (7) and Haraway's desire to strive for 'partiality and not universality' (589). Sandiford's isolation in the playwriting, however, may have compromised the text's ability to integrate standpoint diversity since its engagement with Bajan situated knowledge would be second-hand. Sandiford, himself, was aware of these issues: '[e]ven though I knew the cricket inside out, and, weirdly, I had a connection with West Indian cricket growing up, I am still white, middle-class and from Newark in Nottinghamshire' (2017). Sandiford's own situated knowledge of playwriting and cricket were, however, important epistemological contributions to the project themselves, but may have detracted from the project's ability to draw out the standpoint of the central Bajan participants.

Being Gordon Greenidge's difficulties in negotiating whose standpoint should take precedence, however, may not have been the result of simply privileging one form of knowledge (i.e., playwriting and cricket) over Bajan autobiographical method, but also in the project's attempt to intellectually engage with wider epistemological bias: in this case, racism within cricket. For example, Sandiford was keen to foreground the England Captain Tony Greig's notorious boast in the 1976 series against the West Indies, that he 'intend[ed] to make them grovel'. In the script, Colin would ask a white audience member to read from a card:

> Tony Greig's 'grovel' comment in 1976 hit us hard.
> [Audience member to read the below]
> 'You must remember, that the West Indians, these guys, if they get on top they are magnificent cricketers. But if they're down, they grovel, and I intend, with the help of Closey and a few others, to make them grovel.'

Dramaturgically, this was an important moment in situating Greenidge's story within a historical framework; however, its narrative prominence may have reinforced the potential for the project to decentre its own focus on BAFA's situated knowledge. This was evidenced by some BAFA elders suggesting that the event was unduly centred around the play, rather than the reminiscing prompted by the new documentary.

I do not read Sandiford's artistic and dramaturgical contributions here, however, as expressions of new diversity – despite the commercial value that his presence added to the project as a well-known artist in Reading. The privileging of Sandiford's knowledge and emphasis on broader structural racisms, while relevant and valid, may, however, have compromised the extent to which the project 'preserve[s] in it the presence, concerns and experience of […] the knower' (Smith 174: 11). This lessoning of emphasis around practices that integrate standpoint diversity into the process of *Being Gordon Greenidge*, I suggest, do not demonstrate a new diversity informing the project. It shows, instead, the difficulties in negotiating a theatricality that opens up play development to standpoint diversity. As collaborators, Franklin and Sandiford's ambitions for *Being Gordon Greenidge* were intersectional and complex. It is important to remember that their artistic focus was not on producing – or avoiding – different framings of diversity, but on altogether different aims of working with BAFA. In discursively exploring BAFA's identity, however, these artists engaged different framings of diversity. *Being Gordon Greenidge* unconsciously produced beneficial standpoint diversity in play development and, furthermore, avoided – to a certain extent – the production of new diversity.

5.6 Reading Diversity in Dante or Die's *Kiss, Marry, Kill*

Kiss, Marry, Kill is a forthcoming production from Dante or Die that, as noted above, explores the first prison same-sex marriage between inmates Gallatinov and Goodwin. In this section, I analyse the ways in which *Kiss, Marry Kill's* development process interacted with different framings of diversity found in *The Creative Case.*

Selecting Niche Situated Knowledge

Kiss, Marry Kill opened up the possibility for integrating standpoint diversity into its development by Dante or Die's selecting a highly complicated subject field. That is to say that the Gallatinov and Goodwin story is a difficult one with a contradictory core that, in many ways, problematises questions surrounding the contemporaneous gay marriage legislation and challenges what Ahmed calls the 'Benetton model' of diversity politics by reminding us that queer epistemology is more complex than neoliberal 'official diversity' politics suggests (2012: 53; 52). By focusing on a narrative that ostensibly problematises and makes complex the hegemonic representation of queerness and gay marriage in the historical moment, Dante or Die articulate an approach that operates within the paradigms of standpoint where 'partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims' (Haraway 1988: 589). By focusing on Gallatinov and Goodwin's story which involves the experience of members of a niche demographic (i.e., gay prisoners who have committed homophobic and paedophilic crimes), the starting proposition of the project is one in which marginalised identities are recognised as intersectional and, indeed, highly contradictory. *Kiss, Marry, Kill* thus integrates standpoint diversity into its development by localising further the gay identity field that may have been, especially in the historical moment, in danger of being

overwhelmingly represented by the dominant new diversity of the liberally progressive coalition, predicated on 'the positive freedom or "freedom to"' stance on queerness (Hayron and McEnhill 2015: 132).

Rather than telling a story about a marginalised group of people according to the hegemonic narratives of the given moment, then, *Kiss, Marry, Kill* seems to align with Hartsock's standpoint approach of a 'deeper going' analysis that will 'go beneath' state-sanctioned modes of conceiving marginalised identities in order to expose the material realities of groups in the historical moment (2004: 36). Moreover, in order to ensure Gallatinov and Goodwin's esoteric standpoint was centred by the project, Co-Directors of Dante or Die, Terry O'Donovan and Daphne Attias commenced a process of trying to get access to the inmates, to establish direct communication with them, to interview and listen to them and, in short, support the emergence of standpoint knowledge around their experiences.

Supporting the Situated Knowledge of Gallatinov and Goodwin

Despite their best efforts, the company have not yet managed to communicate with Gallatinov and Goodwin, but there are other ways in which Dante or Die's development *has* been congruent with standpoint diversity. For example, to support and protect the construction of the couple's experiences, Dante or Die engaged a creative team made almost exclusively of gay theatre-makers. For example, director O'Donovan and playwright James Baldwin both identify as gay themselves. Moreover, it is important to note that Baldwin's primary creative work is teaching Creative Writing in prisons, working with prisoners on exploring their identities. Such experience gives Baldwin further understanding of the knowledge-base the play seeks to construct. Without communicating directly with Gallatinov and Goodwin, however, the project may not

genuinely demonstrate standpoint theory building in practice. In a bid, however, to explore LGBTQ+ prison experience, Dante or Die also built on the knowledge of academics with a research interest in the UK prison context including Nicola Carr at the University of Nottingham and Ian Feis-Bryce at Royal Holloway. Carr is a former Probation Officer with a research interest in youth, conflict and justice. Feis-Bryce is a doctoral candidate working on a project investigating LGBTQ+ experience in UK prisons. Furthermore, at the time of writing, the company are engaged in exploring the possibility of casting ex-offenders for a forthcoming premiere in October 2020.

Framing the situated knowledge of Gallatinov and Goodwin

The development of *Kiss, Marry, Kill* commenced with a process of exploring Gallatinov and Goodwin's narrative with a number of LGBTQ+ groups. This approach seemed to, as Harding puts it, "'study up" […] see "beneath" or "behind" the dominant ideologies that shape everyone's lives' (2004: 6). In particular, Dante or Die undertook a series of workshops with the LGBTQ+ community in Reading in which their standpoint knowledge would be drawn out for the project. One workshop was with the student LGBTQ+ society at the University of Reading and another was with SupportU and Reading Pride members held at South Street Arts Centre. These workshops were built around exploring the situated knowledge of participants and collectively negotiating the story of Gallatinov and Goodwin. Below is the poster advertising some of these events

DANTE OR DIE

KISS MARRY KILL



A NEW PRODUCTION BY DANTE OR DIE

In March 2015 the first same-sex marriage or civil partnership in a prison took place. The men who married each other are both serving life sentences at Full Sutton Prison in East Yorkshire for homophobic murders.

"Mikhail Gallatinov is a convicted paedophile who was sentenced in 1997 for murdering a man he had met through a gay chat line. At his trial, Judge Rhys Davies QC said it had been a "cold-blooded, well-planned, callous, chilling and apparently motiveless killing.

Marc Goodwin was jailed 10 years later for a homophobic killing on Blackpool seafront that was described by police as 'a savage, senseless homophobic attack that resulted in the death of a harmless man'." – *The Guardian*

CREATIVE WORKSHOP

We are about to make a show inspired by this story and want to hear your opinions about it. We will host a creative discussion & workshop for Reading University's LGBT+ Society and would love you to be there. It will be led by Artistic Directors Terry & Daphna and playwright James Baldwin.

Over 90 minutes we will explore a few topics that we're researching for the creation of the show including details about the Gallitanov & Goodwin's marriage & crimes, LGBT societal shame and current levels of homophobia in Britain.

DETAILS

Wednesday, 15th November 2017
4pm – 5.30pm
Minghella Building

ABOUT US

Dante or Die is a theatre company making new performances in unusual locations. The words 'Dante or Die' are a graffiti on a public skate park in South London where Co-Artistic Directors Daphna Attias & Terry O'Donovan first

Even though these events would not work towards creating situated knowledge of Gallatinov and Goodwin, they would create a dramaturgy that seemed to produce a standpoint diversity. For example, led by Baldwin, Attias and O'Donovan, the workshops were carefully curated as 'safe spaces' where the sharing of personal experience and opinion was supported and welcomed.

The workshops began with the creative team introducing themselves, outlining the aim of the workshop and gaining the consent of the participants. When the participants had a secure understanding, Baldwin commenced the workshops by outlining the story the play would tell: of Gallatinov and Goodwin and their historically significant marriage. At this point, Baldwin did not mention their crimes. The first question for discussion, then, was what the group thought about *this* marriage. What were their thoughts and questions, how did they imagine it working? What implications did it have on the idea of marriage, on other inmates and the penal system? In operating in this way, the company seemed to 'theory build' in collaboration with the groups. In particular, they collected unexpectedly hostile views on the marriage from the student group who voiced criticisms that it was too much of a 'privilege'.

Baldwin then revealed the men's crimes. He then asked the groups what the effect of this new information was on their perception of the situation. Did it change how they viewed the marriage? The men? What did they think about the relationship between the crimes and the marriage? This conversation produced multiple, conflicting perspectives with contributors regularly changing their minds on how they felt about the case. At times, contributors were extremely angry about the men's ability to marry, especially once the crimes were revealed. Some theorised on the psychologies of the men, opening up broader conversations around queer shame. It was at this point in the workshop that conversations about the participants' experiences of queer shame were raised. Some discussed homophobic encounters they had experienced, some talked about the difficulties of being out, some talked about mental health issues in relation to queer shame. These workshops, I suggest, therefore constructed another way in which *Kiss, Marry, Kill* integrated standpoint diversity into its development: by actively soliciting and constructing the standpoint knowledge of LGBTQ+ societies and, furthermore,

developing a location of care in play development that recognised that the collection of standpoint epistemology is a complex and collaborative process.

Contextualising the Project



University of Reading

Kiss, Marry, Kill?:
Performance and Sexuality Student Symposium
November 22nd 2017 Bulmershe Theatre

As part of FTT's commissioning partnership with South Street, Dante or Die are currently developing a new performance entitled *Kiss Marry Kill*, created by Artistic Directors Terry O'Donovan & Daphna Attias with playwright James Baldwin. As part of that development process, we hope to explore issues relating to the play's LGBTQ+ themes at *Kiss, Marry Kill:* Performance and Sexuality Student Symposium. Bringing together artists and researchers exploring sexuality and identity in theatre, this conference will discuss the politics and practices of sexuality and identity in performance. It will explore existing approaches, identify challenges and look toward future practice. Come and join us for what is set to be a great event!

Symposium Schedule

2.00-2.10	Symposium opening: Lucy Tyler, John Luther, Terry O'Donovan
2.10-2.30	Scholarly approaches: Simon Dodi
2.30-2.50	Scholarly approaches: Joe Parslow
2.50-3.30	Artists in conversation: Lucy J. Skilbeck, Krishna Istha, Chris Goode and Terry O'Donovan
3.30-3.45	Break
3.45-4.15	Break-out discussions
4.15-4.45	Group responses
4.45-5.00	The future in practice: Ellie Edwards and Bradley Greening

Priority tickets will be allocated to students enrolled on FT2PI, FT2P1T and FT3EP and Advanced Practical Project in Theatre. If you are enrolled on one of these modules, please collect your ticket for the event from Minghella Studios' Reception. If you would like to attend and are not enrolled on one of these modules, please email minghella.studios@reading.ac.uk to be placed on a waiting list.

Performance and Sexuality Symposium, University of Reading November 22nd 2017.

Kiss, Marry, Kill also seemed to integrate standpoint diversity into its development by seeking to contextualise its approach in one final stage. The team hosted a symposium

on 'Performance and Sexuality' at The University of Reading on November 22nd 2017. The aim was to invite speakers to explore queer dramaturgies, including *Kiss, Marry, Kill*'s. This approach therefore intended to collect the situated knowledge of other queer theatre makers as part of the development process. Contributors included Dante or Die's co-artistic director O'Donovan, Artistic Director of Milk Presents, Leo Skilbeck and artists Travis Alabanza and Chris Goode (see poster above and photograph below).

The symposium intended to offer an overview of emergent queer methodologies and research areas in the field and, furthermore, explore the politics of contemporary queer theatre practice including engaging with live questions in the field. Such an approach that broadens the epistemological base may, however, seem counter intuitive to the standpoint method. Dante or Die, however, felt that such an approach would benefit the project, particularly by reflecting on standpoint experience of queer makers. Furthermore, with LGBTQ+ identifying students to curate the event, there was a sense that it worked against the 'heterosexist conceptual frameworks' that Harding argues are deconstructed with a standpoint approach (2004: 5-6).



In conclusion, I suggest that *Kiss, Marry, Kill* integrated standpoint diversity into its development practice by selecting a niche subject of knowledge and by supporting and framing the production of situated knowledge in multiple ways. The project connected with three LGBTQ+ groups in Reading and, furthermore, embedded into itself the queer perspectives (and other situated knowledges) of its core creatives, as well as structured dramaturgical support from other queer artists and academics. In this sense, the project has theory built across a range of local and national LGBTQ+ frontiers. It has yet to theory build, however, with its two central subjects. Dante or Die's approach, overall, then, produces a range of potential ways in which standpoint diversity might be realised in play development. Again, the aim of producing standpoint diversity was not central to the project, but, rather, in working within queer community groups, Dante or Die's play development is framed by standpoint diversity. It is, to coin Haraway's description, 'complex, contradictory, structuring and structured' (1988: 589). It is my opinion that *Kiss, Marry, Kill* therefore offers another example of how play development might produce standpoint diversity. By avoiding a superficiality of approach, I also suggest that Dante or Die limited the ways in which the project connected with the terms of new diversity.

5.7 Reading Diversity in Andy Smith's *Summit*

Summit is written by Andy Smith and produced by Fuel Theatre. It is delivered in British Sign Language (BSL henceforth), Farsi (at its premiere) and English. During the performance, three performers take roles as non-hierarchical leaders who are standing before a group of people (the audience) at an imaginary summit. Conceived as a multi-lingual group, the audience have explained to them in the different languages the rationale for the summit. Originally scripted as an Anglophone text, Smith is a hearing

performer-playwright. In performance, the actors thus translate Smith's written English into BSL and Farsi. Despite its seeming focus on the politics of identity including d/Deafness, then, *Summit* is actually a project with much broader theatrical and political ambitions beyond the scope of this chapter. In other words, it was not focused on exploring standpoint diversity or even d/Deafness directly. The concern here, however, is to show how *Summit's* development process can be read as one that integrated standpoint diversity *in addition to* the wider aims of the project.

Integrating Aesthetics of Access

Since Smith is the creator of this work, *Summit* does not, initially, seem to align with the ambition of *The Creative Case*: to commission, programme and make space for 'diverse artists', which Hargrave reminds us is 'a ridiculous term' (2011: 16; 2015: 109). *Summit's* initial project information, however, seems to demonstrate an aim that captures the spirit of standpoint diversity:

> [i]t will have three or four performers. We think that one of the performers might be over sixty, that one or two might be from BAME communities and that one might be a d/Deaf performer, or at least one capable of BSL interpretation. (pre-funding support call-out, 2016)

We might read *Summit* as a project, then, that additionally renders standpoint diversity a central feature of its mode of production, particularly in relation to integrating a d/Deaf performer and, therefore, BSL as a system into Smith's practice.

Indeed, *Summit* was born out of Smith's dissatisfaction with the representation of d/Deafness in English theatre and, in particular, the integration of BSL into his own work. During an 'in conversation with' talk (April 2016), I asked Smith how *Summit* began. Smith referenced his *The Preston Bill* (2015b), which had been BSL-interpreted.

BSL interpretation is widely recognised as when an interpreter stands in a visible position and interprets the spoken and heard elements of a performance. Smith was troubled with BSL not being integrated into performance. For Smith, BSL comprised a theatrical system: what Graeae's Artistic Director, Jenny Sealey, defines as an 'aesthetics of access' in which 'accessibility concerns are not simply last minute add-ons but actually influence and shape the work in wonderful, unexpected ways' (2017). These reflections became the basis for *Summit*: a piece that attempts to transform BSL from its functional role in the social model of d/Deafness into an aesthetic system. The role of Farsi in the piece (performed by Nima Taleghani at the premiere) was, Smith argued, an attempt to similarly integrate another marginalised language. Moreover, since Farsi is spoken predominantly in Iran and Afghanistan, its integration into the aesthetics of access of *Summit* suggests Smith's aim to produce a wider geo-political commentary on the exclusion of marginalised groups.

Material Additions to De-Materialised Theatre

Summit's development seemed to realise standpoint diversity by rendering BSL into another unit of Smith's overall aesthetic: what he calls a 'dematerialised theatre'. In his essay, 'This is It' (2015a), Smith defines dematerialised theatre as follows:

> [i]f I were to characterise or define a dematerialised theatre, I might say that for me, it is a method of making that theatre at its foundation employs only what we might call the essential elements. It is a theatre that – influenced by the terms of conceptual, information or idea art that I mention above – attempts operations using the principle that more might be able to be achieved with less. (3)

The aim to make BSL an 'essential element' in *Summit*, however, evoked immediate difficulties. Smith wanted to create a non-hierarchical representation of BSL and

English. As someone who does not sign, Smith acknowledged that he must commence from a position of what, in conversation, he called an 'un-knowledge'. *Summit* began, therefore, as a project predicated on acquainting Smith with the situated knowledge of the d/Deaf community and with the role of BSL in Deaf theatres. Similar to *Being Gordon Greenidge*, I suggest *Summit* used a range of standpoint techniques to draw out d/Deaf epistemology, but the primary purpose of this epistemology would be to furnish Smith's writing of *Summit* with the standpoint knowledge of d/Deaf communities. In the following section, I analyse the ways in which *Summit* adopted techniques that I read here as standpoint theory building in order to create d/Deaf epistemology; however, these techniques may not have successfully foregrounded d/Deaf situated knowledge in *Summit* since they were predominantly used in Smith's writing process.

Theory Building around BSL

Summit's development thus included a number of units predicated on theory building around d/Deafness and Deaf theatres for the above reasons. This process commenced with a series of events including a symposium on Deaf Theatre at The University of Reading in March 2017. The aim here was for Smith to engage in theory building with d/Deaf and BSL-speaking communities. The events included the Theatre Arts, Education and Deaf Studies BA (henceforth TAEDS) and Course Leader and scholar of Deaf Theatres, Simon Floodgate (who does not identify as d/Deaf). TAEDS comprised a d/Deaf-hearing integrated student cohort; it had been running for 32 years, but closed in June 2018. At the symposium, Floodgate presented on Deaf Theatre, historicising the practice, discussing its performance strategies and politics.



Slide from Head of TAEDS, Simon Floodgate's presentation.

Following the symposium, Smith hosted two read-through and feedback sessions on the first draft of *Summit* with students from the TAEDS course and Department of Film, Theatre and Television, first in the department then at South Street Arts Centre.

The second read-through required the inclusion of dual interrogation of BSL by TAEDs students and Smith's written English. As noted above, in the draft, Smith had acknowledged his own limited understanding of BSL. The first direction of *Summit* reads:

> [i]n performance, if possible, the text attributed to performer 1 should be translated and delivered in British Sign Language. In the following pages it is written in English, but to remind the reader of this fact it appears in **bold type**. (2017: 2)



Summit's read-through with students at South Street Arts Centre March, 2017.

At the read-through, TAEDS students were cast as readers. In addition, the read-through would pause at various points so that students could comment on and query the effect of the BSL. The conventional read-through process was thus disrupted by these integrated conversations. I suggest that these meaningful disruptions constituted an act of theory building with the intention of Smith collating the situated responses of d/Deaf participants in relation to the text.

As the development progressed, *Summit* engaged further theory building on the d/Deaf standpoint. A development team was assembled that would allow for integrated BSL casting, co-direction and national and local BSL support. Smith would co-direct *Summit* with Claire Lamont, Head of BA Performance in BSL and English at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. In addition, the BSL translation would be supported by Rita McDade. Moreover, *Summit* would be supported in production by 'local engagement specialists' organised by Fuel that connected the project with a number of d/Deaf

Centres nationwide. *Summit's* standpoint diversity, however, could have been enhanced in a number of ways. For example, if *Summit* had engaged additional d/Deaf collaborators instead of hearing ones, or if Smith had collaborated on the approach with a d/Deaf theatre company, there may have been more opportunity to genuinely integrate standpoint diversity into the development phase. It is important to note, however, that the integration of standpoint diversity was not Smith's aim. The focus of the development I observed concerned the production of knowledge on d/Deaf perspectives, but Smith's aims for *Summit* – as noted above – were broader overall. The development of *Summit* I observed and participated in, however, did include a range of practices that productively reproduced standpoint theory building including an emphasis on experimenting with the integration of BSL in performance.

Integrating Standpoint Diversity in Performance

Summit premiered on 8th May 2017 at The Brighton Fringe Festival and was performed with a cast of three: Aleasha Chaunté, Stephen Collins and Nima Taleghani (seen in order below).



Summit. Brighton Fringe Festival, Monday 8th May 2017.

In performance, *Summit* centred the d/Deaf standpoint. From the perspective of a hearing spectator, *Summit* was characterised by silences and gaps in speech, with an emphasis on 1's (Collins') dialogue being communicated visually and spatially by the BSL. For a d/Deaf spectator, the effect is almost mirrored; the English is spoken, but its effect is visual, and the BSL communicates the interlocution. The speed at which the interlocution occurred was therefore slow (like the read-through) with a sense of asynchronicity in performance and a physicality created by the gestures of Collins' BSL in an otherwise static delivery mode (see photo above). As d/Deaf audiences noted in the discussion following the premiere (2017), it was immediately obvious that the BSL was not a 'translation' of the spoken English, but, rather, a separate component where BSL was uncharacteristically equal to spoken English. This use of BSL was well received.

In rehearsal, however, actors worried about the pace and the uncharacteristically 'equal' relationship of BSL and English, with the Farsi element adding to what they

perceived as a language confusion. Smith reassured the actors about the delivery and reiterated that the piece required an inter-performer communicative relationship based on mutual support, waiting for each other, listening, relaxing and delivering the work together: a standpoint acting theory. When the actors communicated with each other, their delivery became choric; it was sometimes collaborative, and sometimes distributed between the actors' voices and gestures. In this way, meaning flowed between the actors' inter-personal communication and spectators received a fluid system of communication built on three languages, voice and gesture. This approach equalised the languages in performance. As a result, in performance, *Summit* can be read as a performance that, amongst other things, platforms marginalised linguistic standpoints and challenges a history of exclusion that has conventionally characterised the representation of d/Deafness.

Material Shifts in Audience Preparation

Summit's development can be read as one that additionally integrated standpoint diversity in its preparation for audiences. In September 2018, all the touring venues were invited to an event at the University of Manchester with members of Manchester d/Deaf Centre. The event comprised an intensive theory-building experience in which representatives from touring venues would listen to the standpoint accounts of members from Manchester's d/Deaf community that spanned early childhood, school and adult experiences. In particular, d/Deaf participants spoke of the barriers they experience at theatre and arts venues. In order to reach d/Deaf audiences, Smith's producing company, Fuel, thus created a range of situated knowledge accounts that would enable venues to work closely with their d/Deaf communities. This included acknowledging the variety in d/Deaf experience, thinking about creative ways to

overcome barriers, learning what social media platforms are optimum in connecting with local d/Deaf centres and, furthermore, understanding the need to put BSL at the centre of all engagements, including the copy and promotion. Crucially, Fuel suggested how to recruit and work with a 'Local Engagement Specialist' – a member of a particular demographic – in order to best create an invitation to this community. This was the final way *Summit* seemed to create standpoint epistemology in development. In conclusion, I suggest Summit is another example of how play development might engage a range of practices in standpoint theory-building to integrate standpoint diversity. Like *Being Gordon Greenidge*, it could be argued, however, that the results of *Summit's* standpoint diversity may have been hindered by hearing playmakers' centrality to the project itself since their roles prevent d/Deaf participants from adopting central roles including writing and directing. Without Smith, in particular, *Summit's* significant and high profile d/Deaf theory building, however, would not have occurred. Because of the care that Smith took in opening up the project, then, I suggest *Summit* managed to build standpoint diversity in development.

5.8 Negotiating Diversity in Development: A Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the possibility that neoliberal new diversity discourses were, in coalition Britain, reproduced in English play development. I suggested these discourses of new diversity were discursively reproduced in Arts Council England's *The Creative Case*. They also had the potential to be reproduced in English play development practices. I also argued that *The Creative Case* harboured an antithetical standpoint diversity: derived from taking up an intellectual position similar to that of standpoint theory.

Using three case studies, I argued that play development was a space in which standpoint diversity could be integrated into play development. *Being Gordon Greenidge*, for example, demonstrates how the standpoint epistemology of Bajan migrants can be created by community groups such as BAFA. The project also revealed, however, the difficulties in drawing out standpoint diversity across all aspects of development. *Kiss, Marry, Kill* revealed the ways in which standpoint epistemology could be drawn out by LGBTQ+ groups including university groups, community groups and queer-identifying playmakers. This project also demonstrates, however, difficulties in theatre-makers' abilities to draw out standpoint queer epistemology from currently incarcerated offenders. *Summit,* by contrast, demonstrated the ways in which playmakers might integrate d/Deaf standpoint epistemology in development through engaging a range of knowledge bases.

In all these cases, I also observed how there was a loss, or potential loss, of standpoint epistemology in development when theory-building was done by playmakers who did not identify with the standpoint they explored. As theory-building was not the central aim in any of these projects, these losses were perhaps irrelevant, but their observation might support the production of standpoint diversity in further acts of development. For example, projects often limited their own ability to promote minority epistemology when marginalised narratives were appropriated, adopted or deployed by other makers. Furthermore, when projects attempted to tackle questions of bias and historic marginalisation beyond the scope of the development, there was often a danger of unsuccessfully articulating situated knowledge within the process. This demonstrates that playmakers can't integrate standpoint diversity on behalf of minority groups; rather, standpoint diversity must be adopted as a collaborative and empowering practice.

My reading overall is that, in the 2010s, *The Creative Case* constituted another channel through which neoliberal imperatives were increasingly emerging in English play

development. Because *The Creative Case* harbours a new diversity, it endorses play development practices that reproduce new diversity. It is the subtle, but significant influence of new diversity in *The Creative Case* that demonstrates another of neoliberalism's claims on play development. Paradoxically, *The Creative Case* positively encourages the use of a positionality similar to standpoint theory that allows marginalised epistemology to enter further into the sphere of play development.

The case studies above seemed to resist – where possible – the production of new diversity in development. Again, this was not a conscious act of playmakers in rejecting neoliberalism's structures in their modes of production. Furthermore, it was not as a direct result of engaging standpoint diversity that new diversity was reduced. It is important to conclude that, in producing standpoint diversity, playmakers do not resist new diversity. This is because the two diversities are not oppositional; rather they comprise different framings of contemporaneous diversity politics that play development inevitably engages with. As the title of the chapter suggests, they are both forms of diversity politics that can be 'negotiated' in play development. The conclusion here, then, is that play development might productively engage standpoint diversity, which has been read as beneficial here. Or, perhaps it might engage a new diversity or, perhaps, it engages neither.

By limiting the ways their play development engages new diversity, however, playmakers can evade neoliberalism's structures in their modes of production. Crucially, this means that, in this chapter, we have observed another way in which artists can potentially resist neoliberal imperatives in play development. In the final chapter of this thesis, I observe one further practice in which artists are starting to undermine the relationship between English play development and neoliberal logic.

CHAPTER SIX

'UNRAVELLING AND BECOMING MORE ENTANGLED IN PROCESS': PERFORMANCES OF DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Resisting Neoliberal Play Development Practices: Performances of Development

In this final chapter, I show one further practice in which artists may undermine neoliberal consensus in play development. Here, I investigate the connections between the sphere of play development and the sphere of performance. How does the practice of play development manifest in performance? Furthermore, might performance be central to the project of resisting play development's encodement with neoliberal culture? In this chapter, I suggest that performance can radically support an aim of undermining the neoliberal modes of play development hitherto presented in this thesis. In particular, I suggest that a certain kind of performance that *reveals* its development may be especially useful to the project of countering neoliberalism's constitutive role in shaping theatre. Here, I attend to 'performances of development': a strand of contemporary 'Live Art' practice defined in detail below. Via a Marxist materialist reading, I argue that the unique form of some performances of development gives them the potential to negate the neoliberal discursive features that we have observed co-

opting English play development practices since 2000. Below, I define performances of development, select three recent examples as case studies, ask key questions about their radical potential and introduce the approach I adopt for studying them. Furthermore, in attending to performances of development, this chapter completes the structure of this thesis by exploring English play development's most recent political iteration and its relationship with performance. As observed in the introduction, the omission of performance analysis is usual in materialist theorising in Theatre Studies, and, yet, by neglecting performance and staying 'inside' English theatre's modes of production, we may fail to consider how play development connects to performance.

Performances of Development

Performances of development, I suggest, are part of the aesthetic form known as Live Art. In the chapter 'Discourses of Resistance: Representation and the Real in the Twentieth-Century Avant-Gardes' in *Acts and Apparitions: Discourses on the Real in Performance Practice and Theory, 1990-2010* (2013c: 19-50), Liz Tomlin defines Live Art's history, positionality and politics in Britain. In dialogue with Beth Hoffman's 'Radicalism and the Theatre in Genealogies of Live Art' (2009), Tomlin quotes Hoffman in defining Live Art as a neo-avant-garde practice, a 'reserved site of interdisciplinarity; a kind of rhetorical and curatorial space that operates at the margins, culturally and aesthetically, and that eschews institutionalized recognizability' (36; Hoffman 2009: 101). Hoffman's reading is that Live Art 'became more and more rhetorically overdetermined' as an antithesis of the dramatic literary tradition and evidence to support her reading can be found from as recently as 2007; for instance, in 2007, Tim Etchell from the company Forced Entertainment, argued in a speech that Live Art practitioners were invested in

'breaking' theatre. The idea that live art is an attack on theatre is one that I will return to below (98).

Since Live Art embraces an array of performance strategies and sites, Hoffman reminds us that "'theatre" operated successfully as a seamless placeholder for that conservative cultural model in the imagination of the artists, funders, promoters, scholars and critics in the audience, many of whom continually referenced Etchell's accidental rallying cry […]' (ibid.). For Tomlin, 'Hoffman acknowledges the dual culpability of both those advocating experimental practice and those who might be perceived as dramatic traditionalists in ensuring that, on the British stage, "this "new" work…and the dramatic canon remain engaged in a zero-sum struggle for survival" (37; Hoffman 2009: 99). Today, British Live Art is supported by, for example, Battersea Arts Centre; Manchester's Home; Bristol's Arnolfini; the Live Art Development Agency (LADA), founded by Lois Keidan; Forest Fringe, founded by Andy Field and Deborah Pearson and South Street Arts Centre (discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis). Crucially, as observed in Chapters Three and Four, in the last decade, key new writing theatres have increasingly evolved their development models to accommodate the production of Live Art and other forms of practice including spoken word. As Lyn Gardner notes:

> [y]ou may not think you have ever seen any Live Art, but you almost certainly have. It gets everywhere. […]. It is Selina Thompson performing *Salt* at the Royal Court […]. It is Forced Entertainment at Battersea Arts Centre and Brian Lobel at The Yard where the recent NOW19 festival embraced exhilarating Live Art. It is Kim Noble at Soho Theatre, Dickie at the Barbican […]. (2019)

That Live Art has only recently been significantly developed in key English new writing theatres discussed in this thesis is perhaps rooted in an incompatibility in their respective understanding of 'development'. For example, across this thesis, we have

observed play development to be a conventional commodity production process that, as Stephen Lacey notes, is 'more or less invisible to audiences and taken for granted by theatre workers themselves' (2004: 57). Like many commodity production practices, English play development is a mode of production that mostly occurs backstage, behind the scenes, away from audiences and, crucially, in advance of a performance.

Live Art, by distinction, has a formal interest in revealing development in performance through strategies including presence and liveness. For example, in an essay entitled 'What is Live Art?' (2002), Joshua Sofaer argues that 'Live Art is when an artist chooses to make work directly in front of the audience in space and time'. Similarly, Roddy Hunter and Judit Bodor argue that the liveness and visibility of process in Live Art mean that it might be called 'art of action'. In their Chapter 'Art, Meeting, and Encounter: The Art of Action in Great Britain' (2012) Hunter and Bodor argue that '[t]he term "art of action" can be used to discuss process-orientated aspects […] [i]nstances of practice engage with audiences through dissemination across specific public spheres at different points of process and in different ways' (65). Similarly, in 'The Time of Live Art' (2012: 37-64), Hoffman explores the centrality of presence and liveness in Live Art including revealing process in the now: '[t]ime is the locus of the 'nowness' of live art's now; time's movement effects the disappearance of live art in its ephemerality; it constitutes an indispensable dimension of the condition of being alive' (ibid.: 37).[1]

1 It is important to note that Live Art's emphasis on presence and liveness does not necessarily generate radical potential. Philip Auslander (2008 [1999]), for example, critiques liveness as a site of cultural and ideological resistance. Similarly, Rebecca Schneider (2011) problematises inherent value structures around liveness including hegemonies of chronology, completeness and the relationship between live events and nonlive documents. By querying commonly held value structures around liveness, scholars broadly reveal the aesthetic, rather than political, potential of work within this frame. At the same time, however, there may be kinds of Live Art that can be ideologically resistant – as we start to see below.

In the 2010s, Live Artists have focused on generating further strategies that reveal their performances' development. For example, artists and companies including Deborah Pearson, Kieran Hurley and Barrel Organ seek to heighten reference to process in their performances through a range of strategies. In such performances, we start to see aesthetic qualities that, in some very particular ways, can be put to anti-capitalist use. In an article for *Exeunt* entitled 'Unreal Writers' (2014), for instance, Andy Field explores Pearson's *The Future Show* (2014; 2015) and Christopher Brett Bailey's *This Is How We Die* (2014). He identifies four performance strategies that determine the ways both works reveal process including: '[s]elf impersonation'; '[r]esistant players'; '[t]he rest is noise' and '[c]oda'. Both shows deploy a narratorial first person ('self impersonation'); the deterioration of words and stories into textures and rhythms ('the rest is noise'); and endings based around repetition of effort ('coda'). In terms of revealing their process, however, it is perhaps Field's description of both performances' 'resistant players' – a term he credits to Karen Jürs-Munby – that is most important.[2]

Leading from Jürs-Munby, Field defines 'resistant players' as 'a performer reading a script onstage'. They are 'rogue parts dislodged from their intended place and positioned here onstage to unsettle the smooth running of the theatre machine'. Resistant players, then, are makers that reject the conventions of dramatic mise-en-scène, including the

[2] In an article entitled 'The Resistant Text in Postdramatic Theatre: Performing Elfriede Jelinek's Sprachflächen' (2009), Jürs-Munby explores 'the possible complex relationships between text and performance in postdramatic theatre' (47). In *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance* (2013), Jürs-Munby, alongside co-editors Jermone Carroll and Steve Giles, reminds us that '[t]he term "postdramatic theatre", systematically introduced by Hans-Thies Lehmann since the 1990s, has by now gained international currency' (1). It comprises a method, they contend, that not only 'dispens[es] with one or more of the components of stage, character and action/plot [but] also absolves itself of the traditional […] requirement or expectation that the stage should generate what Elinor Fuchs calls "a fictional world that aligns all dramaturgical elements into a synthetic whole"' (4). Using Jelinek's work as an example, resistant texts, for Jürs-Munby, are theatrical works that adopt a non-dramatic form, challenge the primacy of dramatic story and the conception of the fictional universe (2009: 46-7).

performance of the text by actors. Resistant players are co-constituted by the resistant texts they perform and, thus, the dramatic features that are deconstructed in the live presence of the playmaker. For example, in a chapter entitled 'Quoting Quotations: Citational Theory and Contemporary Characterisation' in *Acts and Apparitions* (2013c: 80-113), Tomlin notes that '[a]cross diverse models of performance, the strategy of eliminating character was adopted to enhance the seemingly more authentic presence of the performer who could share real time and space with the audience […]' (80). Pearson's *The Future Show*, then, is 'both a performance and an on-going project. It is a piece that tells the story of [Pearson's] future, starting from the end of performance until the end of her life. Every script is rewritten to be both time and site-specific' (2015: back-cover). In this chapter, I use the term 'resistant players' to articulate the ways in which the performances I discuss often use postdramatic strategies that unsettle traditional dramatic conventions and their standard scenographic presentations. Do resistant players comprise a radical strategy to challenge neoliberal models of play development?

For Field, resistant players have a political potential. He argues, for example, that they can 'undermine the representation of truth and authenticity and in doing so disturb the process of ideological normalization – transforming stages into spaces of antagonism, contradiction and dissent' (2014). While this chapter is going to argue that *some* performances with resistant players *do* have political (specifically anti-neoliberal) potential, there is a persuasive strand of scholarship that reminds us that discourse on the political potential of Live Art in general is, as Hoffman says, 'rhetorically over-determined' (2009: 98). For example, Hoffman's definition of Live Art described above is also a critique of positions such as Field's that argue that Live Art might 'disturb the process of ideological normalization' (2009). As Hoffman argues, 'in that sense, the valorization of live art as it "breaks" the theatre can neither solve the ontological and

epistemological problem of categories, representational matrices and constellations that bind knowledge – nor guarantee the attendant political hopes that such breaks promise' (ibid.: 103). From this, we can appreciate that Live Art, even its performances with resistant players, do not necessarily possess political potential – nor do they have an innate anti-capitalist positionality. I suggest, however, that it is in the frame of Live Art's resistant players, particularly their mainstreaming in theatre buildings, that we find expressions of the strongest antithesis to the neoliberal logic of play development as discussed throughout this thesis.

Reading Performances of Development

In this chapter, I refer to Live Art performances with resistant players as performances of development. I do so in order to directly reference their methods that experiment with the expression of development. Performances of development, I suggest, constitute a uniquely compressed form that hybridises the usually distinct categories of development/performance and thus process/product. They are not a new form of practice.[3] Performances of development have, until most recently, been made outside the traditional development structures of mainstream theatres and, as a result, they have modes of production that are distinct from the standard and bespoke models discussed

[3] Performances of development have been operating as dramaturgical models certainly since the late twentieth century, though the practice may have its origins in expressions of performance art in the mid-twentieth century. Performance groups including Lone Twin, Action Hero and Gob Squad, for example, have generated performances of development across their trajectory. In an article entitled 'Revolution, Then and Now' (2012), for instance, Michael Shane Boyle interviewed Gob Squad's Sean Patten and Bastian Trost. In defining their overall aesthetic, Patten and Trost note that '[o]ften research happens before the audience's eyes; it is part of the performance itself. Often the content is developed in the performance and the audience can see how it is being dealt with. That's what we want to show – the discussion' (33-34). Such a description, I suggest, demonstrates not only the features of performances of development as I seek to define them here, but their proliferation in the Live Art frame over a significant period.

across this thesis. In addition to being generated outside traditional structures, performances of development also engage different forms of collaboration; rather than being the result of teams brought together by a theatre, they are most frequently the result of existing companies, or individual artists. While the material modes of production are central to understanding performances of development, this chapter, however, is focused on exploring their aesthetic form and the ways in which this form – in performance – might, in some cases, produce anti-neoliberal potential that challenges the ideology of English play development.

This amalgamation of process/product, as noted above, is not necessarily radical in nature. Performances of development can simply operate as a representational aesthetic form and function as straight-forward theatrical commodities. *Some* performances of development, however, combine process/product in ways that, I suggest, challenge neoliberal capitalism's logic and thus comprise autonomous political acts. In this last chapter, then, I ask to what extent do certain performances of development have anti-neoliberal potential? How can some performances of development break the neoliberal discursive formations inhabiting English development observed throughout this thesis? Indeed, in revealing process, Sofaer suggests performances that emphasise process can 'choose to reject this commodity fetishism […]' (2002). How might the rejection of commodity fetishism be key to locating the anti-neoliberal potential in some performances of development?

Here, I develop a final Marxist materialist method for reading performances of development. This method begins with an analysis of Marx's theory on 'commodity fetishism' (1990: 163-177) and then takes up a Marxian geographical form of analysis entitled 'global commodity chain analysis', put forward by cultural geographers including Ian Cook (2004) and Caroline Knowles (2014). Given its origins in the neo-Marxist theorising of Harvey (1990), global commodity chain analysis is an extension of classical

Marxist thinking that does not diverge from the basic principles of historical Marxism. Like some performances of development, global commodity chain analyses are invested in revealing process and thus become a useful frame to bring into Theatre Studies. According to Dorethea Kleine's chapter 'Putting the Ethical Consumption in its Place', global commodity chain analysis is a method that 'follows a particular commodity through the different stages of production, from the sourced parts through the manufacturing via intermediaries to the consumer' (2016: 3577). Global commodity chain analyses reveal the processes of production behind consumer goods as an attempt to show how commodity fetishism operates. As such, I suggest global commodity chain analyses are useful frameworks for unravelling the dramaturgical workings of anti-capitalist performances of development. Using the global chain analysis model, I develop a method that allows me to analyse some performances of development as 'development chain analyses'. Development chain analyses, I contend, constitute the dramaturgical structure of performances of development. They are the means through which performances of development may go on to break the discursive neoliberal features of English play development as I aim to show below.

In this chapter, I focus on three examples of performances of development that I believe harbour the same anti-capitalist potential as global chain analyses: Sh!t Theatre's *DollyWould* (2017; 2018), Greg Wohead's *Call it a Day* (2019) and Selina Thompson's *Salt* (2016; 2017; 2018; 2019). Sh!t Theatre's *DollyWould* charts a development journey made by company members Rebecca Biscuit and Louise Mothersole to Dollywood, Tennessee: the Dolly Parton theme-park and, also, to see Dolly the cloned sheep in the Scottish National Museum (2018: iv-vii). *Call it a Day* is the reconstruction of a visit Wohead made to an Amish farmstead in rural Illinois, USA. *Salt* re-traces Thompson's development journey in which she engaged with the history of the middle passage of the slave trade triangle. Sh!t Theatre, Wohead and Thompson each have a repertoire of

performances of development. Thompson's *Race Cards*, for example, is a 'constantly growing installation and archive' in which Thompson continues to write questions about race thus revealing her artistic process implicitly (Thompson 2019). Sh!t Theatre's *Letters to Windsor House* (2016) is a performance of development in which Biscuit and Mothersole trace information about the former residents of their flat in order to explore the housing crisis. Their most recent performance *Drinking with Expats* (2019) is also a performance of development in which Biscuit and Mothersole reconstruct a trip to Malta, thus engaging with the ongoing human rights crisis at Europe's borders. In addition, in interview, Wohead has observed how his entire oeuvre comprises reconstructions, re-enactments and 'come-backs' (Wohead 2018). Although these artists are engaged with bringing development into performance, then, it is important to note that none have explicitly stated that their aim is to create performances of development. However, is my suggestion that, in the context of global commodity chain analysis, we can see that these performances challenge – beyond the aims and agendas of their makers – the discursive neoliberal consensus of play development observed across this thesis by operating dramaturgically as performances of development.

This chapter proceeds as follows. In section 6.2, I build a reading practice for development chain analysis. In section, 6.3, I analyse the development chain of *DollyWould*. In section 6.4, I explore *Call it a Day* and, in 6.5, *Salt*. In section 6.6, I evaluate development chains as a means for breaking the neoliberal discursive features of English play development identified over this thesis. I conclude this chapter by asking what development chain analysis means for the future of play development beyond 2019 – a central question I continue to address in the subsequent conclusion.

6.2 Towards Development Chain Analysis

Marx tells us about the conventional relationship between process and product. In a final section (originally a footnote) at the end of Chapter One of *Capital: Volume One* entitled 'The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret', Marx introduces the idea of 'commodity fetishism' (163-177). Commodity fetishism (which I return to below in further detail) is Marx's term that describes how the commodity – any commodity – disguises the social relations involved in its production; it can never physically display its value which is objective, immaterial and relational. According to Marx, all commodities (thus plays included) *hide* their social relations in exchange. As we have seen, English play development largely conforms to the mode of production suggested in *Capital* with development operating as a mode of production and the emergent play operating as the artefact rendered into commodity in exchange. Performances of development thus complicate the categories of process/product that Marx attributes to the capitalist mode of production in which products are visible, but processes are rarely shown (though, as we will see, central to products' value). Because of their anomalous dramaturgical form, then, performances of development can be read using the methodology of 'global commodity chain analysis'.[4]

[4] Although I argue, below, that global commodity chain analysis can operate as a methodology for reading performances of development, it is important to note that the method does not always fit performance. Global commodity chain analysis, as we will see, refers to commodity forms that are typically objects with high human use values including food and clothing. As a result, such analyses look at tangible goods that are universally necessary for human reproduction. Performances of development, by contrast, are intangible and have less significant and universal use values. Furthermore, global commodity analyses often focus on commodities with far-reaching geographies including productive consumptive chains that take place in various global locations. They require an emphasis on logistics and free trade (Cowen 2014). Performances, while they may be developed at several locations, are rarely the result of similarly expansive geographical linkages and, furthermore, do not rely on the dislocation and volume of wage labour in the same way.

Global commodity chain analysis is a method that cultural geographers have developed as part of a broader multi-disciplinary examination of ethical consumerism. Tania Lewis and Emily Potter define ethical consumerism as a buying trend that 'has its origins in US White Label Campaigns in the 1890s, led by women's consumer leagues who produced lists of "white" goods: products associated with good labour practices' (2011: 6). According to Naomi Klein's *No Logo* (2000), the movement gained momentum in the 1980s and 1990s in campaigns against unethical production practices, and it became particularly prominent as a reformist strand of the anti-globalisation movement:

> [i]n Bangladesh, women garment workers held a protest against sweatshop conditions; in San Francisco, they protested those same conditions outside Gap stores. In Montevideo, Uruguay, activists turned the main square of the city's financial district into a 'fair trade' show, with exhibits on every corporate abuse […] in Madrid, the entrance to the stock exchange was blocked. And in Cologne, site of the G-8 summit, European activists held a counter-summit and demanded debt forgiveness for Third World countries. The event was joined by five hundred Indian farmers […]. (ibid: 444)

Such protests were instructive in their representation of an emergent concern around global commodity chains and labour practices at the end of the twentieth century. Similarly, the 'Fair Trade' products that emerged in the global market a decade previously were expected to form a niche market. Yet, today, it is possible to observe consumer markets – tea and coffee, for example – where the majority of products are 'ethically' certified (Harrison in Shaw, Chatzidakis and Carrington 2016: 160). As Mike Featherstone notes in his Foreward to Lewis and Potter's *Ethical Consumerism* (2011: xvii-1), the ethical consumption of fair trade products depends 'upon place, knowledge of where goods come from and how they are made, their geographies of transformation and re-packaging' (xxi).

A notable example of a global commodity chain analysis is Ian Cook's *Follow the Thing: Papaya* (2004). Commencing at a supermarket just outside of London that started selling papayas in the early 1990s, Cook locates the global distributors, then the suppliers and then the growers. He winds up at a Jamaican papaya plant: an old sugar plantation, replete with ancient equipment and relics of slave-run manufacturing. Cook then examines the people involved in the process. He explores the farm foreman and the papaya pickers themselves, before returning to explore papaya prices, exchange rates and then papaya consumption in the UK. *Follow the Thing: Papaya* intends to 'expose the connections between production processes and consumption practices and the various activities, relations and politics in between' (Lewis and Potter 2011: 14). Similarly, Caroline Knowles' *Flip-Flop: A Journey through Globalisation's Back Roads* (2014) follows the global journey made by plastic flip-flops. It commences from the proposition that critical questions about provenance reveal how social worlds work. Following trails 'exposes the topographies of [flip-flops'] co-production and distribution', revealing how the world is connected and constructed by hidden social relations in production and distribution (ibid.: 4). As Kleine argues, global chain analyses 'pay […] attention to the actors, process steps, the linkages between actors and the governance of the chain' (2016: 3577). In addition, they also connect formal and informal and legal and illegal processes – for example, how regulated, formal working practices are often supplemented by exploitative, informal or illegal ones. Yet, as Cook implies, global commodity chain analyses cannot take down the capitalist modes of production that they seek to critique. Cook says '[l]ike any thing [sic] you could try to follow. Unravelling and becoming more entangled in the process' (662). In other words, global commodity chain analyses 'unravel' process and provenance, but, in doing so, they cannot break the production of value they seek to illuminate.

Global commodity chain analysis is a Marxist-inspired method catalysed by David Harvey's call for radical geographers to 'get behind the veil, the fetishism of the market', to make 'disturbing' links between Western consumers and global producers whose contributions to their lives are invisible (Harvey in Cook 2004: 642; see also Harvey 1990: 422). Harvey contends that these acts of defetishizing are 'one of the tasks of a geographical education […] to impart something about the variety of socio-environmental conditions, spatial linkages and labor practices involved in every aspect of daily life' (2010: 40). Harvey contends that radical geographers should work to 'de-fetishize commodities, reconnect consumers and producers, tell fuller stories of social reproduction' (Harvey in Cook 2004: 642). A method that 'get[s] behind the veil' such as global commodity chain analysis is one that intervenes in what Marx, in *Capital,* as noted above, calls 'commodity fetishism': the way in which commodities have an immaterial but objective value imposed in exchange (163-177; Harvey 2010: 37).[5]

Harvey contends that commodity fetishism, conceived by Marx over one hundred and fifty years ago, is still how we encounter commodities in our everyday lives:

> [y]ou go into a supermarket and want to buy a head of lettuce. In order to buy the lettuce, you have to put down a certain sum of money. The material relation between the money and the lettuce expresses a social relation because the price – the 'how much' – is

[5] Commodity fetishism emerges across *Capital* multiple times and is central to Marx's value theory. It refers to the strange status of the commodity: you can't cut a commodity open and observe value in motion. Instead, the commodity hides an understanding of the people and processes involved in its making. Marx starts off from the idea that: **'**[t]he commodity is, first of all, an external object, a thing which through its qualities satisfies human needs of whatever kind' (125). He goes on to note that '[t]he mysterious character of the commodity-form consists therefore simply in the fact that the commodity *reflects* the social characteristics of men's own labour as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves' (165 [my emphasis]). Making commodities, then, is a tangible process, but at the end, you get a commodity that 'reflects' value – almost as if value is superimposed or invisibly stored in objects when exchanged. As Marx says '[t]hrough this substitution, the products of labour *become* commodities, sensuous things which are at the same time supra-sensible or social' (ibid. [my emphasis]).

> socially determined, and the price is a monetary representation of value. Hidden within this market exchange of things is a relation between you, the consumer, and the direct producers – those who labored to produce the lettuce. Not only do you not have to know anything about that labor or the laborers who congealed value in the lettuce in order to buy it; in highly complicated systems of exchange it is *impossible* to know anything about the labor or laborers, which is why fetishism is inevitable in the world market. (2010: 39-40)

The fact that it is habitually 'impossible to know anything about that labor or the laborers' behind commodities is Harvey's rationale for getting 'behind the veil' of the market and, thus, why the method of global commodity chain analysis emerged (Harvey in Cook 2004: 642). In fact, Harvey's call to 'get behind' commodity fetishism is directly drawn from a proposition by Marx in *Capital Volume One* that: '[l]ater on, men try to decipher the hieroglyphic, to get behind the secret to their own social product' (166-7). Although global commodity chain analysis makes defetishization possible, the idea of 'getting behind' the process of fetishization is acutely complex.

Defetishization is not just about making production methods visible. When taking Marx's analysis into account, we can understand global commodity chain analysis to be processes of *reification*; it concerns moving through layers of abstraction and unpicking the relational value structures by which commodities are constituted. This seems to involve getting past the abstract labour congealed in objects which render them as commodities in exchange. It involves returning to the concrete, or 'private', labour conditions in which a particular artefact is really made. In short, a global commodity chain analysis must separate something commodified – let us say an object here – from its commodity form. As Harvey puts it, '[Marx] is not saying that this disguise, which he calls "fetishism" […] is a mere illusion, that it is a made-up construction that can be dismantled if only we care to try' (2010: 41). Fetishism is a more complex process that

refers to how the market system and money form disguise real social relations in the act of exchange.

Global chain analysts are well aware of this. As Coles and Crang say, 'the magical, fetishistic qualities of commodities are attributed to their masking of their own origins […] [a]s consumers we usually know little about where the goods we consume come from, of exactly what they are composed, under what conditions they came to be, and how they reached us' (in Lewis and Potter 2011: 89). In applying Marx's ideas to the study of the commodity chain, geographers produce critiques similar to popular exposés by filmmakers, writers and political activists. Examples include Marc James Francis and Nic Francis' documentary *Black Gold* (2006). *Black Gold* follows an Ethiopian coffee-union manager as he travels the world to try to get a better price for the workers' coffee beans. Global commodity chain analysis can work similarly to intervene in commodity fetishism and foreground how commodities are produced and consumed.

Global commodity chain analyses have a particular dramaturgy. Kleine argues that they operate by 'moving away from fixed narratives of often essentialized producers and producer spaces to a multiplicity of voices' (3389). Cook argues that global commodity chain analyses move away from these 'fixed narratives' in particular ways:

> if we accept that geographical knowledges through which commodity systems are imagined and acted upon from within are fragmentary, multiple, contradictory, inconsistent and, often, downright hypocritical, then the power of a text which deals with these knowledges comes not from smoothing them out, but through juxtaposing and montaging them […] so that audiences can work their way through them and, along the way, inject and make their own critical knowledges out of them. (642)

The form of global chain analyses comprises, for Kleine, 'a movement cutting across a myriad of stories' (2016: 3362). Such an approach has comparisons with Doreen Massey's reading of the effect of globalisation in *For Space* (2005): the 'neoliberal

capitalist globalization['s] […] glorification of the (unequally) free movement of capital on the one hand with the firm control over the movement of labour on the other' (ibid.: 4). For Cook, the formal approach, then, of global commodity chains thus intends to present stories '"between the lines" [as] a series of overlapping vignettes' (642). Global commodity chain's own dramaturgies, therefore, undermine globalisation's fixed narratives by combining stories about process, provenance and the real people involved in production, whose presence isn't rendered invisible or conveniently smoothed out in the re-telling, but, rather, who are made visible, juxtaposed and montaged, in ways that audiences can make their own judgement on consumer goods by reading between the lines. For Featherstone, there is 'clearly an aesthetic dimension to [global commodity chain analyses]' (2011: xxiv). By illuminating production in the construction of layered narratives, global commodity chains use aesthetic principles to reify the fetishization they comment on. As Cook argues, they cannot themselves override these systems, but the formal aspects of their construction elucidate the realities of process and provenance and enable consumers to make these connections.

Global commodity chain analysis seems an acutely important method in this political moment. At the time of drafting this chapter in 2018-2019, what dominated the media was the prospect of a 'soft', 'hard' or 'no deal' Brexit with a deadline of March 29th 2019, then May 22nd 2019, and then – at the time of editing – October 31st 2019 which, at the time of submission in December, had been delayed again by a general election. Amid the rhetoric, there emerged contentious debates about the future flow of capital and the impact on trans-national trade. While some discussions focused on issues surrounding the transportation and regulation of material commodities – e.g., the prospect of cross-channel border delays and the now-infamous 'Irish backstop' unravelling the knot of trans-national capitalism proved more complex than adjusting the terms on which commodities are exchanged; for instance, leaving the General Data Protection

Regulation could potentially inhibit the free flow of commercially valuable data. This current discourse around commodity practices and flows, I suggest, is as critical in theatre and performance discourse as it is in a wider geopolitical context. For this reason, an exploration of performances of development and their own development chain analyses seems, in my opinion, especially necessary currently since it helps us reflect not only on the state of play development's co-constitution with neoliberal culture in this moment, but also theatre and performance's relationship to the wider structural operation of capital.

For these reasons, I analyse below how *DollyWould*, *Call it a Day* and *Salt* respectively can be read as development chain analyses. These development chain analyses, I suggest, operate through the same aesthetic form as commodity chain analyses. Although I show how these performances of development style a dramaturgy in the form of development chain analyses, it is what development chain analyses *do* that is going to emerge as the most central idea here. Development chain analyses 'expose the topographies of co-production and distribution', revealing the usually hidden hegemonic social relations of play development (Knowles 2014: 4). I also show how, in defetishizing play development by revealing it in performance, development chain analyses allow artists to undertake bigger, broader projects of defetishization. This is similar to how global chain analyses work to deconstruct commodities *as a means for* critiquing wider systems including capitalism and – as in the example of papayas – the legacy of imperialism and colonialism. Let us now turn to explore the development chain analysis in Sh!t Theatre's *DollyWould*.

6.3 Sh!t Theatre's *DollyWould*: A Development Chain Analysis

The stage 'is a lunar landscape crossed with a dirty morgue' (Sh!t Theatre 2018:1). White sheets hide various large-scale props. There is a scattering of pink balloons, some of which are in body bags, and two mics centre-stage. An audio sequence begins: 'Dolly Parton's "Jolene", echoing and slowed down with sheep sounds and heartbeats over the top' (ibid.). Next, Mothersole and Biscuit enter with faces painted entirely white. In direct address and quick succession, they introduce Sh!t Theatre, themselves (as Louise and Becca), comment on achieving a slightly larger theatre space than last time, declare *DollyWould* to be their 'mainstream crossover hit' (2) and reveal their sexual orientations. Parton's '9-5' is the next audio cue, this time its opening chords rendered as piano instrumental. There then commences a 1977 video recording of American broadcast journalist Barbara Walters discussing Parton. Mothersole and Biscuit voice-over in mock-Tennessee accents. They explain their passion for Parton 'from the very core of our souls' (5-8). Here, Parton is conflated with Dolly the sheep: 'she spent most of her life at the Roslin Institute, Edinburgh' (8). This sequence leads to the declaration that '[w]e saved up loads of money this year to go to where she was born. Where her home is preserved. Back to where she started from' (8). Thus begins *DollyWould* which will repeat the performance strategies introduced above. The main aim of the performance, however, is to document the company's pilgrimage to the Parton Theme-Park, Dollywood in Tennessee, and to see Dolly, the taxidermied cloned sheep at the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh. The dramaturgy of the development chain analysis in *DollyWould*, I suggest, is created with resistant players including experimentation with the written form of *DollyWould* (2018) and, in performance, the live presence of the

artists. Below, I commence with a discussion of the *DollyWould* script before returning to explore its development chain analysis in performance.

The publication of the script of *DollyWould* (2018) shows how normative development practices have been undermined. *DollyWould* is part of a recent shift in publications demonstrating how the conventions of play texts continue to be reconceptualised. For example, the Modern Play series by Oberon publications is instructive in on-going contemporary challenges to dramatic convention including experimentation with character lists, stage description, direction, character dialogue, the organisation of scenes, acts and continuous action, etc. In 'Drama Performativity and Performance' (1998), W.B. Worthen notes that '[p]erformance studies has developed a vivid account of nondramatic, non-theatrical, nonscripted, ceremonial, and everyday-life performances, performances that appear to depart from the authority of texts' (1093). Current scripting practices, I suggest, seek to advance on Worthen's argument and embed the aforementioned performances into the text itself. For example, the script for *DollyWould* (itself an Oberon publication) embraces an array of non-theatrical, non-scripted everyday life-performances that all seek to document the development process of *DollyWould*.

The publication of *DollyWould* thus opens with three essays and a selection of diagrams on process. The first essay is '[a] brief history of *DollyWould*' where Biscuit and Mothersole describe the process of going to Dollywood that the play itself repeats (iv-vii). Following this, there are two work-in-progress diagrams: the first comprises a brief explanation on 'how to clone a sheep' and the second is a Venn diagram that connects Dolly the sheep, Dolly Parton and the Body Farm – a site of body de-composition experiments close to Dollywood that Biscuit and Mothersole also visited (viii-ix). Following this, there are two essays from other 'actors' in the development chain: the US-based creatives Bojan Louis and Sara Sams who hosted Biscuit and Mothersole

during their visit to Dollywood (x-xiv). There is then an essay from Dr Kat Arney, a science writer and broadcaster: 'When I met Dolly's Dad' (xv-xiv). Following this, there is a 'Sh!t Dolly Biography' (xx-xxiii). Furthermore, in a departure from the conventional chronology of text preceding performance, the script includes performance shots; for example, a photo of Biscuit and Mothersole in wigs and fake glasses (11) and a photo of the performers in a breast-shaped double-swing (34-5). There are also photos from the trip to Dollywood – which I return to below. The script for *DollyWould* thus challenges the conventional chronology of development/text and development/performance in addition to integrating nondramatic elements of development into the published script.

I suggest the dramaturgy of *DollyWould* shares features of the global commodity chain analysis. As Cook (2004) argues, global commodity chain analyses are works that produce 'fragmentary, multiple, contradictory, inconsistent and, often, downright hypocritical' accounts (642). He contends that 'the power of a text [that undermines commodity fetishization] comes not from smoothing them out, but through juxtaposing and montaging them […] so that audiences can work their way through them' (ibid.). I suggest that *DollyWould's* text is similar. By negating the confines of the traditional script and by integrating a high volume of seemingly extraneous non-theatrical detail about development, including conflating its conventional chronology, Sh!t Theatre produce a document that, like global commodity chain analysis, threatens to make visible the hidden private labour of development. The emphasis on revealing process, rather than abstracting it to produce text (product), then, is aesthetically similar to the formal presentation of the commodity chain analysis that, as noted above, is presented '"between the lines" [as] a series of overlapping vignettes' that reveal social relations (Cook 2004: 642).

Similarly, the performance of *DollyWould* seems to generate a development chain analysis by advancing on the strategies generated in the text. For example, the story of

the trip to Dollywood commences proper when the company price up the cost of *DollyWould's* development. Biscuit's speech below, for example, is footnoted with details about ticket prices at Dollywood, flight confirmations, extraneous notes on the flight itself and anecdotes about their taxi transfer driver's politics that, in performance, are visually reproduced as a slide-show displaying the travel artefacts including tickets and receipts:

> B: How could it ever live up to what we expect it to be? How could it ever be as mad, or as gaudy or as big or as brilliant as we imagine it to be? How could it ever be worth the money we'd spend on it? The $228.90 on tickets? The £2558.58 on flights? The $86 on gift shop merch? Or whatever else we'd need to spend money on? (15)

A development chain analysis framework means that such expressions can be read as strategies for revealing process and, furthermore, suggests a Marxist concern for revealing the performance's economic base. For example, Biscuit later questions '[h]ow could it be worth the thousands of miles we'd travel? Or the lies we'd have to tell the Arts Council' (16). The disclosure about the 'worth' of the travel (carrying a reference to an ecological 'worth') in addition to 'lying to the Arts Council' received laughs and applause. The performance can thus be read as a development chain analysis that seemingly makes visible play development's processes of commodity fetishism. For comparison, Cook (2004) also includes an extended section that deconstructs the economics of the papaya commodity chain (655-663).

DollyWould's visual dramaturgies seem to add to the development chain analysis's economic dimensionality. Biscuit and Mothersole reconstruct their journey in a series of anecdotes and memories; they present photos, phone-videos including further travel tickets, receipts and theme-park passes. By making these details visible, *DollyWould* does not 'smooth out' the process through which *DollyWould* has been created; it creases its

presentation by juxtaposing and montaging formal features that ultimately defetishize certain aspects of its development. For example, there are photos from extraneous moments in the development chain that further unravel the process: a photo of Dolly the Sheep from the trip to Edinburgh (13); a photo of Biscuit and Mothersole's carpark location at Dollywood (17); a photo of a toilet with Mothersole's faeces in it (18); their 'absolute favourite photo' on Parton's replica touring bus (20); a photo of Mothersole and Biscuit inside a large coffin (23) and finally a sequence of the Parton tattoos each performer and Sams got following their visit to Dollywood (45-7). In addition to the slide-show, *DollyWould* moves into an extended sequence of possible purchases from the Dollywood gift shop and the Body Farm that, in performance, are displayed as fast-moving montages and intercut with pictures of decomposing bodies (22; 50-54).

This reading reveals that these sequences do not simply defetishize development; they become a platform on which Sh!t Theatre can mount a bigger project of defetishization surrounding the Parton spectacle. By including the economic footnotes and lists of the products that can be bought at Dollywood and the Body Farm, Sh!t Theatre seem to make reference to the functioning of capitalist mechanisms in global and inter-state American tourism around Parton. Mothersole and Biscuit produce a critique that they themselves perform and are 'players' in. In 'Follow the Thing: Papaya' (2004), Cook juxtaposes the delicious taste and texture of papayas with the fact that papaya farms operate on sites that were formally slave-run plantations. By juxtaposing their own pleasure in consuming Dollywood paraphernalia with exposing the cost of their travelling, Sh!t Theatre's agenda is perhaps to demonstrate the complex processes in commodity fetishism, placing themselves as consumers and players in Parton's (and hence Dollywood's) chain. In revealing its development, then, the performance becomes entangled with its own process of making just as Mothersole and Biscuit become entangled – as consumers – in the spectacle they want to critique. As Cook (2004)

reminds us, the more process is dis-entangled, the more the actors become re-entangled in the process.

The defetishizing of Parton's own fetishization, therefore, perhaps works to highlight and undermine the intersections of capitalism, patriarchy and Sh!t Theatre's own entanglement in these systems. The series of images that hybridise Parton and Dolly the sheep are perhaps the best example. Glitzy Parton-inspired costumes are combined with wool tails and ears, and multiple images of, and references to, breasts. There is a dressing-up sequence that includes the application of face make-up that suggests both Dollies. These comedic hybridisations attest to the spectacle of objectification around Parton. Moreover, the inclusion of archive interviews with Parton strategically highlight the complex nature of patriarchy in acts of objectification. For example, Mothersole and Biscuit include interview footage where Parton is being interviewed by mostly male presenters. One male interviewer asks '[y]ou are – you are a, an attractive woman. You don't have to look like this. You're very beautiful. You don't have to wear the blonde wigs, you don't have to wear the extreme clothes, right?' (39). Later, *DollyWould* returns to the interviews to cite Parton's response to this question which Mothersole and Biscuit recount to the tune of Parton's *I Will Always Love You*:

> B&L: No, it's certainly a choice. I don't like to be like everybody else. I've often made the statement that I would never stoop so low as to be fashionable, that's the easiest thing in the world to do. So I just decided that I would do something that would at least get the attention. Once they got past the shock of the ridiculous way I looked and all that, then they would see there was parts of me to be appreciated. I'm very real where it counts, and that's inside…But I just chose to do this, and it's, show business is a moneymaking joke, and I've just always liked telling jokes. (42)

By including Parton's answer here, Mothersole and Biscuit seem to reach towards acknowledging the hegemonic systems in which Parton's fetishized image is

constructed. Parton chooses to read her own image as a 'moneymaking joke'. *DollyWould*, however, seemingly explores how Parton's self-made image creates a commodity chain in which other actors are compelled to participate. Mothersole and Biscuit explore the effects of female fetishization scripts such as Parton's on their own lives and bodies. For example, Mothersole and Biscuit, at one point, cut holes in their tops to reveal their nipples and areolas. This strategy does not amount to an emancipatory gesture in the way Parton described it ('I […] would at least get the attention'), but is, rather, a way for Sh!t Theatre to show the complexities in negating their own fetishization as players in Parton's commodity chain (42).

DollyWould provides, then, an understanding of how development chain analyses might be constructed. Here, I suggest that we can read *DollyWould* as a development chain that is achieved through renegotiations of dramatic convention, the presence of the artist in performance, the use of direct address and the rendering of the materiality of development through visual pastiche – with particular reference to costing transparency. It is important to note, however, that the defetishization of the development of *DollyWould* is not the central agenda of these artists. As such, it is incomplete in both script and performance. For example, neither reveal the funding processes and applications, the trajectories, locations, times, models, structures of development, the processes of rehearsal, nor the integration of theatrical systems in performance. By omitting key aspects of its own mode of production, *DollyWould* reneges on the possibility of fully analysing its own development chain in order to make space for its own project of defetishizing broader constructs – this time, female objectification. I will discuss the implications of this critical decision further in the conclusion. Let us now turn to analyse Wohead's *Call it a Day*.

6.4 Greg Wohead's *Call it a Day*: A Development Chain Analysis

In 2009, Wohead's Aunt and Uncle facilitated a visit for Wohead and his then girlfriend to an Amish family home in rural Illinois, USA. There, Wohead collected testimonies, asking a single question: 'how do you live your life?' (Wohead 2018). *Call it a Day* is the result: a reconstruction of that visit. In performance, Wohead is supported by a cast of three actors who play Wohead's girlfriend and the Amish couple. The performance commences with an initial ethnographic reconstruction narrated by Wohead. The actors then 'stand in' for each other – recounting three other possible versions of the visit. In an early showing at the Yard Theatre in July 2017, *Call it a Day* was performed by Wohead, Vera Chok, Season Butler and Tim Bromage. After Wohead's initial account, the same visit is replayed, but, for example, with Butler playing Wohead. In these reconstructions, the visit fractures into different narratives and registers. For instance, one version is queered with Wohead feeling so attracted to Jacob, the Amish husband, that he performs an erotic dance to an audio cue of Phil Collins' 'In The Air Tonight' (1981). The scenography is simple: a table – the Amish couple's kitchen table, we are told – with two chairs end on and two at each respective side. There is also a mic downstage left from which the character playing Wohead can narrate new versions that the actors then improvise. Since its early showing in 2017, *Call it a Day* received its premiere at South Street Arts Centre, Reading, in January 2019. The features described above remained in place, with the addition of further improvisational units that I will come to below. Wohead had also introduced a dual language element with some sequences delivered in Pennsylvania Dutch. A PowerPoint projection was also deployed to integrate non-diegetic commentary on the action: for example, one slide documented voting statistics in Illinois.

Like *DollyWould, Call it a Day* can be read as a development chain analysis that deploys resistant players including the artist in performance, the rendering of the development journey in real time and, additionally, the use of mics to speak directly to the audience, in the first instance about the journey and its aims. In the first account, Wohead reconstructs the visit in acute detail. He describes the journey from his Aunt's house to the Amish homestead, providing anecdotal information about his girlfriend, the weather and the clothes the couple were wearing. He describes how he and his girlfriend felt while approaching the farmstead, the initial greeting, Wohead's compliments on the kitchen arrangements, the view from the window, what food and drinks they were offered and served, what information was revealed about the Amish lifestyle, the names of the Amish couple's seven children and the sounds that could be heard from upstairs. As these details are offered, they are simultaneously performed. The a-synchronous narration and action engenders a slow pace and a consciously uncomfortable register, replete with silences. It is clear there is an attempt to reproduce the awkwardness from the initial visit – an effect that reads, to the audience, as comic. There is a tacit acknowledgement, through humour, that this is a difficult social moment to negotiate for all involved.

These dramaturgies share features with the global commodity chain analysis's emphasis on formal aestheticizing as a means to defetishize the object of study. Like Cook's (2004) use of punctuation to decelerate the account of process, the pacing in *Call it a Day* operates similarly to allow the audience to 'pay […] attention to the actors, process steps, the linkages between actors […]' in this development trip (Shaw, Chatzidakis and Carrington 2016: 3577). Moreover, the subsequent reconstruction of this visit by the other actors is an innovative dramaturgy that *Call it a Day* produces to further realise what can be read as its development chain. Although these accounts are not presented as accurate reconstructions of the play's development process, they 'show

rather than tell' Wohead's attempt to accurately produce the empirical details of *Call it a Day's* modes of production. The triple reconstruction of the visit is almost a live demonstration of the subconscious processes of development, the memory of the artist in committing rich moments of process into performance. The development chain in *Call it a Day*, then, seems to perform the artist's 'unravelling' and 'entangle[ment]' in the memories and subtexts created in development and the act of rendering those engagements into performance. Like the aestheticised commodity chain analysis, then, *Call it a Day* can be read as a performance that reconstructs development '"between the lines" [as] a series of overlapping vignettes' (Cook 2004: 642). By creating an aesthetic form that literally deconstructs its own development chain as a means to reconstruct it more fully, *Call it a Day* can be seen to be a defetishization of its own development since it makes visible not only certain landscapes of process (i.e., the visit), but also the interiority of the artist in recalling and making use of these experiences in the vein, perhaps, of a postmodern stream of consciousness technique.

In addition to creating new dramaturgies, then, through which the development chain analysis is constructed, *Call it a Day,* like *DollyWould*, can be read as a performance that deploys a development chain to attend to its own agenda, which, I suggest, comprises a bigger project of defetishization. *Call it a Day* attempts to challenge essentialised categories of gender and ethnicity. In performance this is achieved by the deconstruction of Wohead's initial visit. The first retelling is over-burdened with gender norms. These include the Amish wife serving the couple and her husband, commentary on the gender performances of the couple and Wohead's and his girlfriend's realisation that, in this space, they should perform heteronormative versions of themselves. For example, this included explaining why they were not married. The aim of the subsequent reconstructions is to paradoxically deconstruct the first version's essentialised categories of gender and ethnicity. The casting of actors of colour,

including Chok and Butler, for example, revision the original account's white bodies. In addition, the aforementioned queering of one version deconstructs the heightened heteronormativity of the original scenario. In another version, the Amish wife discusses her independent interests including karaoke. These narratives reconstruct the Amish wife away from her original gender performance. Such strategies might be seen to be complicit in 'moving away from fixed narratives of often essentialized [ideas]' (Shaw, Chatzidakis and Carrington 2016: 3389).

Like *DollyWould*, *Call it a Day*, however, is only able to release its characters from essentialised norms by departing from the project of defetishizing development in performance. In other words, in attempting to defetishize ethnicity, sexuality and gender through improvisation, *Call it a Day* pauses its own project of reconstructing its development narrative. As with *DollyWould, Call it a Day's* actual development is not coherently reproduced in performance. There is no mention, for instance, of how Wohead received funding, how and where he developed the work with additional creatives, what the rehearsal schedule was and what theatrical systems were integrated and how.

Because *Call it a Day* was part of the Arts Council England-funded project on development I ran with South Street Arts Centre (2016-2019), I have further insight into what units of development were omitted in performance. Indeed, *Call it a Day* had a long development phase. Wohead pitched the idea for the play to the Bush Theatre in 2009, but didn't significantly develop his performance until after the visit to the Amish family in the same year (Wohead 2018). In 2015, Wohead received a residency with UCLA to develop the work further with three actors. In this residency, Wohead could construct 'imperfect imagining[s] of what it is like to be Amish' (ibid.). Wohead described his exchange with the Amish couple in some detail to the performers he was working with. This oral reconstruction of Wohead's visit became the basis for long-

form improvisation where actors worked with the story in order to enact the scenario and, furthermore, imagine additional scenarios in the Amish couple's lives. Wohead described how units of improvisation would last up to four hours, or until they were able to deconstruct the elements of control in the Amish couple's lives that stemmed from the heightened masculinity of the husband, Jacob, and gender norms that Wohead observed in their home. In 2016, Wohead realised that he could adopt a form for the work that was similar to Chris Kraus's *I Love Dick* (1997). In *I Love Dick,* Kraus adopts a metafictional presence in the narrative in order to create a fantastical story about her and her husband's sexual obsession with English theorist Dick Hebdige. Wohead realised that *Call it a Day* would work best if 'rather than stay true and be myself as a character in the show, I put a writer character maker [that is me] into the show' (Wohead 2018). This consideration of his own presence in *Call it a Day* reflects Wohead's engagement with what Tomlin refers to as the 'seemingly more authentic presence of the performer who could share real time and space with the audience […]' (2013c: 80).

At the Yard Theatre's 2017 showcasing of *Call it a Day*, Wohead delivered the play in a series of four rounds – as mentioned above. Following this performance at the Yard Theatre in 2017, in January 2018, Wohead developed the play further at Bradford's Theatre in the Mill. It is here that Wohead decided to include Pennsylvania Dutch – a language he himself does not speak. With the help of a YouTube translator, Wohead translated large swathes of his description of the visit into Pennsylvania Dutch. At Theatre in the Mill, Wohead performed the play's first sequence, the ethnographic description, as a script; he chose to deliver this partly in the Pennsylvania Dutch he had translated which, during the reading, was displayed behind him on a large screen. Since Wohead is unfamiliar with the language and accent, the delivery is consciously hindered. Following the development of this dual-language script, Wohead undertook a further

development phase at Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff in April 2018. Here, he worked with three performers in a fourteen hour-long open improvisation session that 'allowed for the possibility of things happening' (Wohead 2018). *Call it a Day*, at this stage, involved the delivery of the script, but this time with new performance modes where improvisation was taken to the extreme. For example, in one sequence actors were only allowed to say 'soya beans'. These heightened improvisational modes changed the way in which *Call it a Day* operated; for Wohead, it became a piece of 'conceptual ventriloquism' where actors used the script, but immediately undermined it in performance by improvising around it (Wohead 2018).

The gradual generating of the aforementioned performance strategies for *Call it a Day* all culminated in a performance that, I suggest, can be read as a development chain analysis. This development chain analysis, I have argued, calls on strategies including retelling, improvisation and language-play which work to simultaneously recreate the development journey in meticulous detail but, at the same time, break its essentialised structures. Such a dramaturgy, as we have seen, echoes the commodity chain analysis's desire to materially reproduce process and, in doing so, deconstructs the essentialised structures inherent therein. Let us now turn to explore the final case study and, perhaps, the most complex version of development chain analysis in performance presented here.

6.5 Selina Thompson's *Salt*: A Development Chain Analysis

The stage is covered with pink rock salt: chunks, pieces, fragments, dust. A deck chair and potted plant are to one side and, to the other, a partially constructed wall, a plastic set of protective goggles and a sledge hammer. Centre stage is a dark-blue swathe of fabric, itself coated with rock salt, on which are a stool and reading stand. Thompson

greets the audience in an empire-line, floor-length white cotton dress. She explains that 'we are going to make a journey'. *Salt* thus begins with Thompson reconstructing a development activity undertaken three months before *Salt's* premiere (2016): Thompson boarded a cargo ship in Antwerp, Belgium and spent three weeks retracing the route of the transatlantic slave trade triangle to Ghana, then to Jamaica. 'I am going to the middle of the triangle', she tells us. In this section, I read *Salt*'s dramaturgy as a development chain analysis. Here, I refer to the production of *Salt* with Thompson performing (Summerhall, Edinburgh 2017), prior to the run at the Royal Court in 2019 in which Rochelle Rose played Thompson's role.

Salt's development chain analysis is created by resistant players that include Thompson's presence in performance and, I suggest, the formal aestheticising of the development chain in real time and direct address. As with Cook's (2004) and Knowles' (2014) subjective positioning in their analyses, Thompson's presence is central to the dramaturgy of what can be read as the development chain. By situating herself on stage, like Biscuit, Mothersole and Wohead, Thompson also has a dual positioning as the enactor of both process and performance, inhabiting the visible role of performer, but also the conventionally hidden role of playmaker in development. The first-person dramaturgy, I suggest, thus creates a platform through which a development chain can be made visible. Thompson's positioning thus enables *Salt* to get 'behind the veil' of performance and into its modes of production (Harvey 1990: 422).

In addition, *Salt* deploys further dramaturgies that seemingly construct a development chain. As Featherstone argues, there is 'clearly an aesthetic dimension to [global commodity chain analyses]' (2011: xxiv). In *Follow the Thing: Papaya* (2004), as previously noted, Cook reconstructs the modes of papaya production in a heavily punctuated and compressed form rendered in real-time: '[m]en. Walking slowly along an avenue of "trees". Alongside a trailer, full of green plastic crates. Pulled by a tractor.

Work that's undertaken in the hot sun' (643-4). Such formal emphasis enhances the visibility of what is ordinarily fetishized; in other words, form supports the commodity chain analysis's project of defetishization. Similarly, *Salt* develops a dramaturgy for the development chain that offers the audience access to the usually disguised spaces of development: like the commodity chain, for example, *Salt* is similarly constructed in a choppy, poetic form that is also rendered in real-time. Thompson develops a presentational style for retelling her journey that heightens the visibility of development. The account is replete with confessional details: the difficulty she felt leaving her parents and the communication difficulties on board. These asides heighten the reification of process by reconstructing a detailed picture of the emotional and physical landscapes of *Salt's* development. Similarly, the rendering of the account in real-time creates an intimate proximity with the development journey itself. For example, at times, Thompson reconstructs with urgency her feelings following events at sea (which I will come to in more detail below): '[w]e just have to get off this ship. We just need to get off this ship.' The immediacy of this reportage is similar to the global commodity chain which also allows audiences to 'pay attention to the actors, process steps, the linkages between actors and the governance of the chain' (Shaw, Chatzidakis and Carrington 2016: 3577). In its formal presentation, then – the positing of the playmaker in performance, the use of real-time and heightened detail – *Salt* develops a dramaturgy that, I suggest, can be read as a development chain.

Salt, however, can be said to have connections with commodity chain analyses beyond its dramaturgy. I suggest that Thompson's agenda here might be to construct a performative artefact akin to a commodity chain analysis of the slave trade. Unlike *DollyWould* and *Call it a Day*, *Salt* can be read as a combination of two inter-related chains: the development chain analysis of Thompson's process *and* a historic commodity chain analysis of the slave trade. *Salt* begins with a critical moment that

connects these forms. Thompson tells us that the trip emerged from a sense that Thompson's own history was entangled with the slave trade. Thompson explains that, 'like my father before me', Thompson felt a call to unravel this connection, retracing the slave trade and thus being able to make visible the tacit connection she felt to this history. *Salt* is thus a means of 'unravelling and becoming more entangled in the process' (Cook 2004: 662). *Salt*'s dramaturgy creates further connections, then, to the form of the commodity chain analysis: 'the need to know where commodities come from and how they are composed' (Lewis and Potter 2011: 90). *Salt's* subject, however, is Thompson herself. In other words, since Thompson commences from the proposition that her own subjectivity is entangled in this historic commodity chain, the development chain analysis constitutes Thompson herself as the key player in the commodity chain analysis. In this moment, then, *Salt* becomes a personal examination of the historic commodification of subjectivity valorised by the slave trade triangle. Since Thompson sees herself entangled in this historic process of abstraction, the development chain takes the form of a reification of subjectivity and the conception of History as what Paul Gilroy defines as 'disaggregated into specific, fragmented "backstories"' (2016: 37).

If we read *Salt* as a performance that both uses global commodity chain analysis and development chain analysis, we can see how Thompson considers commodity fetishism in relation to her own subjectivity. Crucially, racism is seen as an ideology constructed by the slave trade's commodity chain. It allows Thompson to literally retrace the process in which value was 'reflected' in subjects in a way that rendered humans into slaves and transformed slaves into labour power on arrival to the Americas (Marx 1990: 165). The development chain of *Salt* can be read, then, as a process of retracing a supposedly defunct but, actually, highly residual and ongoing mode of fetishization.

Again, by locating strategies of the development chain in *Salt*, we can observe the method through which Thompson attends to her actual agenda in performance. In *Salt's* case, I suggest the development chain analysis allows Thompson to address the bigger project of defetishizing subjectivity. Thompson can follow the commodity chain of black slavery as a means to expose the topographies of a black subjectivity shaped by this historic commodity chain. *Salt* attempts to conflate time-frames: demonstrating how the 'then' of the slave trade is constituent in contemporary black subjectivity. The global commodity chain analysis attempts to expose the topographies of co-production and distribution, revealing how the world is connected and constructed by hidden social relations in production and distribution. *Salt* similarly intends to expose the topographies and their diachronic presence and remains. For example, Thompson describes the first leg of her journey that involves an encounter with the Italian captain who must be referred to as 'master', six Italian officers and nineteen Filipino crew members. As Sarah Gorman has noted, 'the "master" claims that although [Thompson] is welcome on board as "a distraction" he insists that he would not have agreed to issue the tickets had he known the nature of [Thompson's] project' (2017). The 'master' asserts that his vessel 'is not a slave ship' and yet, as the voyage commences, Thompson understands that, on board, she is going to be subject to racism. The master and crew repeatedly refer to Thompson as 'nigger'. The integration of these critical moments allows Thompson to personify herself as actor in a wider chain with which she is connected.

Thompson engages in a sequence of physical actions that visually reflect the project of defetishizing black self-hood. This comprises smashing up large chunks of pink rock salt with a sledge-hammer. The salt, we are told, symbolises imperialism, colonialism and whiteness, as well as the tears of the slaves. Salt is also the chemical compound that is produced by the natural energy from the sun and the evaporation of brine in sea

water; it is a compound that has been subject to one of the longest lineages of capital's commodification, playing the part in Roman times as the exchange commodity (hence 'salary'). For this reason, salt is a compound that can stand in for the process of reifying humans into slaves – on the salty sea and through salty suffering. In performance, Thompson takes a sledgehammer to a large piece of rock salt. Subsequently, she arranges the resulting pieces in a line according to size: smallest first. Thompson walks over to the smallest piece and says: '[t]his is me. A crying me.' She smashes this piece further and moves onto the next in the sequence. The subsequent rocks represent hierarchies and cycles of oppression that the smallest piece, representing Thompson, is a product of. Through this performative strategy, as Helmsey argues, Thompson shows the process through which '[h]istory mishandles history' (2017). The smashing is also iterative of the suffering and violence experienced by Thompson and the predecessors she evokes. Like the commodity chain analysis, Thompson presents her tacit connection to oppressive structures as 'overlapping vignettes' whose meanings accrue 'between the lines' (Cook 2004: 642). The act of smashing demonstrates not only the experience of violence, but also the meeting of violence with violence required in the process of defetishization, freeing subjects from layers of abstraction. Such violence is enacted in abstract terms; the 'smashing' of these 'structures' challenges the hegemonic systems that have impacted on Thompson. *Salt*'s development chain thus results in a process that suggestively performs the violence required in the process of defetishizing, revealing in the dust the 'spatial linkages and labor practices' (Harvey 2010: 40) that connect Thompson and the slave trade.

It is in these ways that *Salt* can be read as a development chain and a commodity chain analysis. We can understand this dramaturgy, however, to function similarly to Wohead's and Sh!t Theatre's development chains: in concentrating on its own project of defetishizing black subjectivity, *Salt*, like *DollyWould* and *Call it a Day*, does not entirely

reproduce its actual structure of development, choosing instead to heighten certain elements and to omit other aspects entirely. For example, *Salt*'s development must have also included a process of writing, editing, rehearsal and developing the theatrical systems that are disguised in *Salt's* performative account. Instead, the only aspect of development presented is the trip. Because it wasn't Thompson's intention to produce a development chain analysis in performance, the analysis is inevitably incomplete; its incompleteness is central, however, to Thompson's actual project of challenging the wider hegemonic constructs embedded, in this case, in the economic base of black subjective experience.

For now, though, let us conclude with what *Salt* has helped to demonstrate about the dramaturgies of the development chain analysis. We have observed that *Salt* can be read as a development chain analysis and that its dramaturgy has features similar to *DollyWould* and *Call it a Day*: the artist's presence in performance, the rendering of development in real time and a reportage-style account that mimics the aesthetic principles of the commodity chain analysis. This dramaturgy generates a formal mode that reveals the artist in the act of development in real time. This defetishization of development, however, is consciously hindered by the highly curated version of development we receive where swathes of process are omitted in order to advance instead, as the preceding performances of development also do, bigger projects of defetishization which seem to be central to the aims of the artists.

6.6 Performances of Development: A Radical Form for Play Development from 2019 and beyond?

In their increasing proximity to mainstream English theatre and its development modes (for example *Call it a Day's* development at the Bush and *Salt's* transfer to the Royal

Court), these performances of development have the potential to challenge established modes of play development discussed throughout this thesis. In *DollyWould, Call it a Day* and *Salt*, the dramaturgy was generated from strategies including the live presence of the artist and the retelling of (an aspect of) development in chronological order, through empirical detail. Moreover, playmakers deployed strategies including the use of mics, visual aids and recordings (e.g., photos of the artist engaged in their development journey); the addition of extraneous information (e.g., confessional details such as an emphasis on feelings, atmospheres, tones and registers); moments of 'non-work' (Kunst 2015) and manifestations of the cerebral aspects of development.

These dramaturgies, I suggest, can be read as development chain analyses that defetishize play development by making it visible. Defetishizing development can be understood as an artistic attempt to challenge the hegemonies of play development observed over the course of this thesis: including the conservative categories of script development, the positionality of the playwright in development and the conventional modes in which development is 'more or less invisible to audiences and taken for granted by theatre workers themselves' (Lacey 2004: 57). The presence of the artist in performance, for example, challenges the marketable construction of the playwright observed in Chapter One: the individualist, silent genius. Thompson, Mothersole, Biscuit and Wohead all produced scripts in advance of their performance, adopting aspects of the playwright's role. And yet, by performing the works themselves, these makers undermine the playwright's normative manifestation as the autonomous and unseen 'silent partner' (Hapgood 1992: 44).

The central conclusion of this chapter – and perhaps even the thesis – is the observation that to really evade the neoliberal consensus of English play development, artists might develop work away from English mainstream theatres. For example, the performances of development discussed here engender radical potential on the basis

that their modes of production are outside the theatres discussed throughout this thesis. Neither Sh!t Theatre's, Wohead's nor Thompson's work was developed inside a traditional English play development context. As such, each work is able to negate the highly regulated Fordist and post-Fordist capitalistic modes of production discussed in Chapter Three. Furthermore, neither *Salt,* nor *DollyWould,* nor *Call it a Day* seem to observe the standardised and regulated conditions identified by play developers as necessary to artistic production in English theatre's key new writing theatres. Moreover, development chain analyses do not seem to present modes of production that reflect the bespoke, flexible post-Fordist processes adopted in new writing theatres in the 2010s. Play developers working in post-Fordist structures saw value in flexible working arrangements, decentralised, informal, non-managed and non-regulated theatrical practices in which the commissioned artists work collaboratively, but independently, to develop the work. This included taking development trips (for example, the Royal Shakespeare Company's development trip to Ypres for Phil Porter's *The Christmas Truce* (2014)), but these trips were an unseen part of the productive process, rather than a central part of the resulting performance.

These development chain analyses, by contrast, seem to disrupt the socially necessary labour time of development and its conventional structuring in capitalistic modes of production in new writing theatres since they are not subject to the same power structures and economic rationality. Development chain analyses attempt to break with the economic rationality of play development by resisting the debtor-creditor social relations encouraged by theatres; instead, they build their own modes of production through development trips that reflexively comment on the power structures and economic imperatives they omit. To develop work outside mainstream theatres, then, might liberate artists from some of the effects of neoliberalism in play development seen across this thesis, however, play development outside these structures inevitably

encounters other forms of neoliberal consensus. As I explore in the conclusion to this thesis, what might beneficial is re-framing the terms of development inside established institutional structures. These performances of development discussed here – and their commissioning by mainstream theatres – might constitute one way of doing this.

For example, as noted in Chapter Four, play development often asks artists to perform entrepreneurially in order to undertake a facilitated development including, in some cases, absorbing economic risk for new projects. Although the economic basis of performances of development may operate similarly, artistic risk in performances of development is predicated on the project of defetishization; for example, Thompson's undertaking a highly precarious voyage and Biscuit and Mothersole's decision to investigate the Body Farm and get tattoos, in order, not simply to advance their projects, but, rather, to penetrate and performatively articulate the economic structures that determine the subjects they explore. Moreover, by including extraneous details, such as toilet stops in *DollyWould*, the emphasis on feelings, failure and duration in *Salt* and the repeated reference to life activity in *Call it a Day* (e.g., Wohead's eating and drinking with the Amish couple), performances of development decline to hide the artist's life activity from performance. As Kunst (2012) argues, artistic process is 'fused with life'; it comprises laziness and non-work, mistakes, coincidences, chance, failure and duration (123-4; 120). Development is a space in which these life activities are central to the artistic process, but, as I argue in Chapter Four, are often omitted by the pressure on artists to perform as human capital.

In building this dramaturgy out of the above features, development chain analyses defetishize play development by making it visible and, in so doing, challenge its neoliberal structuring. Performances of development, then, are attempts to defetishize performance *from* development; they are works that undermine the value-systems that normally would be constructed by hiding process. Thus, performances of development,

like global chain analyses, 'get behind the veil, the fetishism […]' of plays as commodity objects. Like global chain analyses, however, development chain analyses cannot fully defetishize process, often, as in the cases observed here, omitting material details about development and rehearsal. This is because the process of commencing *and* arresting the development chain analyses allows playmakers to mount bigger projects of defetishization. Performance, therefore, can function as a critical tool for exposing and denaturalising neoliberalism's claim on English play development. By constructing development chain analyses in performance, artists can evade the constitution of their process with features of neoliberal culture. And by integrating and resituating the usually hidden aspects of development, performances of development may present artists with strategies through which capitalistic modes of play development can be undermined.

Conclusion: Work in Progress

The late Mark Fisher analysed 'capitalist realism' as 'the widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to imagine a coherent alternative to it' (2009: 1). Correspondingly, this thesis has examined what amounted to the capitalist realism of English play development in the twenty-first century. The slogan of the Secret Theatre Company that partly motivated this work argued that 'art is not a commodity'. Using a Marxist materialist framework, I have committed not necessarily to analysing the ways in which English play development corresponds to the capitalist mode of production on Marx's terms, but, rather, the ways in which it corresponds with capital's contemporary iteration: neoliberal, predominantly post-Fordist capitalism.

This project was driven by the desire to contribute to the field of scholarship exploring English play development practices in Theatre Studies. As observed in the introduction, scholars have previously analysed play development in different English mainstream theatres and companies (e.g., Luckhurst 2006; Turner and Behrnt 2008; Love 2015). Moreover, they have, in some instances, generated critiques that make partial reference to its capitalistic underpinning (e.g., Bolton 2012). These readings catalysed further questions that could be explored here: what is English play development's relationship with neoliberal governance? And, given that relationship, is English play development a neoliberal culture? Since analysis in Theatre Studies often focuses on text or performance, the critique of theatre's modes of production remains unusual. Although previous research (e.g., Freeman 2017) made allusion to the use of materialist analyses in the scholarship on play development, there was no established disciplinary lens. In order to comprehensively analyse play development as a mode of production in the twenty-first century, then, this thesis advanced, and, in some cases,

brought into Theatre Studies, six different materialist methodologies. Drawing on cultural materialisms, which first brought Marx's ideas into contact with culture, this thesis developed a reading practice that combined cultural materialist principles with close analysis of Marx's *Capital Volume One* and scholarship on neoliberalism. I referred to this approach, overall, as a 'Marxist materialist methodology'. As a result, this work makes a significant contribution to the materialist methodologies in Theatre Studies. Crucially, in this thesis, I have applied this Marxist materialist lens to six different play development practices to ascertain their relationship to neoliberal governance. As a result, this work offers a further original contribution to the field in terms of its findings.

This thesis cannot, of course, offer a comprehensive account of the effects of neoliberalism on this sphere of cultural production, especially since economic relations continue to shift and expand. Nonetheless, this work offers an original reading that argues that the culture of English play development between 2000 and 2019 has been exemplary of neoliberal culture. I have argued, for example, that English playwriting guides published in the 2000s conveyed the principles of marketisation found in HE (Chapter One). I have shown how the burgeoning practice of new play development dramaturgy in English theatres was bureaucratised by New Public Management (Chapter Two). I have found that play development in key English theatres in the mid-2010s was structured and re-structured by Fordism and post-Fordism (Chapter Three). I have contended that these same structures encouraged artists to conceive of themselves as units of human capital in play development structures (Chapter Four). Finally, I have identified how Arts Council England's *The Creative Case for Diversity* (2011a) has advanced a neoliberal new diversity that has the potential to be reproduced in all subsequent practices of English play development.

According to Fisher, '[c]apitalist realism isn't the direct endorsement of neoliberal doctrine; it's the idea that, whether we like it or not, the world is governed by neoliberal ideas, and that won't change. There's no point fighting the inevitable' (2016: 126). Rather than just accepting the neoliberal conditioning of English play development during the twenty-first century, however, this thesis has actively identified expressions of where, and the ways in which, artists were evading its neoliberal consensus. For instance, I have argued that artists resisted their self-conception as units of human capital in play development (Chapter Four), and I have demonstrated how artists have challenged the neoliberal diversity of *The Creative Case*, adopting, instead, the practices I have characterised as standpoint theory-building as a means of expanding the parameters of play development (Chapter Five). Finally, I have shown the radical potential of performance as a live framework in which artists can deconstruct the commodifying processes of play development as observed earlier in this work (Chapter Six).

Overall, then, this thesis reveals that English play development in the twenty-first century is certainly a culture governed by neoliberal imperatives, but with the potential for resistance in multiple forms. This is not to say that neoliberalism is a remote thing that sometimes, accidentally, gets let in to contaminate different cultural spheres including English play development practices despite the best efforts of those involved. Rather, this thesis shows how neoliberal logic became, in this period, widely naturalised within English play development, and also occasionally resisted. If neoliberalism is everywhere, it is certainly everywhere in English play development. At a granular level, it came to command the language of play development, the structures for developing plays and the ways in which participants go about the process of play development. Even the semiotics of English play development can be seen to have been co-constituted with neoliberal rationality. Chapters One and Two, for example, reveal how

saturated the language of English play development became with economic imperatives in the 2000s. Similarly, as noted in Chapter Two, the term 'play development dramaturgy' ensured a bureaucratic focus on developing plays, not a theatrical focus on production. If the semiotics are constituted in this way, so too are the mainstream structures of play development and its participants and stakeholders.

Crucially, the participants of play development, across the two decades analysed here, including the authors of English play development guides, Literary Managers, Dramaturgs and artists seemed never to acknowledge the effects of neoliberalism on their practice and themselves. This thesis does not imply that the people involved in English play development somehow haven't noticed the effects of neoliberalism in the way this work charts. Rather, this rhetorical omission goes to demonstrate neoliberalism's stealth invisibility, omniscience and ubiquity in all aspects of life. Or, perhaps, as Fisher notes above, '[t]here's no point fighting' (ibid.): the presence of neoliberalism in all non-economic spheres is now unremarkable. I suggest, however, that even if the presence of neoliberalism in English play development is, in the twenty-first century, unremarkable, its effects must nevertheless be remarked upon; furthermore, they must be challenged. This thesis not only stands as an original contribution, therefore, that does just that; it also situates its findings as part of the scholarly praxis of exploring how cultures – such as English play development – are still in the process of becoming neoliberal global cultures.

The on-going importance of articulating the relational dynamics between neoliberalism and any sphere of culture, including English play development, continues to highlight how neoliberal market ideology inserts itself into non-economic spheres. Scholars have already articulated neoliberalism's political and governmental dimensionality, but further work is required to understand exactly how neoliberalism is entering cultural contexts, and the impact it is having on the everyday lives of those who

work in and experience them. In the present moment, the reach of neoliberalism and its scope to engulf all aspects of life, therefore, remains uncertain and thus worthy of continued scholarly attention. We do not yet know the outer limits of neoliberalism's command on everything we do – not least our global modes of cultural production – and it is for this reason that further study of culture in general, including English play development, remains central to understanding the uneven development of neoliberalism itself.

In the field of Theatre Studies and, in particular, the context of scholarship on play development, I hope that this thesis will play some role in commencing further engagement with English playmaking's relationship with neoliberalism. Can the rich and diverse practices of English playmaking, including its modes of play development, be approached with a renewed awareness of its unbending economic logic? This is my central hope. I also hope that this thesis will be interrogated in ways that continue to critically chart the ever-changing, but inevitable claim of neoliberalism on English playmaking. Since a major problem with negotiating neoliberalism is that its presence goes unnoticed, my intention is that this thesis – its materialist reading practices and findings – continues to bolster the process of articulating the ways in which neoliberalism intersects with English playmaking, offering up some ideas of its operation as concerns play development in the twenty-first century and, also, advancing reading practices that could serve as future methodological scaffolds.

I am optimistic that scholars of, and participants in, English play development might find and advance new ways in which English play development can continue to resist the claims of neoliberalism. This might involve grassroots collective action amongst artists that ultimately generates a praxis for resisting neoliberalism's influence over theatre makers and the organisations that support and foster their work. Perhaps it would include an awareness of new strategies for resisting neoliberal subjectivity-

formation in play development, such as thinking through how to broker commissions and exist within artistic models outside of the paradigms of human capital. Maybe it will involve further collective action focused on consciously resisting neoliberal new diversities in play development structures, generating dynamic approaches to deploying standpoint theory-building with new participants. Maybe it will involve thinking further about the radical potentiality of performance and generating a critical practice that seeks to advance new live experiences that productively dismantle the neoliberal logic of play development and, more broadly, neoliberal culture. In addition to the actions of artists, those who develop plays in buildings and companies might also play a role. In theatres and companies, might the vocabulary and models surrounding play development be consciously and clearly reviewed in ways that properly attempt to challenge the ideological structures analysed in this thesis? Might play developers enhance their awareness of the bureaucratic potential of large-scale play development? These revisions would have to operate away from current modes of capitalist reproduction that often appear to be, in the current moment, best practice.

By being fully interrogated by other scholars and practitioners, I hope that this thesis will commence a process that addresses broader questions about the future of English play development. How might it be possible to continue to explore what is going to happen next with English play development in the context of neoliberalism? How might we commence an anti-neoliberal operation that seeks to dismantle English play development's co-constitution with neoliberalism while remaining sensitive to and cognisant of the wider global context? Are there examples elsewhere of how play development is resisting neoliberalism that could be applied in this context? Would collective work with representative bodies, including Writers' Guild, Equity, and Bectu support this project? What change can funders including Arts Council England support? Even if the participants of play development do not necessarily activate further

strategies that evade neoliberalism's claim on their practice, I find some cause for optimism in the ways that artists have already generated a set of distinct processes for resisting neoliberal logic, captured in this thesis, that have quietly, but productively, started to challenge English play development's neoliberal imperatives.

Appendix A

An overview of mission statements and offers of play development practices from key English building-based theatres in 2019.

Royal Court	https://royalcourttheatre.com/playwriting/ 'We actively seek out and nurture new and emerging voices'. 'Our Literary Office reads and considers over 2,500 scripts each year, we work with hundreds of writers through our writing groups, and our international department travels across the world, developing exchanges between British and international artists.'
Bush Theatre	https://www.bushtheatre.co.uk/artists/play-writing/ 'We seek new plays.' 'We are proud to be a champion of playwrights.' 'The Playwriting Department coordinates the reading and development of all new plays and offers opportunities throughout the year for artistic development, including readings and attachments to those writers we are keen to support.'
Hampstead Theatre	https://www.hampsteadtheatre.com/about-us/playwriting/ 'Hampstead Theatre is looking for original plays and promising writers. We want to read engaging stories, writing that takes risks and plays that speak to a modern audience. If the voice is refreshing, or if the play is delivered with power, rigour or wit, we want to read it.'
Soho Theatre	https://sohotheatre.com/take-part/submissions/ 'We are looking for unique and unheard voices – from all backgrounds, attitudes and places. We want to make things you've never seen before.'
Live Theatre	https://www.live.org.uk/creative-opportunities/artist-development 'From weekend writing courses and script submission opportunities, to bursaries and space for companies to develop new work, Live Theatre offers support and development to artists, writers and companies enabling new and emerging theatre artists to create quality work and shape the future of theatre.'
Old Vic	https://www.oldvictheatre.com/join-in/for-creatives 'The Old Vic 12 aims to nurture and develop the next generation of theatre practitioners through offering access and insights into theatre-making, mentoring from industry experts, delivering masterclasses to other emerging artists, and collaborating with each other to create brand new work.'
Theatre Royal Stratford East	https://www.stratfordeast.com/get-involved/submissions-emerging-artists/ 'We are committed to helping develop emerging talent where possible. Emerging artists can contact us if they want their work seen for the purpose of professional consultation and mentoring.'
Tricycle (renamed Kiln Theatre)	https://kilntheatre.com/artistic-policy/ 'As we do not have a literary department, we do not have the resources to read unsolicited scripts.' 'If you would like to invite us to see your production or to attend a reading/workshop, please contact us at artistic@kilntheatre.com. Please note that we receive a very high volume of invitations so there may be

	some delay to our response – while we try to see as much as we can, our resources are limited.'
Trafalgar Studios (formerly the Whitehall theatre until 2004)	https://www.londontheatredirect.com/venue/17/trafalgar-studios.aspx [Doesn't directly advertise play development services.]
The Donmar	https://www.donmarwarehouse.com/contact/ 'Unfortunately we are not able to read and respond to unsolicited scripts.' 'If you would like us to see your play then please send an invitation to office@donmarwarehouse.com at least 4 weeks before the production opens. Since we're only a small team we can't see everything to which we're invited, but we try to cover as much as possible and always appreciate an invitation.'
Almeida	https://almeida.co.uk/frequently-asked-questions 'The Almeida is unable to read unsolicited scripts. If you have written a script, we suggest you contact Soho Theatre & Writers Centre or the Royal Court as they may be able to help you.'
Young Vic	https://directorsprogram.youngvic.org/directors-program/what-we-do 'The Directors Program provides an exciting range of opportunities for directors, exploring process, practice and production. Our activities cater for as many different needs and interests as possible, differing in numbers of participants, day time/evening scheduling, and length in order to be inclusive and accessible to all. Everything we offer is free of charge.'
Lyric Hammersm-ith	https://lyric.co.uk/young-lyric/masterclasses/ 'We offer a masterclass programme focused on emerging artists expanding their knowledge on plays and text.'
Finborough	https://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk/literary-department.php 'We actively seek playwrights who have moving and unusual insights into the nature of our social world, and whose theatrical voice and vision are unique. We welcome and encourage big, ambitious plays with large casts. We welcome scripts from both unrepresented and represented writers. We programme productions in accordance with the theatre's artistic policy and additionally we maintain an extensive, pro-writer development process consisting of one-to-one dramaturgy and workshops. As a matter of policy, we do not believe in 'development' for the sake of it, and are always actively searching for playwrights and plays that we can actually produce.'
Theatre 503	https://theatre503.com/about-us/programming-policy/ 'We want to support the work and development of debut and emerging writers along with the artists who bring their words to life. We want to discover stories in close conversation with our times, from voices we haven't heard before, that makes us see the world anew.'
Old Red Lion	https://www.oldredliontheatre.co.uk/production-proposals.html 'We are particularly interested in challenging, new work and ambitious revivals of significant plays from the past, which reflect important new perspectives on our current society and that the UK stage may not have seen for some time.'

Battersea Arts Centre	https://www.bac.org.uk/content/37398/create_with_us/how_we_programme/how_we_programme 'We believe that everyone has the potential to be an artist, whether they make that their professional practice or not. We are excited by the creativity of everyone in our local community, across London, the country and the world. The document gives you some detail on how we work with artists in different areas of our programme, from theatre-making to working with BAC Moving Museum. It covers everything from the kind of work we like to the financial deals we offer.'
Mernier Chocolate Factory	https://www.menierchocolatefactory.com 'These spacious rehearsal rooms are located on the second and third floor of the Chocolate Factory. The rooms are approximately 10m x 10m with a playing area of 30 square feet (approx.) with additional space for production desk/props etc. Hire includes use of room (24 hours access), use of kitchenette, WC and internet access.'
Southwalk Theatre	https://southwarkplayhouse.co.uk/about/ 'Our theatre programme aims to facilitate and showcase the work of some of the UK's best up and coming talent with a focus on reinterpreting classic plays and contemporary plays of note. Our two atmospheric theatre spaces enable us to offer theatre artists and companies the opportunity to present their first fully realised productions. Over the past 20 years we have produced and presented early productions by many aspiring theatre practitioners many of whom are now enjoying flourishing careers.'
The Orange Tree	https://www.orangetreetheatre.co.uk/about/writers 'We are committed to discovering and nurturing the next generation of theatre artists through the OT New Artists programme, including our Writers Collective, and readings and workshops where possible.'
Birmingham Rep	https://www.birmingham-rep.co.uk/get-involved/creative-development/artists.html 'Have you written a script and would like some professional feedback? We welcome script submissions from regional, national and international writers.'
Leeds Playhouse (formerly West Yorkshire Playhouse)	https://leedsplayhouse.org.uk/furnace/people/the-elements/playwriting/ 'Our aim is to nurture bold, new voices and to share and showcase rich, diverse stories about how we live in Leeds, in Yorkshire, and in the world. Our writer development programmes offer opportunities to writers born, raised, or currently living in Yorkshire to connect, to learn and share skills, and to receive bespoke dramaturgical support'.
Royal Exchange Theatre	https://www.royalexchange.co.uk/writers-exchange 'The Royal Exchange Theatre has a rich history of supporting, developing and producing new work by playwrights at various stages of their journey as artists. As we have moved into a new era for the theatre, we are creating an increasingly ambitious and diverse programme of new work. We endeavour to support artistic risk and are dedicated to reimagining the relationship a producing theatre has with its audiences and artists.'
Plymouth Dum	https://www.theatreroyal.com/take-part/talent-development/ 'IdeasLAB is our regular scratch night, which takes place once per season in The Lab. We offer artist[s] and companies a chance to share early-stage work and receive detailed feedback from the audience.'

Sheffield Theatres (Crucible, Lyceum and Crucible Studio)	https://www.sheffieldtheatres.co.uk/get-involved/new-writing 'We are looking to find the best new plays in the region and the country. We are seeking work which is bold, passionate and enriching, for plays which reflect the here and now, writing from unique voices with original perspectives, based around ideas not often explored, stories that are at home not only in our city but on our stages here at Sheffield Theatres.'
Liverpool Everyman Theatre	https://www.everymanplayhouse.com/new-works 'We want to develop playwrights who can best represent out region's talent, voice and unique energy. Our primary responsibility is to writers based in the Liverpool City Region.'
National Theatre	https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/about-the-national-theatre/new-work 'The department was created in 2015, bringing together the devising and experimentation work of the Studio and the script commissioning focus of the Literary Department. […]. We nurture emerging talent, as well as providing dramaturgical support to mid-career and established artists. Our aim is to create the conditions for writers and artists to make the best possible work.'

Appendix B

A table documenting the referenced playwrights and frequency with which they are referenced in English playwriting guides analysed in Chapter One. The volumes also reference screen and television works, but the focus of this table is referenced playwrights as per the concern of Chapter One. Following the table is a statistical breakdown.

Playwright	Gooch (2004) page	Ayckbourn (2002) page	Fountain (2007) page	Edgar (2009) page	Waters (2010) page
1. Aeschylus				66; 89; 188; 189; 54; 205; 66; 89	
2. Edward Albee	85; 88; 103			4	156
3. Jean Anouilh	29; 44			140; 50; 157-8	
4. John Arden	131				185
5. Aristophanes					9; 102-3
6. Antonin Artaud	15				
7. Alan Ayckbourn		xi;; xii; 3; 5; 12-16; 18; 20; 21; 22; 23; ; 24; 26; 28; 31; 34; 35; 37; 38-47; 48; 49-87; 88; 91	3; 87; 89	66; 163;; 122; 127; 128-30; 133; 122; 193-4; 128; 130; 194	5; 194-6
8. Howard Barker				187	55; 114; 187; 193
9. Richard Bean			23; 24		
10. Julian Beck	15				
11. Samuel Beckett	15; 81; 87	47		27; 205; 122; 105; 4-5; 50; 80; 105; 158	1;15-6; 81-2; 106; 152; 155; 194
12. Alan Bennett	16		13; 27; 28; 31; 40; 69	194; 173	75
13. Stephen Berkoff					56; 114; 130
14. Stephen Bill				52	
15. Alecky Blythe			26		
16. Nicholas Boileau					3
17. Edward Bond				181-2; 195-6	9;58; 62; 98-9; 109; 123; 124; 169; 173

18. Bertolt Brecht	4;15;24; 29;71;7 3			19; 27; 31-3; 106-7; 147; 182; 204; 22;106; 137; 22; 31-3; 50; 57; 80;111; 158; 182; 183; 205; 58; 80; 107; 182; 106; 182; 19; 204	6; 47-8; 55; 77; 106; 112; 115; 126; 155; 158; 168; 187; 190; 192; 197-200; 202
19. Howard Brenton			23	xii; xiii; 163-4; 178; 188; 137; 81; 81; 194; 112; 114; 169; 81; 127; 130	4; 8; 48; 126; 191
20. Georg Büchner					7; 9; 54-5; 66-70; 76; 104-6; 113; 120; 129; 130; 141; 183-4; 185
21. Jez Butterworth			31		75; 91
22. Richard Cameron			15		
23. Jim Cartwright				180	82
24. Anton Chekhov				18; 27; 34-5; 43; 46-7; 48; 57; 80; 101; 104; 105; 137; 139; 143; 147; 158; 159; 178; 185; 202	3;5; 9; 43; 47; 56; 59; 71; 79; 81; 89; 119; 125-6; 129-30; 132-4; 145-6; 146-7; 151-2; 186
25. Caryl Churchill			5; 41	28; 102; 106; 110; 111-2; 115; 133-4; 135;	9; 31; 48-50; 73; 113; 119; 120-1; 131; 138-

				162; 163; 165-7	40; 131; 153-4; 152; 155; 160-1; 174-6
26. Brian Clarke	5;48				
27. William Congreve				50	
28. Pierre Corneille				100	
29. Noël Coward	4		3	80; 81; 89; 100; 101; 110; 143-4; 158; 169-70; 192; 193; 194;	60-1; 188
30. Martin Crimp				49; 50; 113; 115; 122	16; 61; 78; 113; 127
31. Stephanie Dale				xiv; 81	
32. Sarah Daniels				194; 179	
33. Shelagh Delaney					188
34. Maureen Duffy				81	
35. David Edgar			25	50-1; 52-3; 115; 122; 127-8; 13 ; 145; 157; 159; 173-4	4; 7-8;; 43; 60; 191-2
36. Euripidies				67-8; 188	
37. David Eldridge				182; 113	
38. Kevin Elyot				50; 85	
39. Hilary Fannin			23		
40. George Farquhar				45-6; 71; 76; 77; 100; 140-3; 169	188
41. John Ford					181
42. Tim Fountain			27; 29; 36; 39; 80		
43. Michael Frayn					75; 83-4; 95; 174; 194-6
44. Brian Friel	128			122; 137-8; 174-5; 181	24; 53; 62-63; 81; 83; 89;
45. John Godber			3; 31; 87	81; 164-5	
46. Nicholai Gogol					162
47. Oliver Goldsmith				68; 71;77	188

48. Steve Gooch	83; 118; 134				
49. debbie tucker green					31; 75; 114; 130
50. David Greig					89-90; 193
51. Trevor Griffiths	60			xiii; 100; 103; 179; 180	
52. Otis Guernsey	5				
53. Tanika Gupta					113
54. Patrick Hamilton		xi			
55. Peter Handke					185
56. David Hare			23; 26	7; 65; 81; 85; 92; 102; 110;127; 130; 133' 157-8; 170-1; 178; 179; 180	5; 8; 73; 87-8; 145; 191
57. Jonathan Harvey					75
58. Henrik Ibsen			5; 47; 62	4; 22; 26; 30-3; 43;45; 47; 72-3; 100-4; 106; 109; 147; 155; 156; 159; 177; 181;184-5; 192; 204	5; 43-4; 45; 47; 56; 58; 73; 96; 1-6; 186; 188
59. Alfred Jarry	15				186
60. Stephen Jeffries				xii; 23; 50' 93; 99; 131	
61. Terry Johnson				xi; 51; 56; 85; 110	
62. Ben Jonson				22; 54; 68; 71; 188	3;9; 134-6; 161; 188
63. Keith Johnstone	74				
64. Sarah Kane			23		4; 16-7; 57-9; 143-4; 163-4; 185

65. Charlotte Keatley				111; 137; 157; 183; 205	
66. Heinrich von Kleist				76	
67. Tony Kushner			59		75; 113
68. Kwame Kwei-Armah					113
69. Thomas Kyd				189	
70. Bryony Lavery				34; 92; 113	
71. Mike Leigh				54	75; 97
72. Federico García Lorca					74-5; 106; 142-3
73. Martin McDonagh			23; 31; 53	187	58
74. Conor McPherson			89	115; 122; 194	54; 58; 90; 155; 190
75. David Mamet			55	24; 28; 35; 47-8; 124; 125-6; 156; 172	5; 19-28; 130; 135; 183
76. Patrick Marber				85; 132; 133; 135; 137	76
77. Christopher Marlow				25; 71	37; 38; 110; 131; 148
78. Thomas Middleton					80
79. Arthur Miller	5; 15; 16	3	5; 10; 48; 53	30; 105; 108-9	73; 84; 108-9; 154
80. Anthony Minghella				xiii; 127; 132-3; 185-6	193
81. Molière				50; 51; 76; 77	
82. Abi Morgan			23		185
83. Heiner Müller					
84. William Nicholson			11; 14		
85. Anthony Nielson				114	165; 187

86. Peter Nichols				4; 49; 92; 193-4	
87. Richard Norton-Taylor			25		
88. Joe Orton			69		102; 113; 162; 165-6; 182; 185
89. John Osborne	16; 73; 147; 148		23; 57	49; 81; 85; 172-3; 179	95; 112
90. Louise Page				xi; 81; 187-8; 193	
91. Joe Penhall			51; 52	xiii; 34	
92. Harold Pinter	4; 34; 49		5; 31; 41; 89	43-4; 102; 107; 155; 162; 163; 155; 179; 180	5; 6-7; 57; 78; 84; 108; 121; 125
93. Lucy Prebble					192
94. Rebecca Prichard				81; 85; 102; 113; 159; 177; 178	
95. J.B Priestley		20		26; 109-110; 193	
96. Nina Raine			89		
97. Terence Rattigan					188
98. Mark Ravenhill			23; 94	49; 85; 115-6; 112-3; 115; 125	21; 58; 153-4; 164-5; 188
99. Yazmina Reza			23; 82	26	
100. William Rowley				70; 189	
101. Willy Russell			10; 22; 43; 60	81; 159; 180	
102. ntozake shange					114; 130
103. William Shakespeare	24; 28; 30; 66; 72; 79; 80; 149		3; 10; 11; 14; 15; 16; 32; 53; 62; 67; 74;	9; 12; 31; 43; 44; 57-8; 69-72; 74-5; 122; 135-7; 139-40; 165; 181; 190-2; 195-6; 204	3; 30; 37-43; 95; 114-6; 185; 189

104. George Bernard Shaw	69			5; 27; 57; 80; 100; 101; 104; 133	3; 6; 108; 122
105. Robin Soans					193
106. Sophocles	29				2; 34; 54; 101; 173; 182
107. Simon Stephens			55	114	83
108. Tom Stoppard	61; 69; 73; 78		5	92; 93; 102; 112; 180; 194	
109. David Storey	83			92	73; 75; 188
110. August Strindberg					44-5; 47; 55; 56; 74; 81; 97; 156
111. Paul Thompson	2; 85				
112. Sophie Treadwell					106
113. John Webster					43
114. Arnold Wesker	83; 147			50; 81; 92; 137; 158-9; 180; 205	75; 83; 96; 188
115. Amanda Whittington			87		
116. Oscar Wilde				4; 34; 48-9; 68; 71-2; 76-7; 101; 106; 112; 137; 167-8; 169	112; 132; 144; 165
117. Roy Williams					53; 189
118. Tennessee Williams	4				63; 96; 109; 154
119. August Wilson					113; 152-4; 189

Statistical breakdown

Number of playwrights cited:	119	(100%)
Male Playwrights:	99	(83%)
Female Playwrights:	20	(17%)
White Playwrights:	114	(96%)
Playwrights of Colour:	5	(4%)
White Male Playwrights:	94	(79%)
White Female Playwrights:	17	(14%)
Male Playwrights of Colour:	2	(2%)
Female Playwrights of Colour:	3	(3%)
Most cited:	Ayckbourn, Beckett, Brecht, Chehov, Coward, Ibsen, Shakespeare	
Most common forms:	American/British 20th realism European alternative forms Historical European tradition	

Appendix C

The table below comprises the transcripts from interviews with theatre staff at nine key English theatres in 2014-2015.

Theatre, Interviewee and date of interview	**Question: How do you develop a play?**
Mercury Theatre (Tony Casement, Associate Director) 29.08.14	It depends what [play] it is, but broadly speaking, it's [our] imaginative response to the material […]. As a director […] I'm excited by plays that have things for actors to get their teeth into, that have strong emotional content, authentic relationships [and are] theatrically dynamic. [Central to this is] the writer […]. It all stems from the script. And that's something they deliver or something you […] work on together. [A good example of how I might develop a play was my production of] Amanda Wittington's *Saturday Night Sunday Morning* [2014]. This was an adaptation that our artistic director, Daniel Buckroyd, had commissioned for the company […]. I'd seen it before quite by accident so when he asked me what I'd like to do I put [it] forward. It has been written to play in village halls and centres and our space here is a 500 seater […]. Amanda Wittington [was] brilliant. I had a meeting with her in Nottingham and said 'look, these are the things I want to do. Basically I want to rewrite some of your play. I want to put a community choir in it as well as the eight cast members who double all of the eight parts'. She was fantastic […]. We spoke about it and I said 'do you want to work with me on this?' and she said 'go ahead' […]. It was very successful. […]. We got a [4 star] review from *The Guardian*. We couldn't have been happier. [The process was about giving a play] that had a particular purpose a new life.
Plymouth Drum (Jane Pawson, Young Peoples' Producer) 10.09.14	With the Youth Theatre, we do about three productions a year […]. We work across age ranges. We do [one play] with eight to eleven year olds and [another that's intended for] primary-aged children. [The third is] a partnership project with our Youth Theatre […]. This year we're working with Royal and Derngate and West Yorkshire Playhouse to commission a playwright [Oladipo Agboluaje] for all our youth theatres [*Immune*, 2015]. In the development phase, [Agboluaje] will work with all three cities and their young people. We've had [a development] weekend here with a lot of a debate about various different issues, and tried out some workshop techniques. And then he's going to do the same thing in Northampton and Leeds […]. We always say that, any time we work with a writer, we always want to work on an idea that they're really interested in developing. We want it to develop organically from what they're interested in. Sometimes we ask 'what's the next play you want to write?' and if it's something that we might be interested in then we'll go from there. That's the emphasis. We place it on the writers. [As a result] a lot of plays have become really interesting […] covering a whole range of topics that affect young peoples' lives. So we've

	had plays that touch on racist views, divorce, fear of predators, and gender identity.
West Yorkshire Playhouse (Mark Rosenblatt, Associate Director) 12.09.14	We have a standard [process]. We have writers doing workshops with directors and actors for a few days, or a week, in a room. And that can take place at any point in the timeline of a play's development […]. If you're talking about a single-authored commissioned play […] everything is being offered [to support the] writer. There will be a director and/or dramaturg and actors giving suggestions […]. And that is the model as was. But now we're embracing a much more collaborative process […]. And there is determination to explode that [traditional model]. One of our associate companies', called RashDash. are two theatre makers who dance, and sing and write text. [They're working with a] writer who we have on attachment here, Alice Birch, to create a piece [*We want you to watch*, 2015]. Their process is much more complicated [and] time consuming. It's a group of people working out [questions such as] 'who is doing this?', 'whose idea is leading this?' […]. And a lot of this is to do with the fact that text is not always at the centre of the process. It's text and movement and form […]. So that's a very different model, but equally that has lots of R&D support and we provide that.
Royal Exchange Theatre (Suzanne Bell, New Writing Associate and Dramaturg) 18.09.14	It works in a lot of different ways. […]. Most of the writers that we have under commission come from quite a long relationship within the company. [For example] we currently have under commission Simon Stephens [*Blindsided*, 2014] […]. [Development models] depend on the process of the writer. We [give] the space and support [for anything they might] find useful […]. That might be a workshop, and the workshop might be a rehearsal room or it might be in a dance studio, or it might be in a specific location. It might be here, it might be in Leeds, or it might be in London […]. It could be on our stage, or it could be in a rehearsal room […]. Some writers love workshops. Others would die if they went into a workshop. Some writers want workshops where actors completely pull apart their script and they work very freely and improvise, and other writers just want a group of actors for half a day to read their work […]. Some writers want a workshop with a movement director or a sound designer just so that they can unlock something.
Royal Shakespeare Company (Pippa Hill, Literary Manager) 23.09.14	I've never developed something the same way twice. But, if you were to look at a rough model […] I would look for a main stage play to be developed over roughly two years, and I would expect that I would have a meeting with a writer about what [it] might be about, and I would also have a couple of one-to-ones with them […]. And depending on what the writer and, if it's not a writer, a creative team (which it quite often is), wants to do next, we might often organise a week-long workshop. That often entails a group of actors, the director and me in the room. The idea is […] to give the writer fuel – for characterisation […], but to also ask questions about the shape of the play and where we are with it. And what often happens after that first workshop is that the writer would go and feed in all that [new] information

	[into] a second draft. Recently, we commissioned Ella Hickson to write [*Wendy and Peter Pan*, 2013]. We had two workshops where we were really looking […] to see how the script was working. And then we had one mixed workshop – script and stage craft […]. We needed to find a theatrical language […]. Obviously when you get an audience in front of [a play] there's lots of other things you can learn and that's why we have previews. But that's a kind of rough outline of a model.
Royal Court Theatre (Chris Campbell, Literary Manager) 30.09.14	We don't do play development on plays we know we're not going to produce. We have writers' groups running and the writers' group is itself a kind of play development […]. Once that's happened and once the plays have been delivered to us, we'll give feedback, but we won't do any more work, unless we think we might produce it. That is partly because we don't have the means. You know it's expensive for us to [source] actors, directors [and] space to put together work [so] I don't know how to develop a play if [I'm] not looking towards possible production. [But in terms of a pre-production development model] we [no longer] do *just* readings. We do a couple of days and, sometimes, there'll be a reading at the end of that [leading to redrafting]. Some writers, [such as] Tim Price whose play is on now [*Teh Internet Is Serious Business*, 2014] used to write a draft every week. Some people take ages and eventually produce a different play. What's interesting about drafting is there are a couple of writers who are so fertile that we try to stop them writing new drafts. Some people can turn out something that is essentially a different play. And, also, it's very interesting because I've talked to so many writers, and watched so many writers work, it's absolutely astounding to me how often they don't know what is good in their own work. I think some of them would admit it. It's partly being so close and partly the joy of creation.
Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse (Hayley Greggs, Literary Associate) 04.11.14	It depends so much on where plays come from. Something [such as] *Scrappers* by Daniel Matthews [2013] [was developed] on our Young Writers' Programme. [Daniel] delivered a script [that was] really great. We decided to give him a development bursary […]. That went really well. During that year, we decided to do a rehearsed reading of *Scrappers* in the Everyman Studio […]. Audiences seemed to respond really well towards it. It fit[ted] with the ethos of our theatres and was right for our audiences now. And so we took [*Scrappers*] to a script meeting [where] we decided that we [wanted] to produce that. So that is one way to develop a play. On the other hand, [for a playwright such as] Stephen Sharkey, [and his] play *Sex And The Three Day Week* [2014], [the process is different]. We've had a really long relationship with him and we know his work really well. [He] pitched to Suzanne [Bell, the then literary manager] […] and because we trust his work ethic, and we trust his work would be right for our stages, we went ahead and commissioned him. [Not] all our commissions make it to the stage, but, on this occasion, we committed to reading drafts and giving notes, and finally, made the decision that this could [be commissioned].

	[But] there's never one way to do it; it all boils down to responding to the work, or responding to the writer.
Birmingham Repertory Theatre (Tessa Walker, Associate Director) 05.03.15	There really is no one way to do it. Plays are living, breathing things and they'll ask very different things of you as a director, as an actor, as someone working with the play in development. The answer is I don't really know, but I do know that they – and the people that are writing it – will need different things […]. There isn't a way to develop plays, but, there is, I suppose an attitude with which you respond to the thing that it is for whatever it means at that moment […]. The word 'dramaturg' is a really new word, and I don't even really know if that's what I am, but I remember for a long time I just developed plays, whatever play development means, and I was directing them and they were new. And then I remember suddenly there was this word around, which was 'dramaturg', which people seemed to be using and using it about people like myself. [We] never necessarily used it ourselves. [Play development] comes about entirely through practice and through a sort of 'knowing' and 'seeing' in practice. You can't [have a model] because [plays] are very complicated, brilliant shifting things. And [you realise this from] being in a place like the Rep where there's a whole range of artists from very different disciplines. [For example] the spoken word scene in Birmingham is huge which comes out of the even huger music scene in Birmingham so if you're working with a spoken word artist, supporting their work, they're going to need something very different from you than someone starting to write […] a play.
National Theatre (Tom Lyons, New Writing Associate) 12.05.15	The plays we develop for production are very big commissions. [The writers] do the first draft. And then we read that first draft [and] then that process becomes redrafting, notes, possibly readings in the studio […]. And then we look to see whether a director would want to work on that project and, once we get that matched up, we can look at programming the play […]. [But] small plays [are] developed quite [differently]. [For example] you [might] have an [unsolicited] writer who hasn't been commissioned, but who's written a [good] play. [You'll then] give very, very introductory feedback. [However] we don't do much [unsolicited script development] […]. We offer writers' attachments […]. It's not a commission, so there's no commitment from us to produce it [and] no commitment for the writer to turn it in; it's just the space to write a play without a spec. Because if you're writing to spec in London […], you're going to write a three-character play for a studio space because that's what's most likely to get produced. [That's] the opposite of what we need in our theatres […]. So it's that gap of how do we move a writer, who's doing really well at *those* plays into someone who could write for The Olivier […]. The really annoying thing, that I've said many times, but a lot of people say, is a big play doesn't mean a play that's got a big cast. It can be a three hander that feels intimate. [The] Olivier is like an amphitheatre […]. It's about upscaling [the playwright's] writing.

	[So] big plays that feel rich and textured can take years because to get that texture you can't churn it out in three months. [But our model] is about to change. At present, we have a literary department *and* the studio's associate directors and the artistic director and now we have a deputy artistic director as well. With the literary department we have eight freelance readers. We receive about 2000 unsolicited scripts and [we] read all of them to some level. What we're going to do is [consolidate the development activities]. [In Autumn 2015, the Studio became the home of The National Theatre's New Work Department, bringing the Literary Department together with the Studio.]

Appendix D

The table below comprises the transcripts from interviews with playwrights and playmakers at nine key English theatres commissioned between 2013-2015.

Theatre, Interviewee and date of interview	**Question: What was the development process for […]?**
Mercury Theatre (Amanda Whittington, Playwright) 21.07.17	*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (2014)?
	Daniel [Bukroyd] and I adapted Alan Sillitoe's (1958) *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* in 2006 for New Perspectives – a rural touring company [...]. I read the book and started to think: 'okay, what story are *we* telling?' In the (1960) film version, and other versions I'd come across, the female characters weren't central. In the other versions, there were also omissions. The central character [Arthur] has an affair with a married woman who, in the book, has an abortion which was censored. Then he goes and has an affair with her sister, Winnie. Winnie doesn't feature at all in the film. And then he ends up with Doreen who is portrayed as uncomplicated wife material. [My version] was about putting Sillitoe's book on stage while making these three female characters more central [...]. Daniel [Bukroyd] left to run The Mercury. Daniel contacted me and said they were going to do my adaptation [and] Tony [Casement] would be directing. Tony came to Nottingham to do a 'reccy' of all the locations then we spoke about what he wanted to do […]. He wanted to bring the community in [...]. It had come from New Perspectives as a rural touring piece […]. So, at this point, it was going from village halls into a rep theatre [...]. They had to reimagine it on those terms. [In addition] The 'Nottingham-ness' of the story had to translate to the Mercury environment. […]. With a first production it's very fresh – people haven't seen it, or worked on it, before. You're writing through rehearsals. Then, with a second production, you hand over the script and then you're there at the end of the phone. Then you go and see it and it's wonderful because you don't have any of those anxieties that you had on the first run […]. [Multiple productions] are harder to achieve in this culture than three or four decades ago so when it happens it's very exciting.
Plymouth Drum (Oladipo Agboluaje, Playwright) 28.06.17	*Immune* (2015)?
	The idea was for me to meet with the young companies from the three venues to work with them […]. I was told that I would have a free rein to write whatever I wanted, but it [should] be based on the information I gained from the young companies. [As a result], I

	wasn't solely the writer. I was also the workshop facilitator […]. It was much more daunting than I'd [anticipated]. I was under the illusion that it would be 'come in, sit down, and then [go away] and write whatever you want to'. [This process of working with Young Companies between theatres] was the second commission in the programme. The idea was for it to be a sort-of National Theatre Connections [type programme] that worked with regional venues. That was sort of the model they were proposing [and] each venue produced a different version of the piece. I've never had three simultaneous productions of the same play at once. That was a really novel thing. In a sense the companies were working together, but, at the same time, they were creating their own versions […]. It started with a series of three workshops at each venue. For Northampton and Leeds, we picked a few weekends. For Plymouth, we did it over a period of three days […]. For Northampton, it was very practice-based; we were always up on our feet playing theatre games. With Leeds, we did quite a bit of writing […]. And then we'd do a lot of debate […]. We had a lot of time as well where we'd just sit and talk. It was interesting what came out in different venues. For example, for the young men, there was a lot of [anxiety] about masculinity, especially in Plymouth. We covered religion, politics, love-lives, everything […]. After that I did a draft. And then after that they sent five [company members] from each venue and we all met in Northampton. We did workshops on what I'd written […]. It was exhausting, but it was really, really interesting. Rather than just write something and call it 'for young people', you realise when you meet a young person, when you've spoken to them, when you worked with them over a period, developing work together has a positive effect. It makes a difference.
West Yorkshire Playhouse (Rash Dash Theatre Company) 26.07.17	*We Want You To Watch* (2015)?
	Greenland: We were co-authors with Alice Birch. Early on in our [company's] making process, we felt that we weren't as good at writing. Since then, we've started taking full responsibility for writing the text […]. But, at the time, that was something we were really anxious about. And so when Amy Letman [Creative Director at Transform Leeds] and West Yorkshire Playhouse said 'what do you think is the thing you could really do with to move forward with your work?' we said 'work with a writer.' We started to put together a short-list of women writers. Alice [Birch] was on that list [of feminist writers we wanted to work with]. When we met, we really got on and we had loads of similar political and radical feeling. **Goalen:** We all went to see some work together in Germany. We went to 'Find Festival' at The Schaubühne. The work we saw was quite difficult; it wasn't comfortable to watch. It pushed us in a certain direction with the show and made us a bit bolder. **Greenland:** No-one paid for us to go there. There was no bursary for tickets and flights. Before *We Want You to Watch* was funded by the

	National, RashDash had funded the early development itself [but the initial connection between RashDash and Alice was facilitated by West Yorkshire Playhouse]. We had funded getting together with Alice for a few weeks. The other project with West Yorkshire Playhouse still hasn't come to fruition, but we decided that there was another show we wanted to make about pornography. RashDash then funded some practical development where we did some work with some actors and we also did a little bit of work with a director [Ellen McDougall]. We did some development work at Battersea Arts Centre. Before we came up with a concept, we spent three weeks with Alice at Battersea Arts Centre, working with a couple of actors there. The main purpose of that was to do a whole load of research into porn. What we came out with there was something really, really different from what the show actually became. It was a splurge of all of that material on pornography that we were going through. The outcome was to come away from that and go: 'that was good, but we feel like we need to do something really different, actually.' [Porn] is such a massive issue, we wanted to do something very critical. In order to do that, we felt we needed to move into a more absurd realm. **Goalen:** At the [Battersea Arts Centre] scratch, there was quite a lot of scenes between couples. It was very much about the domestic ramifications of porn, rather than the political. Then we did some work at The Lyric Hammersmith. It was the core team with Alice [Birch], Ellen [McDougall] and an actor [Audrey Brisson]. The Lyric gave us space, but they didn't fund the development. Again, that was RashDash. And that involved more time working on the specific form. At that point, we knew we had these five scenes, the central characters – Pig and Sissy, and some ideas about developing some of the other characters. **Greenland:** We started to write first drafts of what those scenes would be and, at the end, we invited a load of theatres from around London to come and see it. We invited the Almeida and the National and the Barbican and loads of other people. We thought 'let's just fucking go for it'. Sam Miller came, who was Ben Power's assistant [Power is Deputy Artistic Director of the National Theatre]. By this point, we'd already had a meeting with Ben Power at The National and he did seem very interested in it. After the showing, they said 'yes we want to do it'. They commissioned it straight away. It would go on the following year. **Goalen:** During the rehearsals of the show we found out that we'd got Arts Council funding to tour the show as well. We always knew that the trajectory was longer than just the run at The National. It was very exposing for us to do a difficult show in that building. It felt like the biggest we'd done in terms of profile and cast. **Greenland:** The response was really hard. We didn't read the press reviews and we knew there was a lot of negative stuff coming in. I had a really bad reaction on that press night [for *We Want You to Watch*]. [Press nights] are really horrific. It's terrifying having your little open heart, that, during the process, you've been getting out more and more, just completely stamped on – on the night you're

	supposed to feel about ready to do a month's run. I was just really flattened by it. Although I didn't read reviews, I could sense that there was a kind of anger about it. And because I was in the show, feeling quite vulnerable about it, I didn't have the hindsight to think about who was saying it and why they might be saying it […]. It does mean that, since then, I've refused to come out of theatre shows and say 'that's good'. There is no such thing as 'good'. I would never use a review to decide what to see. And, if I did, I would only go to specific reviewers who acknowledge their subjectivity.
Royal Exchange Theatre (Lee Mattinson, Playwright) 11.07.17	*Crocodiles* (2014)?
	I'd originally written *Crocodiles* to submit it to the Verity Bargate Award. [I was shortlisted] and then I met [director Ng Choon] Ping when I was doing a project at the Arcola. He got in touch with me about doing a project at the Young Vic. After that, he asked if I'd got any other [full length plays]. I said I'd got *Crocodiles* [and] we started talking about that [...]. In the past, I'd had a more traditional relationship with [theatre collaborators], but my relationship with Ping was different. [Before the commission, Ping and I] started by building the world of [*Crocodiles*] together. We'd send each other YouTube videos, pictures, bits of poems, bits of other plays. We wanted to build up the feelings, and the tensions, of the play […]. After a few drafts, we had a reading. We got some actors together in London […]. And then the Hodgkiss Prize came up at the Royal Exchange [that rewards innovative projects, especially between a writer and a director]. We won a full production. […]. We didn't veer too much off the track we were already on […]. The Royal Exchange were offering notes, but part of the process of winning the Hodgkiss Prize was about [acknowledging] [Mattinson and Ping's] unique relationship and [acknowledging] that we were working [independently]. [the Manchester Royal Exchange] understood our process [and] respected it. When we cast it we also made a lot of changes […]. We cast Sarah Gordy in the role of Matilda. Sarah Gordy has Down's Syndrome. We had to cut back the amount of text to make it work for Sarah [...]. Sarah was involved in the process every step of the way. We'd go through the script with her daily […]. I had to kill a lot of darlings for that, but it was so worth it for Sarah […]. Once we'd done all that [characterisation work], the final week of rehearsal was with the Royal Exchange. They were coming in at this point and seeing runs and giving notes […]. Up until press night it was still getting changed […]. It was always getting better. We always knew what to do next so it felt like quite an organic experience.
Royal Shakespeare Company (Phil Porter, Playwright)	*The Christmas Truce* (2014)?

06.12.14	
	In November 2013, I got commissioned to write a play, but, before I agreed, I wanted to see the material on which the [Royal Shakespeare Company] intended that play would be based. I got sent a pack. It was about Bruce Bairnsfather who was a humourist, cartoonist, and originally from Stratford. He actually worked in the theatre – he put up their original lighting. He'd written about the Christmas truce. I knew that he would be a part [of the play], but how I used him was up to me […]. So I agreed with [the Royal Shakespeare Company] that he was probably quite a good starting point. But it could have been that I'd just use his sense of humour to infuse the play, rather than making him the central character. In terms of the specific content of the drama, I had plenty of freedom and I felt that I was given a bit of momentum by being given a push in a specific direction. Normally it would be my prerogative to just write the first draft in isolation, then deliver it, and *then* start to have conversations about what works and what doesn't. But, I think, with this project, that would have been a high-risk strategy. The collaboration had to be between me, Erica [Whyman – director], and Sam [Kenyon – composer]. The other real key contributor was Mike Ashcroft [movement director]. In terms of developing the script, though, it was me and Erica negotiating decisions. Erica was very much the person in charge. I would say what I wanted to do with [the script] in conversation with Pippa [Hill] and Erica. Then Erica and Pippa would have discussions and feedback to me […]. I've written other things for the [Royal Shakespeare Company] which have not been so collaborative. [On other projects] I've sort of gone away and wrote whatever I liked […]. But with a project like this, it didn't feel like there was any particular moment of me handing it over.
Royal Court Theatre (Tim Price, Playwright) 03.07.17	*Teh Internet Is Serious Business (*2014)?

	I've got a longstanding working relationship with the director [Hamish Pirie] who's directed four of my other plays […]. He moved from the Traverse to the Royal Court and worked with Vicky [Featherstone]. Vicky asked him what he and I wanted to do next. I wrote [saying] that I wanted to do a play about [the] Anonymous [movement] [...]. Vicky said [the Royal Court] had a slot in nine months. We'd set ourselves a really big challenge. I'd never written a play for more than five or six people and there was about fifteen parts here. It was really, really stressful. […]. But [the Royal Court] is the most extraordinary writer-orientated space so they just said 'Whatever you need to get this done – we'll sort it.' We did an R&D meet and read-through. Also, I have a relationship with the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff so we took part of the script to Cardiff for a couple of days. We did a couple of workshops with the students [who] were the same age as [the characters] so talking to them about their relationship with technology was [really useful] […]. Then I did loads and loads and loads of rewrites and then we went into rehearsals. We had an extra week of rehearsals. We had five weeks. And rehearsals were absolute chaos! I mean I was rewriting it every night. I was cutting large swathes […]. The cast was split between nine actors and four or five dancers. We did a combination of split rehearsals. We did dance rehearsals with a choreographer [Emma Martin] […]. We also had [Chloe Lamford] designing the show […]. We had a short-hand: me, Hamish and Chloe. Chloe designed the play for Hamish to direct [and I wrote it for Hamish to direct]. We were able to communicate very quickly. They weren't just good working relationships, but they were good friendships too.
Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse (Daniel Matthews, Playwright) 04.07.17	*Scrappers* (2013)?
	I was very much a collaborator with the dramaturg [Lindsey Rodden, now Associate Writer at Newcastle Live]. It was my voice, but [Lindsey] had input into it. My role was definitely as the writer but [at that point] I would have still considered myself as [a] young writer. I remember at the beginning, when we were first discussing the team, the actors and the designer, I introduced myself as the 'young writer' and they said 'you can call yourself the writer. You've made that graduation.' But, still, I felt that I wasn't there really. I still felt like a young writer. I'd come up through the young writers' programme […]. *Scrappers* was the first thing I'd written that was full length […]. I finished *Scrappers* [and submitted it to] the Everyword festival [where an early draft was showcased] […]. I got a phone call saying that [The Liverpool Everyman] would like to put it on. [I think they wanted to put it on] because it was raw. I had no preconceptions of what a piece of theatre should be. It was just me talking about thoughts and feelings. That's why it worked. The language felt fresh [and] working

	class, which is really synonymous with Liverpool […]. [After the commission, the Liverpool Everyman] wanted me to do some more work on it. They wanted me to prepare a draft for the director [Matthew Xia, who is now Associate Director at the Royal Exchange Theatre]. There were deadlines for me to hand the play to [Matthew] and to [Lindsey] […]. The draft that I handed in at that next deadline ended up being a lot worse […]. There was a series of one or two more drafts before it went into rehearsal. At that point, it was ready to be handed over to the actors […]. In rehearsal, I underestimated what my role would be during the production […]. The Everyman really did prepare me for it, but I don't think I [knew] how to prepare myself. It was [hard] because it was about airing my thoughts and feelings. I don't think I'd prepared myself for that. And when it happened, I was a bit like 'argh'. But the short answer is I loved it.
Birmingham Repertory Theatre (Steven Camden, Spoken Word Artist) 10.07.17	*Back Down* (2015)?
	When I first talked to Tessa [Walker – the director], I said that what I'd be really interested in is writing my mum. I'd never really seen her being represented. I started writing that as a monologue, but it wasn't coming. At the same time, I was writing a novel about a boy who's from Birmingham who falls in love with film and has these two friends [*Tape*, 2015]. In one of the scenes in the novel, the characters mentioned this trip. I wanted to explore that more. I ran with it and wrote some dialogue. That's how it came out. And I said to Tessa 'look, there's no woman in her late fifties in this!' She was alright with it […]. I'm not from a theatre background. I'm also not massively enamoured by a lot of the theatre that I've seen in terms of feeling myself represented, and [the issues], and people, that I grew up with […]. It was never about 'one day I'll have a play on at the National or wherever'. Not only was that not the plan, I don't really like the idea of it. I'd be pretending if that was something of interest. What is interesting for me is that immediacy of storytelling. Why *Back Down* was so lovely was that it was such a [familiar] story and form. It was so specific in terms of [Birmingham's] tone and energy […]. We started the work of trimming lots of it and moving back and forth between me and [Tessa] with questions […]. We got to a decent rough draft then we started casting. That's when the shifts happened […]. During casting, something happened that changed my perception of what [I was doing] and who it was for. I got really excited about using the play [to not only tell a Birmingham story], but to forward the careers of [the] three actors [we'd cast Waleed Akhtar, Sam Cole, and Lawrence Walker]. There was a real family feel to it. Tessa was the older sister, I was the younger brother, in terms of the hierarchy, and you had these three even younger brothers [the actors]. It was lovely. It was really, really great. It worked. We wanted it to

	have an impact on lives beyond the piece itself. [In the end] I was happy with the mission in terms of sorting these guys out and touring community venues.
National Theatre (Alexander Zeldin, Playmaker) 29.06.17	*Beyond Caring* (2014)?
	I had no money to do *Beyond Caring*. It was done in an unstructured way over a long period of time. [It was initially developed with the Yard]. The Yard theatre were amazing in supporting the development. They championed me in such a deep way. For *Beyond Caring*, I was the writer. I'm not the writer in the way a traditional writer is writing a script, leaving it with a director, then coming in once or twice to check that it's been realised. Instead, I try to leave things half-finished […]. There's three aspects to being the writer: there's the very personal duty of care [to the working class subjects informing the work], then the sense of trying to be useful to the actors, the collaborators, the technicians. Then finally, I'm also the director making decisions about the shape of its work and its intended [artistic] meaning. *Beyond Caring* was developed from situational source material. I was reading *The Night Cleaner* by Florence Aubenas. In addition to that, I had my own experiences of cleaning and meeting cleaners. The process started with my doing [primary and literary] research. I went and did cleaning jobs on my own before working with the actors. From that, I gathered a wealth of anecdotal material that I wrote up as monologues, interior monologues, characters in situations, transcripts of conversations, literary source material […]. I had the material [when the team were in place] and I said let's just explore it. I also asked them for their experiences. Every single one of those people that was working on that [creative] team had some experience of doing a stressful and meaningless job […]. I love working at the National. They're all so supportive. I'd received real resource and real support, technically, logistically but, also, morally [for *Beyond Caring* and, later, *Love*] […]. What changed with *Love* is that I became more sophisticated and more interested in the artistic process. The structure [became] more considered.

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