

Projecting Presence: establishing an *effet de présence* for virtual characters

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II. Abstract, Keywords and Copyright notice

Abstract

Given the expansion of multimedia technology and proliferation of moving projections on the theatre stage in the 21st century, this thesis examines how a virtual or projected character can appear to be present without a physical body on the stage. This study is grounded in the theories of *effet de présence* (effect of presence) as elaborated by Josette Féral, but also uses other theories to look at how productions can create such an effect for virtual characters. Specifically, this thesis examines the character's relationship with the real, framing devices and actions of the characters. The specific examples of *Rwanda 94* (Groupov), *La Belle et la Bête* (4D Art) and *Les Aveugles* (UBU CC) are used as case studies in order to focus on these techniques.

Partant de l'intégration des nouvelles technologies et la prolifération des projections vidéo au sein des scènes théâtrales du 21^e siècle, cette thèse examine les techniques par lesquelles les personnages projetés peuvent sembler présents en l'absence d'un corps physique visible. Cette réflexion est basée sur l'effet de présence, concept élaboré par Josette Féral, ainsi que d'autres théories et examine comment un effet de présence est constitué pour ces personnages virtuels en considérant leur relation au réel (mimesis), les dispositifs de cadrage dans lesquels ils s'inscrivent de même que leurs actions. Cette analyse sera menée à porter de avec trois études de cas : *Rwanda 94* (Groupov), *La Belle et la Bête* (4D Art) et *Les Aveugles* (UBU CC).

Keywords

Contemporary Theatre, Presence and *effet de présence* (effect of presence), Framing, Mimesis, Projections, Virtual characters

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Introduction

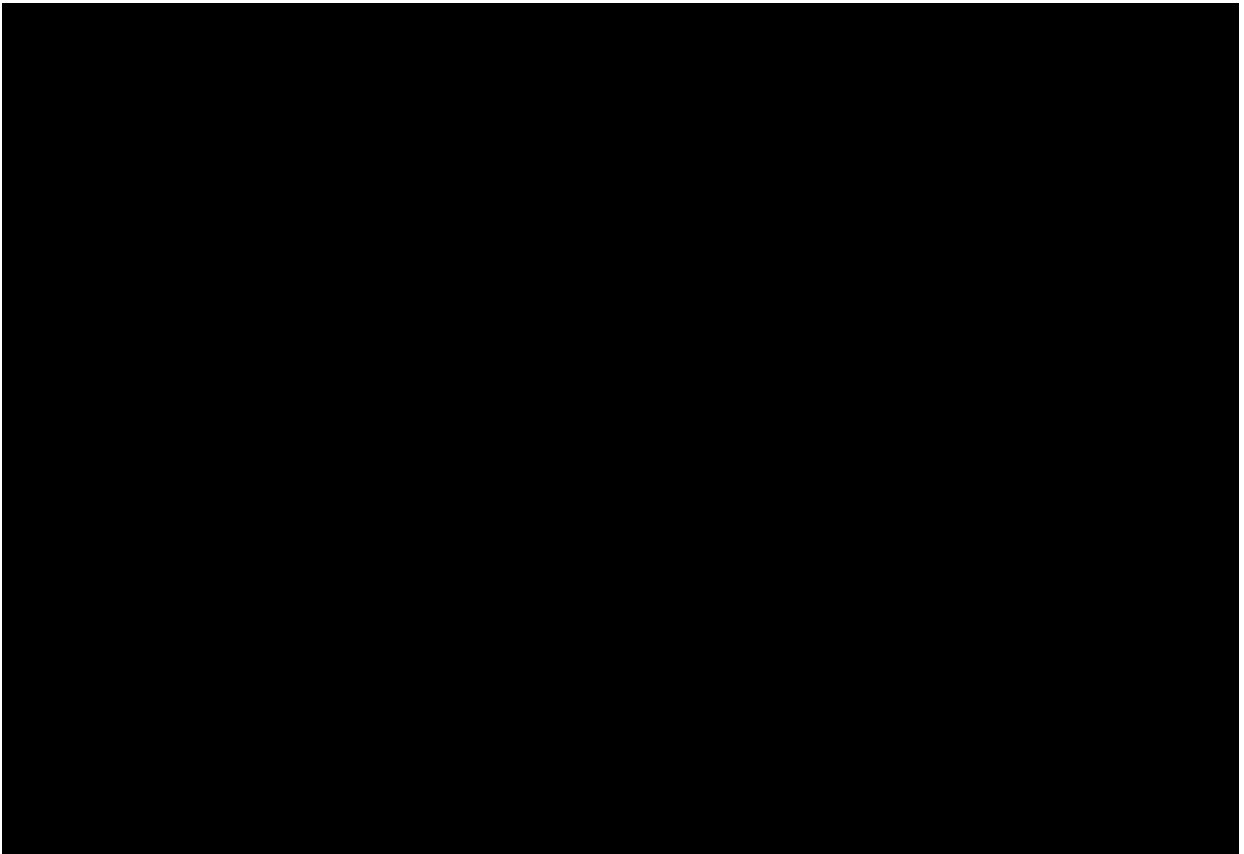
Description of the project

This thesis looks at the use of video characters on the stage, and the techniques used by artists to make such characters appear “present”. While focusing on specific techniques, this thesis also looks for trends which may exist. This is done through three major case studies, as well as other relevant examples, to discover if general rules can be established for the presence of mediated or projected characters in the theatre. This questions how the creation of presence is affected by matters of space vs. place, dramaturgy, audience reception and artistic intentions.

The question ‘how does the production make projected characters appear to be present’ has guided this research. This question involves several different perspectives, including, but not limited to, the audience’s understanding of the projections, the intentions of the artist and the production, the narrative and theatrical devices of the production and the technology used for the projection. While all of these are touched upon in this thesis, I have tried to avoid an in-depth discussion of the technology and audience reception. Individual productions use differing techniques and technologies for similar results, making a technology based discussion specific to the case studies and not allowing for generalized observations. Audience reception is also highly specific, but to the individual audience member. This also makes it highly subjective and thus hard to quantify or

compare between productions. Instead of basing analyses on my subjective experience of a given production, I have used the artist's stated intention in a given production, thus allowing me to consider the central role of the audience within the theatrical event, without imposing my experience on the whole of an audience. While using specific case studies, this thesis does try to suggest trends and commonalities between the different examples, in the hopes that the conclusions can be applied to productions not included in this thesis.

This study is relevant for two main reasons. Mediated characters are increasingly common in an increasingly technologically advanced theatre, and simulated presences are increasingly convincing. This has led to them becoming *à la mode* in contemporary theatre practice. In the current social context, presence no longer requires being in the same place, due to television, Skype, etc., and this questions the importance of physical presence in the theatre. It could mean that an actor is no longer required for theatre to occur. Further, some of these experiments establish a presence for the virtual by lessening the presence of the physical, rather than heightening the virtual presence or creating an effect of presence (described below). This is the case for Denis Marleau's *Les Aveugles*, one of the three major cases in this paper. Thus, the introduction of virtual characters not only requires that presence be invented for the virtual, but may also require that presence be confirmed for the material or physical.



Images 1A-D

A: Image from *Kiss and Cry* (NanoDances), in which actors fingers move on one on several miniature sets while being filmed, and the image projected live on a large screen upstage center. The audience is therefore able to simultaneously see the film and observe the filming process.

B: Robert Lepage standing 'in' the projected backdrop of *Le projet Andersen*. Lepage later steps out of the projected image, giving the appearance that he is emerging from the projection.

C: Christopher Maraffi's MFA thesis project at the University of California Santa Clara, entitled *Mimesis and Mocap* developed a motion capture (Mocap) system which reacted to the movements of the actor. In this scene, the physical and virtual characters are engaged in a tug of war.

D: The Metropolitan Opera's staging of the Wagner Ring Cycle (2011-2012), directed by Robert Lepage, uses motion capture (see image C) to find the position of the characters and have the projected set react accordingly. In this image, the bubbles 'leave' the singer's mouth as she sings. The bubbles follow the motion of the singer, who is suspended in the air, and the size is affected by her volume, while the speed at which the bubble rises is correlated to the pitch she is singing.

Theoretical Overview

Presence

Presence can be broadly defined as being with or in the same space as another person or object: as being "here". While more precise definitions change between

authors/artists/theoreticians, there is consensus that presence is a central part of the theatrical event. In his book on theatres and space, Guy McAuley notes a common thread between definitions of the theatre is that both the performer and the spectator "must be present [...] within a given space" (McAuley 1999: 3), suggesting that presence is in part a spatial concept. Josette Féral says presence can be defined as the opposite of absence, which would therefore be, in simple terms, not being somewhere else (Féral 2012:11). These definitions all consider physical presence. However, as Patrice Pavis notes, theatre also implicates dramatic presence, since an actor can be onstage and yet ignored or in the dark and therefore irrelevant. Pavis' definition of presence is an indefinable quality of the actor in which the audience takes an interest (Pavis 1999: 285), which highlights the importance of presence to the audience.

In her 2012 book *Pratiques performatives*, Josette Féral suggests that presence can most simply be defined as the opposite of absence (Féral 2012: 11). As this thesis questions how characters who have no physical/bodily presence can be made to appear present, absence is relevant. While not physically being in the same space is a facet of absence, absence can also be a lack of immediacy or implication in a situation or communication. Colloquially, people are called absent-minded when they are forgetful, day-dreaming or otherwise not mentally engaged, even though they are physically present. This demonstrates a difference between bodily presence and mental presence. In the theatre, absence can be considered a lack of meaning, importance or communication, indicating that the actor has not captivated or attracted the attention of the audience. An actor can be absent whilst

standing on the stage, suggesting that presence and absence are not always contradictory concepts.

Filling some of the gap between absence and presence, Féral suggests the term *effet de présence*. This adaptation of Roland Barthes' literary term *effet de réel* is described as "the spectator's feeling that the bodies or objects which are before his eyes (or ears) are really there, in the same space and time as the spectator himself, even while he knows that this is not the case"¹ (Féral:2012 26). Roland Barthes' studies on narrative structure demonstrate that most stories have details which are not essential to or even part of the plot. These elements do not serve character development, setting or action, but reinforce the realism of the narrative. English literature critic Henry James calls this an "illusion of life", and says it is the most important quality of a narrative (James 1884:5).

Josette Féral applies this concept to presence and suggests that, through a similar attention to detail, the presence of the actor can be imitated and created in cases where there is no actor on stage. Neither *effet de réel* nor *effet de présence* is a way to trick the audience, but rather a strategy to help the audience with their willing suspension of disbelief. According to Féral, the "effect of presence"² can be created through interaction with the audience and the imitation of the human form. She also notes that not every attempt succeeds at creating this effect. She suggests that holograms, such as the ones used by 4D Art, do not create an effect

¹"le sentiment qu'a un spectateur que les corps ou les objets offerts à son regard (ou à son oreille) sont bien là, dans le même espace et le même temps que ceux dans lesquels il se trouve, alors qu'il sait pertinemment qu'ils sont absents". Own translation

² Based on Richard Howard's translation of *effet de réel* to effect of reality

of presence because their absence is foregrounded by the presence of the human actors. In comparison to the human actors, the holograms look ghostly or hollow. This suggests that presence, or at least the effect of presence, is relative and therefore not an objective quality.

For this paper, presence as a general term will be defined as a quality of the immediacy of the character's representation which the audience takes an interest in, and allows the audience to believe in the fiction as communicated by the artists. Essentially, presence is what makes the audience interested in the character. The term *effet de présence* will be used when talking about the creation or simulation of presence for a virtual character (projection), or a character who is visually or dramatically present, but not physically present. Through the separation of space and place, physical and dramatic presence can be dissociated to allow that which is not present to have an *effet de présence*, as the cases studied in this thesis attempt to demonstrate.

Spatial Theory

Effet de présence often relies on the dramatic space creating a presence for something which is otherwise absent. While often used interchangeably in speech, there is a slight but important distinction to be made between space and place. Social geographer Tim Cresswell proposes that, academically, a space is a delineated, neutral or meaningless area, while a place implies a context and a meaning (Cresswell 2004, 2-5). Thus, the geographical coordinates 45°25'29"N

75°41'57"W indicates a space, as it does not provide context or meaning to that spot on the planet. However, referring to the same location as the Canadian Parliament Buildings makes it a place, because that term provides context and meaning which frames the location in our minds.

This paper adopts these definitions of space and place, as it reflects the dualism between the real world and the fictional world, which is implicated in the theatrical event. While there is little agreement on vocabulary between theatre scholars, the existence of this duality is not questioned (McAuley 1999 :3). When discussing the theatrical event, the external “real” world (ERW) is where actors move on the stage space and speak text written by someone else. The fictional dramatic world (FDW) is a realm of places, where Hamlet listens to his father on the walls outside Elsinore Castle. This separation of space and place follows Pavis’ definitions of theatre and stage space, which are “the space occupied by the audience and actors in the course of a performance” and “the actual space on stage in which the actors move, whether they confine themselves to the stage area per say or mix with the audience” respectively (Pavis 1999: 344). This can also be understood as an application of Richard Schechter’s not-not I in spatial terms. Just as the actor is not-not Romeo, the stage is not-not Verona.

Just as a single place can have multiple spaces, the FDW can be portrayed in multiple different spaces. There can be the physical space of the stage, but there can also be the aural space of the soundscape, or the virtual space of projections. These spaces can all represent a single dramatic place, or can represent different

places, depending on how they are framed. For example, *Rwanda 94* uses a screen to depict Rwanda while the stage depicts Europe. However, *Les Aveugles* uses the physical surface of the masks, the soundscape of ambient forest noise, and the virtual space of projections to depict a single location within a forest.

This thesis examines how the artist's construction of place within the fictional dramatic world alters the presence of characters in the theatre, and allows for an *effet de présence* for projected characters. These questions will be viewed through three perspectives: the relationship between the theatrical and the real, the framing of the virtual space within the dramatic place, and interactions between the virtual and the physical spaces. Each one of these theoretical lenses looks at a different aspect of the relationship between place and space, and how an *effet de présence* can be achieved. While framing is more of a spatial notion and not directly referred to by Féral, she highlights the importance of mimesis and interactivity in the introduction to *Pratiques Performatives*. She notes that in some cases “the *effet de présence* comes from imitation of the human”³ while in others it is from “the apparent interaction between the screen and the spectator”⁴ (Pavis 2012: 12-13). How spaces are framed is important for two reasons: it visually defines distinct spaces and exposes the relationships between the places within the fictional world. These perspectives can be understood in simple and general terms as how the dramatic place resembles the “real” world (relationship to the

³ “l'*effet de présence* vient de l'imitation de l'humain”. Own translation.

⁴ “l'interactivité apparente entre l'écran et le spectateur”

real), how the two places are juxtaposed (framing) and how they interact with each other (interaction).

Cases and methodology

As projections in the theatre become increasingly common, there is a plethora of possible case studies that can respond to a multitude of questions. This thesis has limited the inquiry to characters that are mediated by technology and video projection within francophone theatre productions. While this excludes purely sound based mediation where there is no accompanying visual, such as a radio play, still there are many productions which could qualify. For this thesis Groupov's *Rwanda 94*, 4D Art's *La Belle et la Bête* and UBU compagnie de création's *Les Aveugles* have been selected for a variety of reasons. From a practical perspective, they are productions which I was able to see in their entirety, either live (*Les Aveugles* and *La Belle et la Bête*) or recorded (*Rwanda 94*). They are also all productions or companies which have academic literature written about them, facilitating access to information about the shows and the artists involved. Finally, all three productions implicate different facets of an *effet de présence* for virtual characters. Denis Marleau's *Les Aveugles* negates all physical presence and has neither a visible stage nor actors, only virtual elements are present. This completely removes the physical stage space and replaces it with the virtual space of projections and soundscape. *Rwanda 94* is a documentary theatre production with a very close and direct link to the real world. The production is also the only one to have two dramatic places in the stage space at once, one represented by

the physical and one by the virtual projections. *La Belle et la Bête* reinterprets a common fairy tale and has a blend of physical and virtual presence, but in a single dramatic place. Thus, the three cases studies each have a different relationship to the real world as well as different combinations of physical and virtual presence, which make them telling case studies. These cases will be supplemented with other examples as needed, such as Coachella's use of a hologram in 2012 and the productions *Leo* (Cirque of Eleven) *Julius Caesar* (Ottawa Shakespeare Company).

Marleau's *Les Aveugles*

Founded in 1982 as a production vehicle for Québécois artist Denis Marleau, UBU compagnie de creation (referred to as UBU here-after) has increasingly incorporated videos in productions since Stéphanie Jasmin became co-artistic director in 2000⁵. In 2004, UBU completed a three part series of "Fantasmagories Technologiques", productions that are based on projections. While *Comédie* by Samuel Beckett and *Dors mon petit enfant* by Jon Fosse were also a part of this trilogy, *Les Aveugles* was the best received of the productions and is the only one which this thesis will discuss. It is important to note that Marleau has reused similar techniques to those in *Les Aveugles* in other shows, notably *Dors mon petit enfant*. It was initially located at the Musée d'art contemporain in Montreal, which where I saw it March 8 2012, during its 10th anniversary tour⁶, at 17h00⁷. It has also toured through North America and Europe,

⁵ It is worth noting that UBU did some projections prior to 2000, notably in *Urfaust*(1999) which has projections within a darkened space similar to *Les Aveugles*.

⁶ While the series was completed in 2004, *Les Aveugles* debuted in 2002.

in English, French and Spanish, and has been hailed as “the perfect illusion, disarming, hallucinatory”, (premiere.fr 2007), “masterful” and “emblematic” (Lefebvre, 2012; Fouquet 2004: 155).

The audience is initially held in the lobby before being allowed into the hall. The darkened hall has twelve masks on the stage, onto which the pre-recorded faces of the actors are projected. Céline Bonnier and Paul Savoie’s faces are repeated six times each, with the females on stage right and the males on stage left (see image 3). The masks are slightly enlarged casts of the actors’ faces and the projections are lined up with an exceedingly high degree of precision, which leads to the appearance of twelve real faces. Speakers which are installed both with the masks and around the audience immerse the spectators in a sound scape in which each mask has an associated voice associated, while ambient noise comes from both the stage and the audience. As the masks “speak” Maeterlinck’s text, the lips and eyes move, but other than these small facial movements there is no movement on stage. The production lasts about 45 minutes, and the projections start before the public enters and continue until the last audience member exits the hall, maintaining the effect both prior to and after the show.

⁷ Aside from my experience viewing the production, I have found online video extracts of the production as well as published accounts of the performance which have helped me to verify details from my memory of the show. There is also extensive literature on the production, including editions of *Alternatives Théâtrales* and *Jeu* which are devoted to the work of Maeterlinck and Marleau respectively, with a focus on *Les Aveugles*.

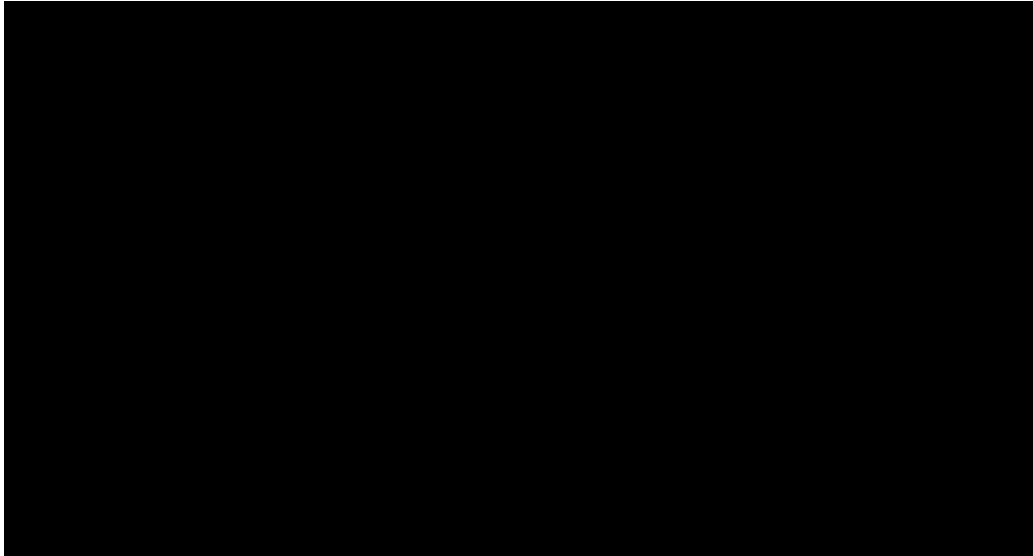


Image 2: Paul Savoie and Céline Bonnier projected onto the masks.



Image 3: Paul Savoie's face reproduced six times for the six male characters.⁸

Groupov's *Rwanda 94*

Groupov, founded in 1980, is a group of francophone Belgian performing artists who attempt to use different art forms to investigate "the question of truth"⁹

⁸ While the images appear to have a slight green tint, I do not recall this colouration from my experience at *Les Aveugles*, and have found no references to it reviews of the work. I believe that the green is a result of the camera capturing a projected image in dim lighting conditions.

(groupov.be). Their celebrated 2000 production *Rwanda 94* is a 6 hour documentary theatre piece which investigates the Rwandan Genocide of 1994. After an introductory 45 minute testimony of a Rwandan mother who survived the genocide while her children and husband were killed¹⁰, the production follows the research of a fictional TV news host, Mme Bee Bee Bee, into the events of the Rwandan genocide. The first sequence with Mme Bee Bee Bee, “*Le chœur des morts*”¹¹, is relevant to this investigation, as is the final sequence of the second act, which is entitled “*Façon de fabriquer*”¹².

“*Le chœur des morts*” begins with a musical bridge, followed by TV footage. This footage shows known figures like Pope John Paul II or French President François Mitterrand, and is interrupted by static and a face which speaks in Kinyarwanda, the most widely spoken language in Rwanda (See images 4a-c). These clips introduce a half hour news magazine devoted to the interruption of all telecommunication media by “*fantômes électroniques*”, spirits of Rwandan victims which have been interrupting communications media. While it is not explicitly stated during the performance, it is important to know that the TV clips are real news clips while the “*messages parasites*” which interrupt the clips are fictions created for the production. After the magazine program itself is interrupted by one of these events, which is translated to “The babies, children, women, men, these people of the creator, why did they die? Is that not genocide, death to the last

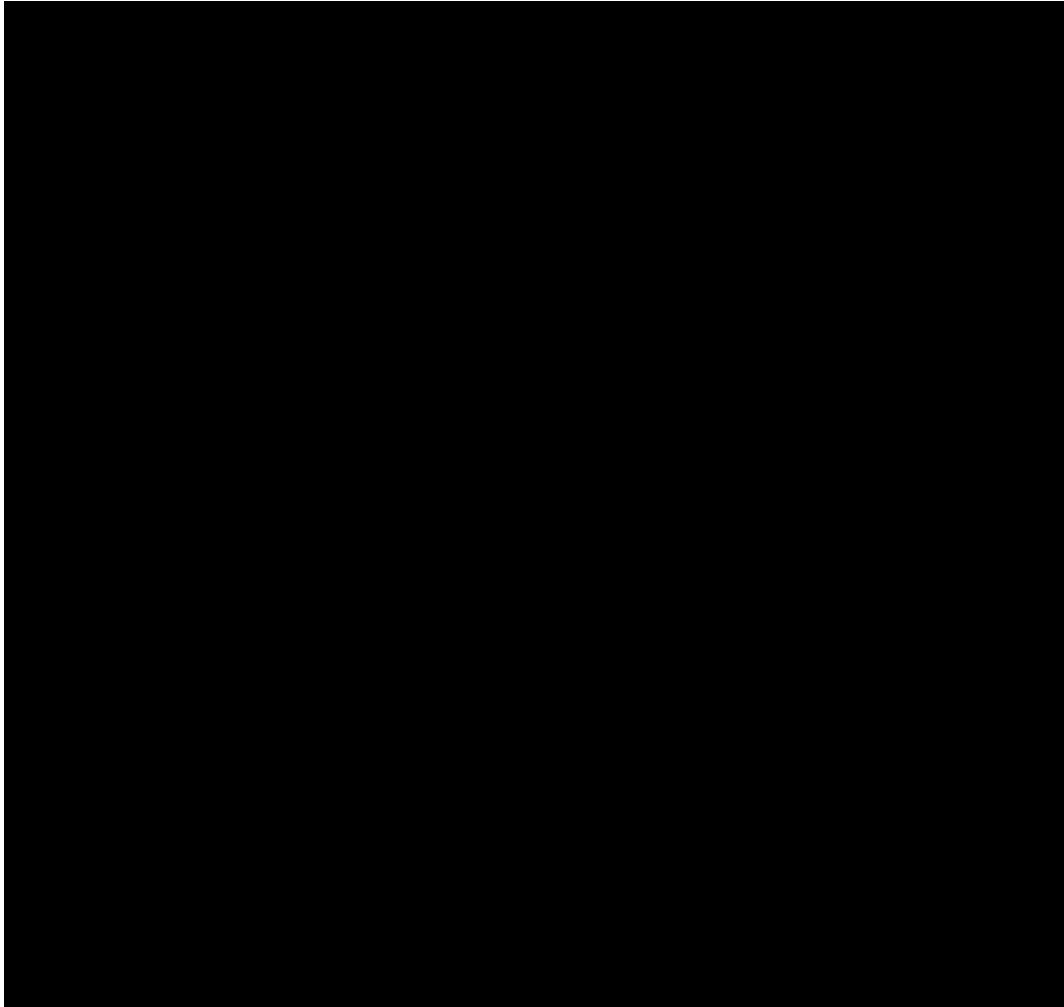
⁹ « la question de la vérité ».

¹⁰ Edition 67 of *Alternatives Théâtrales* has published an open letter to Groupov written by Claire Ruffin which, I feel, is a good subjective account of *Rwanda 94*, especially this opening testimony.

¹¹ “The chorus of the dead” This sequence starts at 55 minutes into the performance and lasts 27 minutes.

¹² “Methods of creation”. This sequence is about 4 hours into the performance, and lasts about 15 minutes.

person, a genocide which tore up the roots and pillars of life”¹³, Mme Bee Bee Bee promises to investigate the causes and truths of the Rwandan genocide.



Images 4a-c (clockwise from top left): French President Mitterrand is displayed in a news sequence on INA, interrupted by static, and has the ghostly apparition of a young boy superimposed on the static. In the last image, the INA logo from image 4a is visible through the boys left ear/temple.

The second video sequence, “*Façon de fabriquer*” is an 8 minute montage of silent footage from Rwanda which depicts militants smiling as they wave machetes, a river of dead bodies, killings, piles of corpses and other emotionally

¹³ « Les bébés, les enfants, les femmes, les hommes ces personnes issus du créateur, pourquoi ont-ils péri? N'est pas un génocide, mort jusqu'au dernier, un génocide qui a araché jusqu'au racines et pilliers de la vie »

charged images. The silence is broken three times by a radio broadcast in Kinyarwanda. Subtitles on the screen read “The Tutsis are fooling themselves. They think they are multiplying, but they are disappearing from this earth. Little by little they are being wiped out. [Sung] Come friends, let’s celebrate. The Tutsis have been exterminated. Come friends let’s celebrate. God rewards the just”¹⁴.

My access to *Rwanda 94*, aside from articles and reviews, comes from the archival footage that was turned into a film. The filming was during a public presentation in Liège, at the *Théâtre de la place*, but is undated. The filmed footage is not a static camera, but takes a range of visual perspectives focusing on the action. During the video sequences, the screen is the focus, and very little of the stage is seen. This skews my perception of these two sequences, and in discussions with people who have experienced the performance live it has been suggested that the virtual within the film version feels more credible than the live performance did, especially in the first sequence.

4D Art’s *La Belle et la Bête*

Founded in 1983, Montreal based multi-disciplinary arts company 4D Art uses holograms to include mediated characters in their work. Michel Lemieux and Victor Pilon’s holograms are similar to Pepper’s ghost¹⁵, but appear to be in 3

¹⁴ The first time this is translated into French, the second time in English and the third time there is no translation. The French translation is of a longer version of the same radio broadcast, and thus differs. “En vérité, tous les tutsis périront. Ils disparaîtront de ce pays. Ils croient qu’ils ressusciteront mais ils disparaissent progressivement, grâce aux armes qui les frappent, mais aussi parce qu’on les tue comme des rats. Mais au fait, les maquisards (les tutsis) qui me téléphonaient où sont-ils maintenant? Hé! C’est sûr qu’ils ont été massacrés! Ils ont été massacrés! Venez chanter : Venez chers amis, félicitons nous! Ils ont été exterminés! Venez chers amis, félicitons nous! Dieu est juste! ».

¹⁵ A “Pepper’s ghost” is a technique through which an image/object can seem to appear or disappear. The effect, named for the British scientist John Pepper who first used it in a theatre, relies upon light’s ability to both

dimensions and interact with the physically present characters on stage. Many 4D shows are reinterpretations of existing stories or real world events, such as the life of Norman McLaren (*Norman*), the story of Orpheus (*Orphéo*), Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (*The Tempest*)¹⁶ and *Beauty and the Beast* (*La Belle et la Bête*), the example being examined in this thesis. 4D Art is on the leading edge of holographic imagery and the Boston production of *La Belle et la Bête* was called "a high-tech cosmic poem" (Brown 2012) by media critics.

La Belle et la Bête is 4D Art's interpretation of the *Beauty and the Beast* story focuses on loneliness and revenge, as does the 1946 Jean Cocteau film on which it is based. The show involves 3 actors, who portray the Beast (*Bête*), the Girl (*Belle*) and the Lady. The character of the Lady usually acts as a narrator, although she does go onstage and becomes the fairy godmother in the story. The stage consists of a raised platform with two white moving flats at the mid-stage, and a white backdrop. The set is projected onto these surfaces as well as the floor, and projected characters appear in the space. These appear to be projected into thin air and tend to show the thoughts of the live characters, including memories or fantasies. For example, when the girl is contemplating her art or her relationship with the *Bête*, she speaks to her sister, who is a memory conjured on stage as a hologram. Another example is the *Bête* grappling with the memory of his pain and years of loneliness, which is shown by the actor fighting with holographic

pass through and reflect off clear glass or plastic surfaces, and often produces an apparition with a ghost-like quality.

¹⁶ 4D Art produced promotional DVDs with 25 minutes of material from the show for both *The Tempest* and *La Belle et la Bête*, to which I have had access. I saw *La Belle et la Bête* three times in English at Boston's Cutler Majestic theatre in December 2012. Quotations of *La Belle et la Bête* in this thesis are from the 25 minute promotional DVD which has provisional English subtitles.

representations of himself as a younger man (image 5). These holographic images look ethereal, as the backdrops and other objects upstage of them can be seen through the holographic image, even though they appear to be 3 dimensional. They move and speak, both with other holograms and with objects/characters physically present on the stage. This ability to seemingly interact directly with physically present characters makes the work of 4D Art unique within this thesis, and relevant for study. However, the work is also interesting because it closely recreates the human form from head to toe, while the other productions focus on the head and face of the characters.

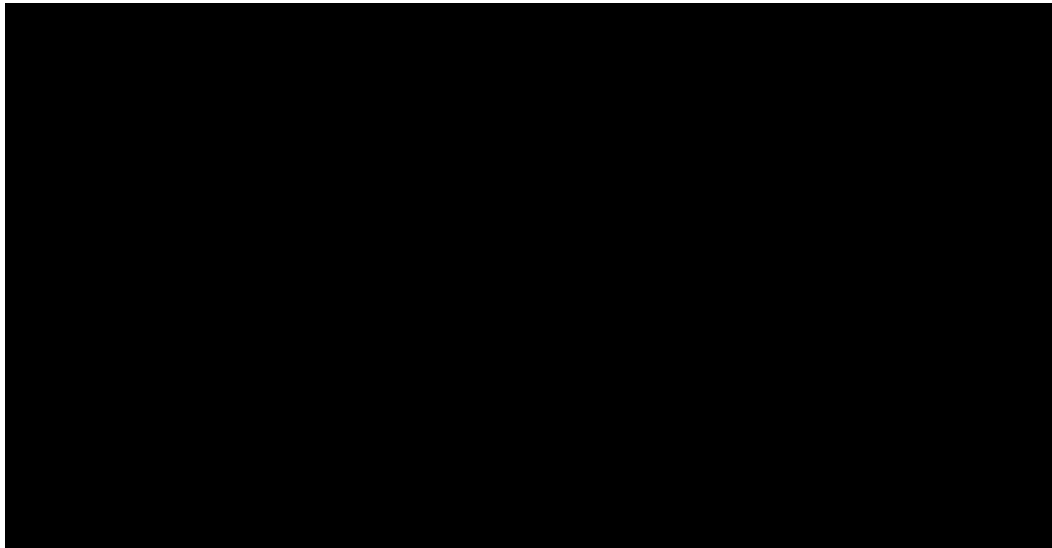


Image 5: François Papineau as Bête fights with a younger, projected version of himself.

Thesis

A first chapter will discuss the relationship with the external world and how that relationship can create an effect of presence, focusing on *Rwanda 94* and *La Belle et la Bête*. As a piece of documentary theatre, *Rwanda 94* investigates The

Rwandan Genocide, and uses the audience's *a priori* knowledge of the event from the news media to create a relationship with the staged production. *La Belle et la Bête* uses conventions to establish that the virtual represents the mental place of the characters. Also, projections which imitate human characteristics create a relationship between the holographic characters and real characters. The holographic characters also interact directly with the human-portrayed characters, something which will be discussed in chapter 3.

The second chapter will be devoted to framing. It will discuss visual and physical framing in relation to *Rwanda 94* and its use of a TV screen. This chapter's first section will analyse the framing conventions used in *Rwanda 94* and how those conventions have been borrowed from the external world of the audience. A second section will discuss the use of negative, or empty space to frame the dramatic place in Marleau's *Les Aveugles*. A final section will discuss Circle of Eleven's production *Leo* and the Ottawa Shakespeare Company's *Julius Caesar*, in order to discuss live video feeds. 4D Art's work also uses live video to create some of the projected characters, making this discussion relevant to the case studies in this thesis. However, the usage of live video is clearer in *Leo* and *Julius Caesar* than in the work of 4D Art, and therefore allows a discussion of live video techniques.

The third and final chapter will look at the interaction between physical and virtual elements on the stage and how the actions of mediated characters can help create an "*effet de présence*". A first section focusing on *La Belle et la Bête* will

look at the interactions between the physical and virtual characters, and elaborate on the distinction between pre-recorded and live characters established in the previous chapter. A second section will analyse the interactions between the virtual characters and the virtual environment in *Les Aveugles*, as well as the passive interactions between the virtual characters and the audience. The thesis will be concluded with a brief discussion of how these elements work in unison to create an *effet de présence* for the virtual elements, and possible directions for further research.

Chapter 1: Creation of the Fictional World and its Relationship to the Real World

1.1 Introduction and theories

In his 2006 book *Mimesis*, Matthew Potolsky notes that nearly every major artistic theory of the western world is based on mimesis, although not always using the word. For Plato, mimesis is a category of object which imitates the appearance of an original object, which is itself a copy of the ideal object¹⁷. Plato also condemns mimetic art forms as likely to “distort the thought of anyone who hears it” (595 a-c), a judgement which is absent in Aristotle’s treatment of the term in *Poetics*. Many of the definitions of mimesis which follow Plato are contradictory, at least in part, and are problematic as theoretical tools (Potolsky, 2006). However, Potolsky finds some recurring characteristics of mimesis. In English, mimesis, which translates most directly to imitation, has long had the implicit meanings of fake, staged, or inauthentic (Potolsky 2006:74), a connotation which can be seen as far back as Plato. Potolsky also suggests that imitation is a poor term for mimesis in English, as it removes questions of context and interpretation. Swedish scholar and educator Bjorn Rasmussen supports Potolsky’s suggestion that mimesis has been limited by its association to the word imitation. Such an understanding of mimesis restricts the aesthetic potential of the term, and consequently of the theatre (Rasmussen 2008: 309). Following Aristotle’s

¹⁷ Plato maintains three categories of objects: the mimetic and has the appearance of the original, such as a painting of a chair; the physical which has the physical form of the original, such as the chair a carpenter built; and the original as is found in the essence of the object, the ideal of a chair (597 a-d).

understanding of the term, Potolsky suggests that mimesis is not a straight copy of an object. Mimesis requires the interpretation of an original, while copies do not require interpretation.

Potolsky stresses the importance of this interpretation by saying that mimesis does not need to perfectly recreate whatever it is representing, as “mimesis is not straight up imitation” (Potolsky 2006: 1). Instead, mimetic arts give a persuasive simulation of a facet of reality, rather than an objective truth (Potolsky 2006:3-4) . This is based on David Halliwell’s concept of Hetrocosm, which states that the arts creates a separate or alternate world, as well as Henry James’ essay *The Art of Fiction*, in which he proposes that only an air of reality needs to be created for fiction to be believable (James 1984). This alternate world is created through the use of conventions. Mimetic representations rely on fidelity to the conventions and not a fidelity to external reality or nature (Potolsky 2006: 4). These conventions are the habitual symbolic practices of an artist or a production, which are relied upon to communicate with the audience.

Mimesis is sustained by relying on social conventions (Potolsky 2006) as evidenced by changes in theatrical aesthetics. In early 20th century realism, as well as some later styles, actors spoke to each other and ignored the audience as much as possible, maintaining the fourth wall. In this scenario, the audience sits quietly in a darkened auditorium. Ancient Greek tradition was to directly address the audience, who were far rowdier than modern audiences and in an outdoor amphitheatre. In spite of the differences, both practices were considered mimetic

during their respective time periods, but would not be considered mimetic in other eras (Potolsky 2006:74-75). Richard Schechner suggests that theatre exists when a separation occurs between the spectators and the performers (Schechner 2003:137), while Féral adds that the audience needs to be aware of the inauthenticity of what they are watching (Potolsky 2006:74; Féral 2002:96). This separation can be seen in Aristotle's use of the term as well, and the difference between imitation and mimesis is required for the audience to empathize with the characters. Conversely, according to Potolsky, mimesis is not a perfect analytical tool for all aspects of the theatre. The difficulty lies in determining whether what the audience sees is mimetic or not. Potolsky suggests that the actor has the ability to mime actions and emotions and, as suggested by Diderot's actor's paradox, the emotions mimed by an actor are "impossible to distinguish from the genuine emotion" (Potolsky 2006: 82). The audience is unable to know whether the tears shed by an actor are from sadness or sorrow, or simply training the eyes to water.

However, events in the theatre are inherently mimetic, even when firmly rooted in reality. While Yolande Mukagasana did experience the events she describes in the opening testimony of *Rwanda94*, it remains mimetic because she is retelling the events to an audience, based on her memory of the events. This performative action is rooted in the established conventions of the theatre. Yolande Mukagasana remains in the stage space, the audience space is in dimmed lighting and the audience does not intervene in her telling of the story. When she does deviate from the expectations of the theatre, such as telling her own story, she acknowledges this departure, for example by stating at the start of her testimony

that “I am not an actor, I am only a survivor of the Rwandan Genocide”¹⁸. The retelling of the events is subject to several levels of interpretation, most importantly the interpretation and memory of Yolande. This happens both as she lived the events, as she only lived them from her perspective, as well as when she recalls and retells them. This process involves a selection of events, memories and words which provide the audience with a single version of the events from a single perspective, and therefore even the very ‘real’ moment of the retelling is mimetic.

Similar observations can be made for the projected bodies in all productions studied within this thesis. They are accurate reproductions of the human body or the human face, but from the perspective of a camera. Thus, while an effet de présence may create a belief in the presence of the characters, the audience logically knows that there is no physical body on stage, and the human features are a video projection. Further, these are not generic or hypothetical humans, what Plato would call an ideal body, but the actual face/body of the actor. The bodies in all three productions are mimetic for the same reason that Yolande Mukagasana’s retelling is mimetic. The bodies are two-dimensional recreations based on the interpretation of the original body which is/was in front of a camera. The camera could have different options or filters added to it which alter/interpret the face by enhancing the colour, altering the speed of motions or other changes. In the case of *Rwanda 94*, one of these changes is the use of Black and White for the interruptions by the dead faces. Unlike *Rwanda 94*, which uses accurate

¹⁸ Translation of “je ne suis pas une comédienne. je suis une survivante du génocide de Rwanda tout simplement.”

representations of faces, *Les Aveugles* distorts the faces slightly, although imperceptibly to my eyes, so that they line up properly on the masks. 4D Art's holograms appear to be three dimensional and move in all directions within the space. While the framing, both visually and dramatically, is different in the three cases and will be discussed in the next chapter, it is also important to consider how effective the different mimetic devices are. This includes the mimetic representation of the human body as well as the use of mimesis in the creation and staging of the FDW.

1.2 *Rwanda 94*

Through the use of primary sources, *Rwanda 94* cultivates a different relationship to reality from fictional theatre pieces, is an example of documentary theatre. In her MA thesis, *'Exhibit A': An Application of Verbatim Theatre Dramaturgy*, Melanie Moore adapts typologies from documentary film in order to propose a classification for documentary and verbatim plays based on how they use and privilege aural or text-based archives and records¹⁹. She also suggests that the defining quality of documentary or verbatim plays is their examination of the archive through asking questions (Moore 2013: 22). As an example of historical drama-expository documentary theatre, *Rwanda 94* examines in detail a real-world event that the audience is aware occurred. While not all segments of *Rwanda 94* are verbatim theatre, and some of the segments I will analyse are highly fictional, such as the news broadcast in the first video sequence, they do pose counter-

¹⁹ These categories are (from most text based to most aural) Literary, Tribunal, Historical Drama, Expository and Participatory. It should also be noted that these categories are neither exhaustive nor exclusive and that some productions can fit into multiple categories.

factual questions of both the audience and the 'archive'. Based on Lubomír Doležel's descriptions of verbatim theatre, Moore suggests that these questions are a defining feature of documentary theatre, and are the way in which the production examines the records of an event. The main question which is being asked in *Rwanda 94* is vocalized by Mme Bee Bee Bee at the end of the 1st video sequence, when she says that she will "search, with impartiality, for the causes of the catastrophe"²⁰.

The other important aspect of *Rwanda 94*'s relationship to the real world can be understood through theories of Holocaust art. While most of the writing on memorials and works of art surrounding holocausts as a general term focus on the *Shoah* during the Second World War, the general theories and observations can be applied to *Rwanda 94*. Gene Plunka's book *Holocaust Drama* proposes that holocaust art often attempts to express the "sustained barbarity and unimaginable enormity" (Plunka 2009:3) of an event that no one would believe was possible (Plunka 2009: 275). Plunka and *Rwanda 94* creator Jacques Delcuvellerie echo each other by indicating a desire to "raise moral and ethical questions for discussion/debate and draw lessons from History" (Plunka 2009: preface) and question "motivations and the methods of their [the Tutsis'] assassination" (Preface to *Rwanda 94*). The statements in the preface of *Rwanda 94* align with the criteria for documentary theatre, and thus confirms the intimate relationship between *Rwanda 94* and the ERW. They also indicate that the production is an expression of something which is otherwise unimaginable to the audience. A tangible

²⁰ Translation of "nous chercherons avec impartialité, les causes de la catastrophe".

expression of even a fraction of the horrors in Rwanda can cause a reaction in an audience, as depicted by the producer's horror at the 8 minute video sequence²¹.

The virtual characters in *Rwanda 94*, including Dr. Kimali and the chorus of the dead are shown on the screen as people. The ghostly apparitions are in black and white, but Dr. Kimali is in full colour, and his body has not been altered in any perceptible or unconventional way. The characters are people as the audience is used to seeing people on television, and *Rwanda 94* reproduces the conventions of television news broadcasts to represent the character of Dr Kimali. Such a reliance on TV and film conventions is evident not only in the interview with Dr. Kimali and the news broadcast, but also in the rest of the sequence. The first use of video, with the ghostly apparitions, employs visual and aural static to 'interrupt' the broadcasts²². Reusing a real-world effect intuitively explains the relationship between the two parts of the video clip and that the ghosts interrupt the news clips and can be contrasted with the cleaner 'jump-cuts' between the different news clips which have been edited and presented in sequence together. This contrast can also be made between the ghostly apparitions and the second video sequence, which smoothly transitions between the playback of visual and aural recordings. It is thus confirmed not only that both sequences are within a television program, but also that the apparitions are interrupting the broadcasts. Within the 67-68 double edition of *Alternatives Théâtrales*, which is dedicated to *Rwanda 94*, the director

²¹ See track 2 on the DVD.

²² While tuning a television was not a common occurrence when *Rwanda 94* premiered in 2000, it is recent enough that audiences will recall having had television programming interrupted by static due to bad reception. Younger audiences will have had similar experiences with radios or other technology.

and founder of Groupov Jacques Delcuvellerie says the reliance on television news conventions was intentional and reflects TV and radio news as how the vast majority of people learned of the genocide (Delcuvellerie 2001:55).

In this way, the virtual space of the projections is intended to evoke memory for both the audience and the production. The production has the stated goal of paying homage to those who were killed in the genocide, but the suggestion that television news was used to recall how the audience learned of the genocide indicates that there is a desire to affect the audience's emotions through the production. This is done explicitly by suggesting that Europe, and by extension the audience, was passively complicit in the genocide by not intervening. However, the emotionally charged content of the video sequences, especially the ghostly apparitions and the 8 minute silent montage in the second sequence, are intended to emotionally implicate the audience. The audience's emotional reaction is created not only through the stories recounted, but also through the audience's knowledge that these stories are based on real events, and thus the relationship the staged events have to reality.

Unlike some other segments of *Rwanda 94* which directly reference a source, such as The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda rulings, the video segments do not cite specific sources. Aside from the reliance on television news conventions, the segments use recognizable footage to create their intimate relationship with the real and to extend this relationship even to the fictionalized parts of the footage. As Melanie Moore suggests, the production is able to assume

a certain level of knowledge about the events and use this knowledge to validate the content. To examine this relationship between the content of the sequences and the events in Rwanda, the second video sequence, which has the strongest relationship to the real, will be considered within the context of holocaust art, and the other projections will then be considered in relationship to this second sequence.

One of the problems encountered by Holocaust drama is the representation of something so unimaginable that there are not adequate words to describe it, something which this second sequence attempts to do. Writing about the *Shoah*, Ernst van Alphen notes that “the Holocaust, in all its uniqueness and extremity, is unrepresentable [...] its representation is technically impossible” (van Alphen 1997: 41-42). As Dr. Kamali alludes to in the first video sequence of *Rwanda 94* by saying that the lack of a Kinyarwanda word for rape did not limit sexual violence in Rwanda, words are an imperfect and inadequate tool to describe the horrors that occurred during the *Shoah*, or the Rwandan genocide. In the case of Rwanda, between eight hundred thousand and a million people were killed in the one hundred days following the assassination of President Juvénal Habyarimana on April 6 1994. Rather than relying on words, which van Alphen argues lack the ability to properly express victims’ experiences, *Rwanda 94* uses the images of the first and second video sequences to symbolize and represent, respectively, the events of the genocide.

This is particularly true of the second video, which uses footage and sound sourced from the archive. The video includes a song which may be recognizable to the audience, as it has been included in documentary recounts of the genocide (BBC). Audience members who do not know that song can be assumed to be aware of the use of the radio to incite violence, as well as machetes to kill during the genocide. Both of these are clearly depicted in the video sequence. There is also a sign for “Paroisse Rukara” seen in the video, which is known for being the church where 5000 people took refuge, and over 2500 were killed during the month of April (Prosecutor v. Mpambara 2005 :6). These references to the events in Rwanda demonstrate that this video is part of the archive, and therefore represents an event that the audience knows to have occurred. In this way, the production relies upon the audience’s knowledge of the events in Rwanda in order to represent the indescribable horrors of Rwanda. It uses words to symbolize a part of the Genocide, and allows the audience’s memory to reconjure the rest, increasing the affect in the audience and thus avoiding the limits of language which van Alphan highlights.

The ghostly apparitions use some similar techniques to acquire presence. They each appear to interrupt the media coverage of a real world event, such as the signing of the Pope John Paul’s Eleventh Encyclical or a speech given by French President François Mitterrand. While the audience might not know when or what the Eleventh Encyclical is, they can be expected to recognize the Pope or Mitterrand and therefore use these images to create a relationship between the ERW and the ghost characters. However, the production uses this relationship to

create an authenticity for the ghost characters, and to imply that the interruptions are an actual event from the ERW. This implication is initially made through the framing of the characters with authentic footage which the audience would be able to recognize. The characters' mimetic representation of their stories also suggests this illusion of authenticity. The ghost characters speak in Kinyarwanda, which is translated into French for the audience. These stories are another way of addressing the problem of representing the genocide, since the stories attempt to represent a single event within the genocide and have that one event stand as emblematic for the whole. The audience's *a priori* knowledge of the Rwandan genocide allows them to situate the stories within the context of the genocide. The use of Kinyarwanda actually subverts the mimetic characteristics of the representation by removing, at least initially, a level of interpretation. Until the character of Dr. Kimali translates the ghost character's testimonies, the events are described in the language in which they would have been lived, removing a level of interpretation associated with the translation between two languages.

In spite of being dead, these characters do create an *effet de présence* through their virtual testimonies. The use of real TV news clips helps to create the *effet de présence* for the dead characters, as it makes sense that only a character which is present in reality could interrupt the broadcast of news events which the audience knows to be real, such as the signing of the Pope's Eleventh Encyclical. However, presence is created not only through the use of television codes, such as static interrupting a TV transmission, but also through the dialogue. The use of Kinyarwanda creates an affinity between the ghosts and the events which the

audience knows occurred, both from their own *a priori* knowledge and Yolande Mukagasana's testimony. As Barthes describes when proposing the effect of realism (*effet de réel*) upon which *effet de présence* is based, adding the extra linguistic detail may make the story seem more authentic for some members of the audience.

As a character who translates the Kinyarwanda for Mme Bee Bee Bee and the audience, Dr Kimali is between the archival video shown to the audience and the fictional characters that have an illegitimate presence within the archive. Unlike the ghost characters for whom he translates, the mimetic qualities of the characters are highlighted within the production, specifically the role of interpretation within the mimesis. Dr. Kimali first translates the ghost-character's testimony from Kinyarwanda to French and then interprets the meaning of the symbolic language for Mme Bee Bee Bee, and by extension the audience. Unlike the ghost-characters and Yolande Mukagasana before them, Dr. Kimali does not purport to have been a witness or victim of these events. However, creating his presence through a remote television interview is coherent with both its framing and its content. As is true with the ghost characters, Dr. Kimali is in a different dramatic place than the stage space where Mme Bee Bee Bee is located. This not only adopts conventions which the audience would be familiar with, but also reminds the audience that Dr Kimali does not have bodily presence within the dramatic place represented on stage. However, his bodily presence somewhere within the FDW is established by Mme Bee Bee Bee who frames the interview by saying that Dr Kimali is in Butare, Rwanda.

Rwanda 94's placement within both documentary and holocaust theatre creates a very different relationship between the FDW and the ERW than that of the other two cases studied in this thesis. However, this relationship is still mimetic. The observations made earlier about Yolande Mukagasana's opening testimony hold true for the whole production. *Rwanda 94*, as a whole, interprets the events of the Rwandan Genocide and provides one version of the events. This interpretation guides the production, from the use of the term Genocide, through the selection of scenes and the casting of the actors on stage. Both through the selection of the scenes as well as the use of the term Genocide, the production focuses on the killing of the Tutsi by Hutu militia. However, it is important to remember that, in the words of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, "other persons than Tutsis and moderate Hutus suffered in 1994. The process of a criminal trial cannot depict the entire picture of what happened in Rwanda, even in a case of this magnitude" (ICTR-98-41-T). *Rwanda 94* interprets the events by focusing on the Genocide and its colonial causes. This can also be seen in the cast, which has both Hutu and Tutsi members, and in the ghostly apparitions which are Tutsi and moderate Hutus. This interpretation differs from other interpretations of the events, such as *Shake Hands with the Devil* (Rt. Lt-Gen Roméo Dallaire) or *Hotel Rwanda* (Terry George and Keir Pearson), by blaming the UN forces for not intervening and by excluding the killings of Hutus by the Tutsi *Front Patriotique Rwandais*. This does not make any of these version incorrect, but highlights the influence which interpretation has on the retelling of a real world event.

1.3 4D Art

Throughout the body of their work, Lemieux-Pilon 4D Art's virtual effects are mimetic. The generally fictional, projected characters are filmed for the specific production and what is shown is the projected image of a body, rather than a physical one. While the projection of a body recorded by a camera is inherently mimetic, the production's ability to interpret the body is most obvious when considering the scale of the characters, as well as their ethereal look. While there is no attempt at reality given the changes in size of the projected characters, these follow conventions which are anchored within the body of 4D Art's work. Furthermore, the ethereal quality makes sense within the FDW, as the projections represent a mental place for the characters, rather than a physical one. Finally, I will discuss the visual effect of a hologram and a human together and how the conventions exploit the hologram's inherent characteristics.

The conventions which dictate mimesis are rooted in the cultural context in which they are presented. Thus, that which seems state of the art or convincing today might not seem that way 10 years later. This is relevant for 4D Art, as the techniques they use to create their holograms become more common, as exemplified by their expansion into museums and other non-theatre settings. Further, the use of similar holographic characters at Coachella music festival in 2012 and at the MTV awards in 2005 suggests that this sort of holographic mimesis is becoming part of popular culture (The Guardian 2012). When talking about the Tupac hologram, newspapers and online reviews use terms such as

“plenty realistic” (Biddle), “dimensional” (Thier) and “resurrected” (Kaufman), which suggest that the Tupac hologram was able to establish a presence, even if it was via a “Pepper’s Ghost” like technique, which creates a character onstage which very much resembles the holographic characters of 4D Art (image 6).

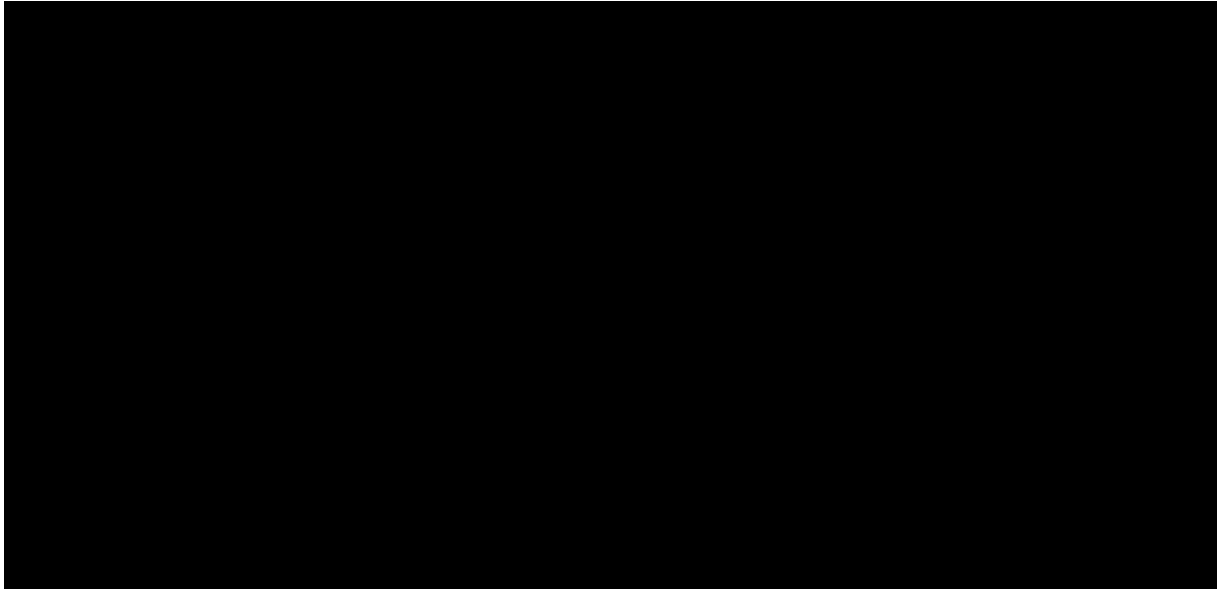


Image 6: Snoop Dogg (left) performs with the projection of Tupac at Coachella 2012²³

The Tupac hologram is important not only because it represents an acceptance of these effects by popular culture, but also because it follows a similar convention to that of 4D Art’s holograms. The Tupac hologram is not recreating a performance that had already occurred with Snoop Dogg before his death, but instead ‘resurrected’ Tupac, bringing him back from the dead to put on a new performance. This displays a non-physical world on the stage, the world of the dead.

While 4D Art does not talk about how they create their visuals technically and therefore the similarities between 4D Art’s holograms and the Tupac hologram

²³ Screen capture from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGbrFmPBV0Y>

can only be made through observation, they do discuss the usage within the performance. In a Master Class given by Michel Lemieux and Victor Pilon, they said that their name represents how they think of projections, which represent a 4th dimension which is the dream world²⁴. This dream world, like the realm of the dead, is a non-physical space. For 4D Arts, the virtual represents a mental space of thoughts, dreams and fantasies. In *La Belle et la Bête*, the horse is Belle's emotional draw to the Bête, while her sister is a memory or delusion. 4D Art follows this idea of the virtual space representing the mental in most or all of their shows. In the 2006 production of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, Prospero becomes delusional and the other characters, except Caliban, Ferdinand and Miranda, are figments of his imagination. As such, they are represented via holograms. While the body of one artist's work does not make the social conventions upon which mimesis is built, it does demonstrate that 4D Art is establishing a consistent convention within their own work. 4D Art then builds on the conventions established in prior works as the basis for the characters, which makes the relationship between the real (physical) and the virtual comprehensible to the audience.

The use of this convention, that the virtual is a visual representation of the mental space of the characters, is present in the first holographic images in *La Belle et la Bête*. These are two representations of Belle's sister, who is un-named in the production. Belle externalizes her internal monologue by talking with the sister. There are several textual and visual hints that the sister isn't really present,

²⁴ Dreams are, strictly speaking, not a dimension, as dimensions are measurable qualities such as height, width, depth, length of time. However, the term dimension is misused in common speech to refer to perception or phases of existence rather than measurement, and 4D Art's use of the word dimension follows this usage of the term.

both in the ERW and the FDW. She looks ethereal, is initially unnaturally tall and appears out of thin air, all of which demonstrate that she is a projection rather than an actor (image 7). Further, her lack of physical presence in the FDW is made clear when Belle throws “paint” at her and it passes through her and to the back wall. It is relevant that the “paint” is also virtual, and so could “stick”²⁵ to the character, if the character was present. The final and, in my opinion, clearest indication that she is a fantasy or delusion is Belle’s ability to conjure her sister and alter her personality. After Belle un-conjures her oversized and critical sister, she says “be nice this time” and conjures a miniature, complementary version of the sister. The fact that the sister is a figment of Belle’s mind allows the size to change and to represent how Belle feels about her sister. This convention is maintained throughout the production.

About half way into the show, the narrator says that the Bête is “tortured by his past”, and the audience sees the Bête looking at a virtual mirror. From the mirror a younger man steps out, mirroring the actions of the Bête (image 5). The Bête fights his past-self, but must battle against several versions of the younger self. Since the virtual version of the Bête is a mental version of the Bête, he is not confined to being a single version, but instead reappears each time the Bête’s physical-self hits the mental one. The Bête is being attacked by the memory of his past, and how he used to look. Henry James suggests that the power of fiction lies in its ability to compete with real life (James 1884:2). In this instance, the fictional,

²⁵ I am not trying to suggest that two virtual objects will naturally interact the same as two physical object, but rather that it would have been possible for the projections to create this appearance if it was desired.

virtual Bête is able to compete and interact with the physical Bête. Towards the end of the play, when the Bête is able to overcome the memory of his past, he smashes a mirror, demonstrating the character over-coming his mental baggage. However, the sequence also indicates that the virtual characters and images represent the mental space, and do not exist in their own right within the FDW.

The fact that the virtual space represents a mental place within the FDW creates three spatial levels within the production. The audience exists within EWR, the characters create the second place of a physical, fictional dramatic world and the projections represent the third place, mental place within the FDW. While such levels of representations are possible without projections, the ethereal quality of the projections highlights and clarifies this. This also exploits the inherent quality of the holograms. Academic and newspaper reviews of the production note that the projection technique does not create an image which looks solid in 3 dimensions, an effect I have been referring to as the ethereal look of the projections. Josette Féral suggests that this highlights the lack of presence for the projections, and undermines the *effet de présence* for these holograms (Féral 2012:). This is true if presence is considered in a purely physical perspective. However, highlighting the lack of physical presence aids the projections in representing a place that is mental rather than physical, and maintains the distinction between the two levels of place (mental and physical) within the FDW. This distinction is where the *effet de présence* is created, because it allows the audience to understand the different levels of presence required for the physically and virtually presence characters.



Image 7: Belle (Bénédicte Décary) and her un-naturally large sister (Violette Chauveau).

There is very little interaction between two virtual elements in *La Belle et la Bête*. This makes sense, as thoughts/dreams generally do not interact with each other, but only with the person who has the thought/dream. The few instances which could be considered interaction between virtual elements, such as the younger image of the Bête who steps out of the virtual mirror (see image 5), are also in the presence of a physical character and are part of a single thought process for that character. In the case of the Bête and his younger self, the Bête's reflections on his past self 'step out' from the past and torment his present self. The virtual space, which is the world of thoughts and dreams, does not exist in *La Belle et la Bête* except when there is a character visible to dream or think it. Victor Pilon suggested this by saying, during a Master Class I attended at Emerson College in Boston, that "real people on stage give soul to the dead images", and help to create their presence. While 'soul' may not be the correct word, the physical elements which are present do give meaning and context to the virtual. That the virtual cannot be present without the physical, but that the physical can be present

without the virtual, both in the practice of 4D Art as well as in the way they describe their work, suggests that the two are not equal, and that the virtual relies on the physical. This further supports the fact that the projections are not physically present in the FDW, as is clear from the ethereal quality of the projections, and this can be used to create expectations, understanding and presence for the virtual characters, and thus reinforce the convention created in prior works.

1.4 Conclusions

When it is accepted that theatre is inherently mimetic, presence can be created for video characters through consistent and coherent conventions. While these conventions are not the same in different productions, they share similar characteristics. They are intuitive and the relationship to the real which these conventions create exploits the inherent characteristics of the video characters within the production. In both *Rwanda 94* and *La Belle et la Bête*, the virtual characters exist in a place which is distinct from the stage space, but related to it. This relationship is made clear during the production.

Each of the three productions analysed in this thesis establish a relationship to reality through conventions that are rooted in the creation of the FDW. Throughout the body of their work, 4D Art establishes the convention that the virtual space represents the mental place of the characters, while the stage space represents the physical FDW. *La Belle et la Bête* follows this convention. *Rwanda 94* uses the second video sequence to establish that the virtual space of the TV screen contains actual parts of the archive, while the characters of the physical

space examine this archive to understand the Rwandan genocide. In both *Rwanda 94* and *La Belle et la Bête*, the convention allows the audience to know which space represents what place, and the convention therefore frames the content as being either authentic in the case of *Rwanda 94*, or as dream and fantasy in *La Belle et la Bête*. While the use of conventions can be a method to frame spaces so that the audience comprehends how the characters in the virtual space are present, it is also possible for the production to create conventions that suggest presence when none exists. *Rwanda 94* does this by establishing the convention that what is on the screen is archival footage and is therefore authentic.

In both productions, the virtual characters represent aspects of the FDW that is neither physical nor visible in the ERW. This uses the inherent characteristics of projected, virtual characters to the advantage of the production and allows the audience's intuition to help ascertain what the character is. This is most important in *La Belle et la Bête*, when the character's lack of physicality is more apparent. In *Rwanda 94*, as well as *Les Aveugles*, the characters are projected against a solid, opaque surface, which makes the projections appear more solid. In the case of 4D Art, the projections are against a transparent screen and therefore look hollow. This reflects the fact that they are not physically present in either the ERW or the FDW. In these instances, not only do the characters follow pre-established conventions, either from the artist's body of work or from the ERW, but the conventions make sense to the audience.

Mimesis requires not only that a relationship between the ERW and the FDW be established, but that it also follows conventions the audience understands. These conventions create expectations within the audience as to how the virtual characters will be used and what these characters represent. As will be discussed in the next chapter, these conventions provide context for the virtual characters and therefore frame them, giving the audience immediate information about the characters. This prepares the audience to both receive and understand how the virtual characters exist within the logic of the FDW.

Chapter 2: Framing and Framing Devices

2.1 Introduction and theories

In the theatrical event, the frame of the stage space marks the border between the FDW of the characters and the ERW of the audience while also creating a series of expectations regarding the action and characters of the play. Pavis includes this duality of functions in his definition of frames²⁶.

The frame or framework of the theatre performance is not only the type of stage or space in which the play is performed. More broadly, it also refers to the set of the spectators' experiences and expectations, the contextualization of the fiction represented. Frame is to be taken both literally (as a "boxing-in" of the performance) and abstractly (as a contextualization and foregrounding of the action)" (Pavis 1999: 174).

A frame limits and contextualizes an object. More concretely, this boxes an object in visually, while abstractly it provides context and expectations to the viewer about the it and its relationship to what is outside the frame (Pavis 1999: 155; Lyons 1983: 18-19). Communications theorists have defined frames as interpretative packages which organize ideas and give meaning to issues (de Vreese 2005:52-53; Neuman et al. 1992), and in this way provide context for the item. Claes de Vreese defines framing devices as "specific textual and visual elements" which give context or information about an object (de Vreese 2005: 54). A frame is also a border that defines a space or territory. Josette Féral remarks that boundaries create private, isolated spaces which group together similar items into a single

²⁶ In the theatre, framing devices include the hall configuration, the Front of House space, any pre-show announcements, lighting, sound, advertising and program information which can influence the expectations of the audience. A production of *Hamlet* in the park creates a different set of expectations than *Hamlet* presented on the main stage at the Stratford Festival.

spatial unit, while the removal or transgression of boundaries creates common, shared spaces, which can be used to facilitate communication (Féral 2007). Many performance artists describe doors and windows in similar terms, as access points between separated places. In Aleksandar Dundjerovic's 2002 book *The Theatricality of Robert Lepage*, the Quebecois artist says he uses video to show another place than that of the stage. This again suggests a spatial dimension to video usage (Dundjerovic 2002: 179).

When dealing with spatial issues, frames can separate distinct spaces as well as inform these spaces, turning neutral space into meaningful place at the same time as identifying the location. In a theatrical event, this allows the stage space to be identified and separated from the back-stage and the audience (front of house) spaces. In western theatre, the audience usually does not step into the stage space, and the frame of a proscenium arch or stage line delineates where the audience sits and where the actors perform.

Frames are often visual, such as a stage arch or line, however framing elements can also be textually or discursively based. These contextual frames give information about the object framed, in this case a space. This creates certain expectations and provides clues as to what the framed object is. For example, saying "and now for something completely different" allows the listener to expect a new thought which does not link to the previous one. It can also create an expectation for something funny, as it is a reference to the british comedy *Monty Python*. Based on my observations and the cases studied in this thesis, visual

frames tend to be borderborders which limit the space while textual borderborders tend to give context to the spaces. This chapter will demonstrate that framing can create an *effet de présence* for virtual characters when both the visual and textual frame are coherent with the fictional dramatic world.

Although frames determine what is inside or outside a certain space, they are not absolute and can be crossed. In a 2007 article, Josette Féral applies the transgression of territorial boundaries to the arts in two specific productions, of which one is *Rwanda 94*. While Féral's article is interested mostly in the ethnic and territorial considerations of the events in Rwanda, some of the more general comments about space are also relevant to the production. Féral notes the contradictory urges to both create and transgress boundaries, and that these opposite reactions are complementary. Erecting boundaries isolates and identifies "isomorphic" spaces, or spaces that regroup similar things together. In other terms, it frames objects and indicates that everything within a frame shares certain characteristics (Féral 2007:55). Thus, in most theatre productions, everything which is on stage in a play is framed together by the stage arch and is therefore present within the FDW.

This chapter looks at both elements of framing in the theatrical event, how framing is achieved and the importance of framing the projected characters for the construction of the dramatic world. Continuing the analysis of the previous chapter, the example of *Rwanda 94* is used to understand how two distinct places can be shown onstage at the same time within a single stage space using frames within

frames and by following common conventions to assign a context to each. As each frame can be understood to represent one place of the FDW, and actions or conversations which cross between frames are a communication between two distinct places within the FDW, based Féral suggestion that communication is the result when borderborders are transgressed (Féral 2007:49). This is followed by a look at Marleau's *Les Aveugles*, which only stages one place, but within a negative space. This discussion focuses on the use of negative space to frame the virtual space, and how this can create an effect of presence for the virtual characters by juxtaposing them with absence. It also questions whether framing the stage and audience space together can foster a sympathetic relationship between the audience and characters, and if such a relationship helps create an *effet de présence*. Finally, Circle of Eleven's *Leo* and the Ottawa Shakespeare Company's *Julius Caesar* are compared with the other case studies in order to explore the importance of framing and spaces. Unlike *Rwanda 94* and *Les Aveugles*, these examples are filmed live and displays the source of the images as well as the final image captured by the camera. In theatre, virtual spaces are framed to set the boundary between virtual and physical, but the frame also serves to define the relationship between the physical and virtual. Each production analysed in this section frames the virtual differently within the FDW, and therefore creates a different relationship between the physical and the virtual.

2.2 *Rwanda 94* and staging distinct places

Like many episodic performances, *Rwanda 94*'s stage space represents many different places at different times. However, during the two video sequences the virtual space and the stage space simultaneously represents two distinct locations within the FDW, in both cases a European television studio (stage space) and Rwanda (virtual space). While the second sequence clearly attempts to recreate a television screen and to shift attention between the different places in series, the first sequence attempts to create equal presence for the stage and virtual spaces by exploiting the conventions of remote television interview and schizo-visibility²⁷.

Perhaps the most common contextual framing devices in modern media are those of the television and television news, which *Rwanda 94* adapts in both media based sequences. I will use three different typologies of contextual framing within TV to analyse *Rwanda 94*. The first, proposed by Claes de Vreese, discusses different levels of framing. This can be on a macro-level how the news agency frames and thus changes the news being reported based on the political leanings of the agency or the staff involved. However, W. Russell Neuman extends this typology of framing to a micro level, with specific events being framed within a specific theme. In a separate framing typology, and one based on techniques rather than content, Paul McIlvenny proposes a series of frames which looks at how video is used in television, focusing on reality television. This 2010 study lists

²⁷ Adaptation of the term schizophonia, coined by Richard Schaffer to denote the separation of a sound from its source, usually through technology, and the possible shifts in meaning associated with this separation.

and describes four different types of video interactions: live video observation, live video relay, video-prompted recall and specialized uses such as video morphing (2011: 263). Thus frames can be layers, with a specific object framed within a scene which is itself framed by how that scene is constructed within the production.

Recalling that frames serve as a way to contextualize, and thus create expectations, the sequence being framed within a news broadcast creates the expectation that the content of the video footage is real. While this expectation is respected in the second sequence, the first sequence uses this to present as real something which is not. By extension, this attempts to create a presence for something which never was.

The earlier of the two sequences is a fictional news broadcast. De Vreese notes that in news stories the frame is often separated from the facts, either in a distinct paragraph or within the headlines, captions or other constituent parts of the news story (de Vreese 2005: 55). A similar study by W. Russel Neuman identifies five types of frames for issue specific news frames which categorize the news and current affairs: Human impact, Powerlessness, Economics, Moral Values, and Conflict (in de Vreese 2005: 56). The relevant frames for the analysis of the first sequence are human impact and powerlessness, which focus on the “descriptions of the individuals and groups affected by an issue” and the domination of weaker groups or people by forces beyond their control (de Vreese 2005: 56; Neuman 1992:66). It is important to note that all pieces of news can have multiple frames applied to them, but that individual news stories tend to apply one frame to simplify

and restrict the story (Neuman 1992). These frames can be detected in news stories through key words and phrases used to describe the information. For example, the powerlessness frame often invokes references to a lack of control and a feeling of fatalism and determinism. Describing the powerlessness frame, Neuman cites a teacher who, when discussing the end of the world, repeats “it’s gonna happen” and “out of my control” multiple times, suggesting that there is nothing she can do to stop the world from ending (Neuman 1992:68-69). In these cases, not only is it individuals who are powerless, but often governments or society as well. This is different from the human impact frame, which offers personal examples of the effects of the news story in order to offer a human face to the news. Speaking of the South African Apartheid regime, human impact stories used the hanging of Benjamin Moloise to personify the conditions of Apartheid (Neuman 1992:69-70). These stories are often emotionally charged stories that, while not always explicitly framed in empathetic or compassionate terms, do “employ adjectives, personal vignettes and visuals that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy, sympathy or compassion from their audiences” (Neuman 1992:69). This is clearly applicable to the second of the two sequences from *Rwanda 94*, as well as the production as a whole. While not explicitly stated in Neuman’s study, it appears that Human Interest stories are more common in special reports or magazine news pieces. These frames can be applied to all of the sequences in *Rwanda 94*, and other documentary theatre pieces. However, since both video sequences are based on news media, these are especially appropriate frames to borrow in order to analyse them.

Following Neuman's typology of frames in the news, the story of the ghostly interruptions is portrayed as one of powerlessness. This is clear from the vocabulary used as well as the construction and selection of the examples shown during the news story. The initial five examples shown during the news story are from five different news sources, in different languages and countries, which suggests that all of society is helpless and that this is a wide spread phenomenon. In discussing these interruptions, Mme Bee Bee Bee's assistant, Paulo Dosantos, uses the powerlessness frame, by saying that the events happen "everywhere in the world" and to "all methods of communication"²⁸, implying that this is a powerful force which people cannot control. The power of these ghosts is also indicated by the difficulty that people have had in understanding what they say, with the character of Mme Bee Bee Bee saying "the meaning escapes me" and that an expert has come to "decode" the messages²⁹. A sense of this being supernatural is also created with a reference to "ghosts"³⁰. Towards the end of the segment, the character of Colette Bagiment notes the importance of how language has framed the discussion, saying that the term tragedy is usually used by journalists talking about the Rwandan genocide. The character continues by informing the audience that the word tragedy implies fate, inevitability and therefore powerlessness³¹. This confirms that language is a tool through which the ghostly apparitions, which are virtual characters, are framed. By following the framing devices of the news, the sequences are able to create a greater relationship with the real and thus create a

²⁸ Translated from « *partout dans le monde* » and « *tous les moyens de communication* ».

²⁹ Translated from « *la sens m'en échappe* » and « *déchiffrer* »

³⁰ Translated from « *fantômes* »

³¹ « *et qui dit tragédie dit fatalité* »

more convincing fictional dramatic world. This reinforces the relationship with the real discussed in chapter one, as well as the documentary nature of the production and thus frames the virtual characters with signs of reality. This suggests that the characters were once present in the ERW, even though this is not the case, and thus helps to create an *effet de présence*.

However, Claes de Vreese proposes that there can be levels of both narrative and frame. While the news story is one of powerlessness, the messages themselves are of human interest. A human interest story is designed to put a face to a news piece, which the interruptions do. The story of the boy, who is the third ghost to interrupt a news piece, has an emotionally charged story which is told to create feelings of outrage, empathy, sympathy or anger in the audience (Neuman 1992:69), and achieves this goal on stage with Mme Bibibi. This is also the intent of the production, according to the preface of the filmed version, which says:

From April to July 1994, during three months, a genocide of Tutsis and massacre of opposition Hutus occurred in Rwanda, leaving between 800 000 and 1 million dead. The third genocide of the 20th century officially recognized by the “international community” occurred under the gaze of the whole world. The general indifference and passivity, the desertion of UN Forces, the medias lies, brought the Groupov to create a piece of theatre to attempt to give a voice and face to the victims, while questioning the motivations and the methods of their assassination. The genocide destroyed hundreds of thousands of families, and those who survived are forever wounded. It is to them and the memory of their assassinated loved ones that this film is dedicated.

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³² Translated from « D'avril à juillet 1994, pendant trois mois, le génocide des Tutsi et le massacre des opposants politiques Hutu s'est déroulé au Rwanda, faisant entre 800.000 et un million de morts. Le troisième génocide du XXème siècle officiellement reconnu par la « communauté internationale » a eu lieu au vu et au su du monde entier. L'indifférence et la passivité générales, la désertion des forces des Nations Unies, les mensonges des médias, amenèrent le Groupov à proposer une création théâtrale tentant de rendre voix et visage aux victimes, tout en interrogeant les motifs et les processus

The production as a whole thus attempts to provide a face and an emotional connection to the massacres in Rwanda, and provides many of those faces through the projections. Similar to what Neuman calls a human interest story, the production is designed to visually and emotionally affect the viewer. The character of Mme Bee Bee Bee addresses the power of images and makes an emotional connection with the material, saying “if I quietly say a million dead, you show no surprise, but if I show a couple dozen bodies you are shocked. Why?”³³.

Discursively, the first video sequence is framed both by the preceding scene and by the production as a whole. The end of the preceding sequence has the cast on stage as a chorus, telling stories of the genocide, and ending together with the phrase “I am not in peace”³⁴ while closing their eyes³⁵. The closing of the eyes is an allusion to death, and each of the stories is that of a victim of the genocide. The chorus repeat different words in both French and Kinyarwanda, creating a dissonance, but together say “I am dead...They have killed me...I do not rest. I am not in peace”³⁶. This frames the ghostly interruptions of news items, the first of which is only 10 silent seconds after the final “*je ne suis pas en paix*”. This framing informs the audience as to who is interrupting the television broadcasts, as well as creates a relationship between the virtual and the stage spaces. This coherence between different spaces frames not only the characters, but also the different

de leur assassinat. Le génocide a détruit des centaines de milliers de familles, ceux que ont survécu en sont blessés pour toujours. C’est à eux et à la mémoire de leurs proches assassinés que ce film est dédié. »

³³ Translated from « Si je dis tranquillement un million de morts vous ne sursautez pas, mais si je montre quelques dizaines de corps vous vous révoltez ».

³⁴ « Je ne suis pas en paix ».

³⁵ See the first track of the DVD.

³⁶ Translated from « Je suis mort...Ils m’ont tué. Je ne dors pas. Je ne suis pas en paix. »

places within the FDW, supporting the creation of an internal reality within the production.

The second video sequence is not framed discursively by the preceding scene as directly as the first sequence. Rather, the sequence is framed by the whole production up to that point. However, this scene does reinforce the frames from the first video sequence, and can be used to confirm and nuance the analysis of the first sequence. The five hours of the production preceding the second sequence have several recurring themes. In several sequences, including the first video sequence, the fact that the events in Rwanda constituted genocide is insisted upon. There is also an emphasis on the similarity between Hutu and Tusti, groups which the production suggests were artificially divided by colonization, as well as the blindness of Europe and by extension the rest of the world, to the events in Rwanda. These recurring themes help to contextualize the final video sequence, and place the disturbing content within a fictional context in which screening the material makes sense, a news room. The argument between the characters over whether or not the footage is appropriate questions the role of journalism in the Rwandan genocide, and echoes the vocabulary question from the first mediated sequence. In non-theatrical considerations, it also gives an example of debates surrounding Holocaust art, and artistic endeavours to memorialize unimaginably horrific events.

This sequence confirms the visual framing from the first scene. The idea that the projected images are that of a TV screen is confirmed, both by the

characters and the usage of the screen. The characters all work in TV News, which is indicated during both video sequences with references to l'UER (Union européenne de radio-télévision or European Broadcasting Union, EBU in English). In the second sequence, the Editor and Dosantos both mention that they will watch the opening to the TV piece, at which point the projection screen displays the images. The screen is the same screen that was used in the first video sequence, confirming that the screen is a TV screen on both occasions. Finally, this was suggested at the end of the first video sequence when Mme Bee Bee Bee speaks directly to the camera, and her face is displayed on the screen above. The fact that her face is shown on the screen during this address "to you, our television audience"³⁷ is a confirmation that the screen is a television monitor, and therefore is also a confirmation of the viability of television framing devices within the production.

In his 2010 study Paul McIlvenny examines the uses of video in reality television. He lists four types are live video observation/monitoring, live video observation, live video relay from one space to another, video prompted recall and specialized uses such as video morphing, of which video relay and recall are relevant for *Rwanda 94*. In order to address the fact that these shows are often spliced and mounted after filming, which involves reshooting some segments, McIlvenny suggests that within a highly mediated production which is staged, produced and edited for a public audience, live video is video which is made interactionally relevant (McIlvenny 2010: 261-262). This is the case for the *Rwanda*

³⁷ « à vous, nos téléspectateurs »

94's interview segment and the interruption within the first video sequence. In order to make sense of the spaces, McIlvenny suggests that the programme needs to frame and legitimise the use of technology, often through voice over (McIlvenny 2010:270). In the case of *Rwanda 94*, Mme Bee Bee Bee does this by saying "is with us here tonight...from your research department in Butare"³⁸. This frames for the audience the relationship between the two places within the FDW, and indicates why one place is represented on the stage space, while the other is on the virtual space of the screen.

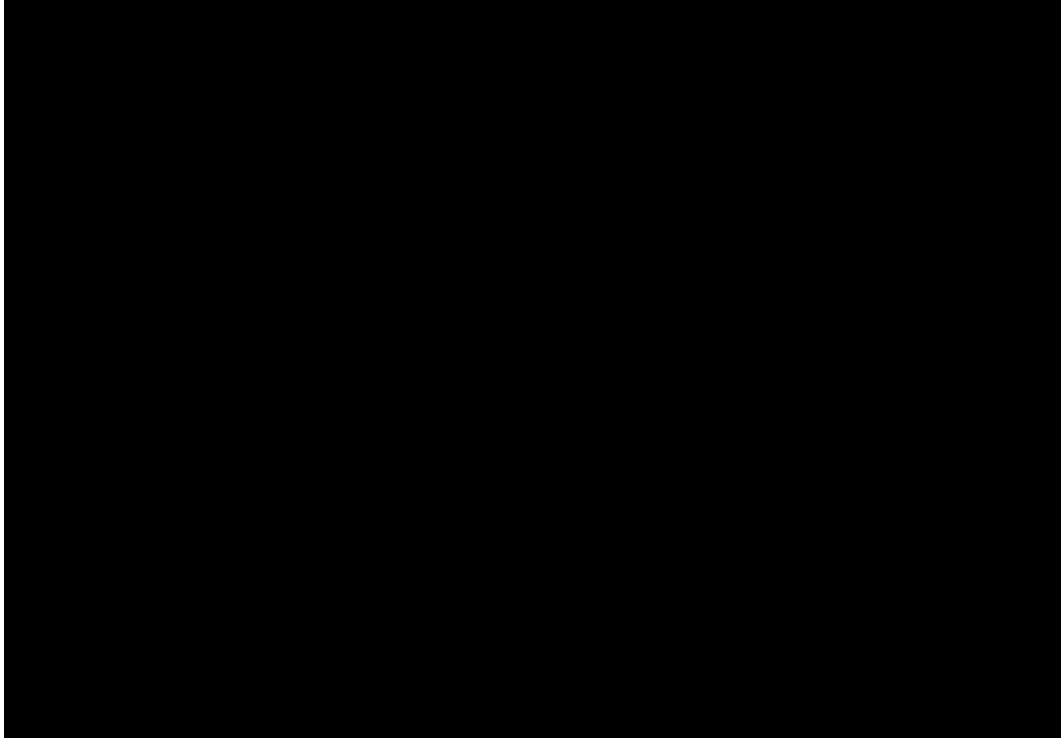


Image 8: The second video sequence in *Rwanda 94*, with the video footage on the screen above the characters.

³⁸ Translation of « est en liason avec nous...depuis votre département de recherche à Butare»

The visual framing of the screen and stage space also gives insight into the importance of the two spaces and the relationship to them. In the second sequence, the lighting on the stage is dimmed, focusing the attention onto the screen. The screen is visible above the actors, and the dim shapes of the actors and their characters reactions to the footage are seen mostly in silhouette. This is similar to dimming the audience space during a performance and is a sign that communication is one way, from the virtual space to the theatre space which includes both the stage and audience spaces at the same time. It reduces the people in both spaces to passive observers. In contrast, the first sequence has both the actors and the screen light and visible. This creates two spaces which are present before the audience. The characters move in both the stage and virtual spaces at the same time, suggesting that they are simultaneously present. This is reinforced by the characters speaking to each other across the frame of the spaces. The two spaces also appear to be the same size, and therefore of equal importance. Both usages recall Robert Lepage's comment that video in the theatre opens a window to other worlds (Dundjerovic 2002:179), as they give characters in Europe access to Rwanda, either for communication purposes or for observational purposes.

In *Rwanda 94*, the frames within different segments of the production are based on techniques from the ERW. This is coherent with the content of the production, which is rooted in events from the ERW and is not fictional. However, silence and negative space frame the individual sequences, marking the transition from one sequence to the next, and often one place to the next. This is similar to

the use of empty space to frame the characters in *Les Aveugles*, but on a different scale, and emphasises the importance of framing and negative space as a way of framing places. The use of blackness, or negative space, as a framing technique is highlighted in UBU's *Les Aveugles*.

2.3 Marleau's *Les Aveugles* and negative space

The most striking aspect of the visual framing of *Les Aveugles* is the darkness into which the audience is plunged when they enter hall. There is enough light to keep everyone safe, but not enough to see around the space. This effectively renders the audience blind, not unlike the 12 Maeterlinck characters who are the only visual stimuli during the 45 minute performance. Following a spatial logic which will be discussed below, this also puts the audience within a place which attempts to subvert the physical space by making the soundscape more important than the visual. In *Les Cahiers du théâtre français* published by the Centre National des Arts, where he was artistic director and presented *Les Aveugles*, Denis Marleau says that this was intentional, in order to foster a sympathy between the audience and the characters (in Lefebvre 2004:2). Féral suggests that an interaction between the character and the audience can foester a relationship between them and is one of the ways to create an effect of presence, (Féral 2012:12) If the audience can be affected by the mediated characters, it becomes easier for the audience to believe they also share a presence with the projections. This also responds to one of the difficulties in staging *Les Aveugles*

according to scholar Henry Rose, who suggests that an actor-less production of the text would not engage the audience “with understanding and sympathy” (Rose 1974: 113-114).

Dark, empty space is a form of negative space. Originally used in print layout design to refer to the empty white space between different parts of the text and other printed elements, the term is now employed to refer to the empty space between objects, whether that is white space on a page or the empty, negative space between two objects in a room. Called the “lungs of a good design” by Swiss typographer Jan Tschichold, negative space can provide as much meaning as the positive space, while also providing it with a contextual frame (Wong 2010). Writing about poster design, Bang Wong suggests that a generous whitespace frame “will usually draw the eyes” to the framed positive space, indicating an important element. I propose to consider the theatre space of *Les Aveugles* as negative space, and examine how absence can create presence by focusing the audience’s attention on the projected characters.

In the case of *Les Aveugles*, the audience enters the darkened hall once the show has started. Other than the audience, benches and the faces of the characters, nothing is visible in the theatre. The stage space, which the audience faces, is both empty and absent. Initially the theatre space is filled by sounds, produced by audio speakers which surround both the audience and the stage, and the audience watches the twelve characters. Rather than a visual set, an audible set is created, with the sounds of a river, leaves rustling etc. This setting confirmed

by the characters who, once awake, directly refer to the sounds as part of their immediate environment, especially the baby and the dog who are never seen but are audibly physically present. Aside from the masks onto which the faces are projected, there is nothing visibly present in the stage space, leaving the stage space as negative space. Recalling Féral's suggestion that framing creates units which group like objects together, and that negative space can be used to frame important parts of an image or scene, this creates a coherent FDW place in which the visual faces are important. Further, their juxtaposition with absence suggests a presence for the virtual characters. In a review of Marleau's work, Ludovic Fouquet suggests that other senses were more acute and that the theatrical tension between the audience and the non-existent actor was enhanced by the use of selective senses, specifically hearing, rather than the usual sensorial presence of the actor on the stage (2004:158-59)³⁹. Both Yana Meerzon and Denis Marleau have noted this effect as well, suggesting that it shifts the responsibility for establishing presence for the characters from the actors to the audience members (Meerzon 2008: 204; Fouquet 2004: 158). This occurs because it is no longer the actor's job to interest or seduce the audience and thus create presence, but incumbent on the audience to allow themselves be taken by the production with an intellectually active, and not passive, reaction.

³⁹ Translated and paraphrased from : "Il m'a semblé, en effet, que l'écoute était alors plus fine, l'ouïe et la vue mieux préparées à cette réception théâtrale d'un genre nouveau, qui nous met en tension alors que l'acteur n'est pas là, mais dans un espace sonore, lumineux, scénographique, qui bénéficie lui des présences habituelles! [...] L'acteur est au plus près, mais surtout il est pleinement dans son image et dans sa voix. Il n'est que spectre, mais un spectre pleinement charnel, d'une absence totalement présente.

Discursively, negative space sets the location of the show. A review in the journal *Jeu* describes it as an ancient forest which is exceedingly dark with dead leaves and deathly trees⁴⁰ (Vigeant 2002: 152) a description in which all three elements are important parts of the frame. The forest is a dark and unknown environment, something which Maurice Maeterlinck and Denis Marleau both emphasise at the start of the text. *Les Aveugles*, both in its original form and Marleau's version, depict twelve blind people who are trapped between life and death, in a sort of nowhere purgatory state. The FDW location described in the review is in keeping with the long stage direction at the start of Maurice Maeterlinck's text :

A very ancient northern forest, eternal of aspect, beneath a sky profoundly starred. In the midst, and towards the depths of night, a very old priest is seated wrapped in a wide black back. His head and the upper part of his body, slightly thrown back and mortally still, are leaning against the bole of an oak tree, huge and cavernous. [...] Not far from the priest, a cluster of long and sickly daffodils blossoms in the night. It is extraordinarily dark in spite of the moonlight that here and there strives to dispel for a while the bloom of the foliage (in Thomas 1911: 46)

This text frames the play which follows, and gives the reader a context in which the action takes place. As there is no visual set for *Les Aveugles*, the aural set creates the frame similarly to the opening stage direction. The idea of being surrounded by black is present both in the characters who are visually isolated by the black, negative space, and in the audience who can see only the outlines of the other spectators and are thus isolated within the black space. The mood of a dark,

⁴⁰ Translated from : « Une forêt obscure, point de la mort, isolée dans le noir »

gloomy place is recreated by whispering voices, a bell clanging in the distance and a continual river sound.

The original text foregrounds death in the opening stage direction, by placing the dead body of the guide in the middle of the blind. In a review of this and UBU works, Ludovic Fouquet notes that *Les Aveugles* is a “[reflection] on absence and the presence of video” (2004: 154), which is expanded to a reflection on the possible life of video on the stage. This is similar to questions posed by the playwright Maeterlinck about *Les Aveugles* and possibly performing the piece without the presence of live actors. “Perhaps the live being must be removed completely from the stage. The human would be replaced by a shadow, a projection of symbolic forms or a being who would appear to be alive without having life. I don’t know, but the absence of man seems to be important ⁴¹ (in Lefebvre 2004: 3)”. This connects to Marleau’s work which questions the western theatrical form and its tendency to focus on the actor and the acting rather than the text (Krysinski 2003: 22). Marleau has consciously removed life from the characters, so that everything the audience can see is a representation of death. This emphasis on death, which is both a part of Marleau’s staging and the original text, not only frames the characters, but also the visual elements of the production.

However, there are some symbols of life in *Les Aveugles*, and these are framed differently by the projections. In his dramaturgical analysis of the text *The Sightless (Les Aveugles)*, Henry Rose discusses many of the elements which, in

⁴¹ Translated from « Il faudrait peut-être écarter entièrement l’être vivant de la scène. L’être humain sera-t-il remplacé par une ombre, une projection de formes symboliques ou un être qui aurait les allures de la vie sans avoir la vie? Je ne sais; mais l’absence de l’homme me semble indispensable »

Marleau's staging, are not projected. He suggests that the river is the river of life, and he notes that the characters appear to have crossed or exited the river (Rose 1974: 117), suggesting that they are dead. The characters say that the dog is from the asylum, and therefore the dog can be understood as a sign of life and as a possible way for the characters, for whom Marleau uses projections, to return to life, except that they eschew the possibility and choose to remain in the forest. Rose also notes that daffodils are a flower associated with spring, and thus the renewal and rebirth which follows winter (Rose 1974:127). These flowers are given by one character to another, and at that time "the night-birds fly away" (Rose 1974: 127). These night-birds are carrion birds and are symbols of pain, evil and death, which the "sickly daffodil blossoms" are able to stave away, even if they cannot grant life to the characters (Rose 1974:122; Maeterlinck 1899:176). Unlike the characters, who are dying, Marleau chooses to represent these aurally, framing them apart from the characters. These symbols of life are placed within the aural space and are thus framed differently from the characters who are dying and are visual. While there are two different spaces, an aural space and a visual space, which represent a single dramatic place, that of the forest, in this case neither space is a physical space but rather both are virtual ones.

Unlike *Rwanda 94* which displays two dramatic places in the same stage space, *Les Aveugles* has a single dramatic place. This allows the production to completely subvert the theatre space, by transforming both the audience and stage spaces. This is indicated to the audience by the soundscape of the production, which creates an atmosphere and has the characters conversing with each other,

indicating that they are together, and also that the audience is there as well. That the audience is in the same space as the characters may help to create a relationship between them, something which Marleau acknowledged when describing the show. This also subverts the presence of the audience by placing them in the same space as the characters, and helps make the virtual appear to be presence. However, in both cases, the dramatic places are defined with negative space. In *Rwanda 94*, the screen is raised above the stage space, leaving an empty (or negative) space between the European TV studio and the locations presented on the screen. In *Les Aveugles*, the dramatic place is all negative space, and this includes both the stage space and the audience space.

Further, the productions can be framed contextually by familiarity with the artists styles and motivations. The questions on presence which both Marleau and Maeterlinck appear to pose in their work contextualize the absence of actors on the stage. This contextualization helps the audience understand the questions of presence/absence which Marleau's projected characters pose. As an artistic group, Groupov tries to examine what is really true, information which helps to create expectations for the audience attending their work which examines the truth of events in Rwanda. Also a certain level of knowledge of the events in Rwanda are important for understanding *Rwanda 94* and the events discussed, allowing the audience to understand the projected characters and create an *effet de présence*.

2.4 Live Projections

Marvin Carlson highlights the importance of live versus pre-recorded video as it can affect time and spatial relationships. Live video is “a medium of present action” (Carlson 2003: 620) which recalls that the stage place is imbedded within a larger FDW which, for the characters, continues into the off-stage space. It is different from pre-recorded video, especially in the ways live video affects time and space, and thus it requires slightly different framing technics. Circle of Eleven’s touring production *Leo* and the Ottawa Shakespeare Company’s *Julius Caesar* both demonstrate this. In theatre, virtual spaces are framed to set the boundary between virtual and physical, but the frame also serves to define the relationship between the physical and virtual. Through the frame, images can appear to be projected live, but actually be pre-recorded. In some instances, the audience may see the actor on the screen and the stage at the same time, or is given some other indication that the filming/projection is live. However, both *Rwanda 94* and *Les Aveugles* are examples which focus on images after they have been pre-recorded by the video camera and it appears these images are live, but are not cases where both the source and the image are visible at the same time. For this chapter, live video will be video which is framed as being projected live, even if that liveness is an illusion. However, two examples where the use of live video can be confirmed will be examined as well as the recurring case studies above in order to see how liveness may affect framing devices.



Image 9: *Leo*, with actor Tobias Wegner in the right hand set and the projection in the left.

Implicit in this part of the discussions are questions of “liveness” and how physical or temporal presence frames projections. At first glance, this seems self-evident, live video is footage which is captured by the camera and displayed on the screen at the same time, and thus the subject of the video is temporally present. This would be a process which moves the images spatially but not temporally. However, as Paul McIlvenny notes, the way clips are mounted within a highly mediated and scripted performance can make something which was not live appear that way, something which he refers to as interactionally relevant, which would apply to the interview in the first *Rwanda 94* sequence. This is generally done by framing the video as live, and by having the physical interact with the virtual, hence the term interactionally. The work of Philip Auslander is also important here, both questioning what “live” is and whether “live” matters. Auslander suggests that live is neither superior nor always the authentic or original

version. In discussing rock music, Auslander suggests that rock is, ontologically, a recorded medium and that live rock concerts are imperfect recreations of the original songs or album. Physical presence in rock music does not mean authentic. However, in law, presence is seen as primordial, and attempts at mediated trials have been rejected both by the participants and by the law (Auslander 1999). The attempts at mediated trials are interesting because presence by closed-circuit TV, either by the defendants or witnesses, is acceptable, but only if the judge, jury and defendant are able to view “the witness as he or she testifies” (Maryland v. Craig in Auslander 1999: 124). Auslander interprets this ruling by indicating the importance of the word “as”, and the implication that presence must be simultaneous. This is the opposite of rock music, even though both are quasi-theatrical events. What becomes relevant then is the context and framing: whether the video is framed as live or framed as pre-recorded. 4D Art demonstrates this by blending pre-recorded and live video feeds while framing both as live. Both the live and the pre-recorded are interactionally live, and I would agree with Auslander that the relevance of liveness is dependent on the framing. However, none of the recurring examples in this thesis have the source and the image on the stage at the same time. Visual framing becomes important in these instances, and to examine if liveness matters more than framing, and the importance of coherence within the frame, I will examine the Ottawa Shakespeare Company’s 2012 production of *Julius Caesar* and the Nouveau Théâtre Expérimental’s presentation of Circle of Eleven’s *Leo*, also in 2012⁴². These two productions use live video feeds which display both the

⁴² For a short clip of these examples, please see the enclosed CD.

stage where the video is filmed and the screen on which the character is projected. Thus, the audience is both highly aware that the video is live video, and of the temporal/physical presence of the projection, which is therefore framed as being live.

Like *Rwanda 94, Leo* presents the audience with both a live and a virtual character at the same time. However, in this case it is the same character who is being captured by the camera and his image is present in the virtual space of a screen via a live camera feed. The camera is suspended above the audience, although visible if an audience member looks for it, as is the video projector. The stage space is divided into two, with the stage right space occupied by a screen (virtual place) and the stage left space has a simple set (ERW). This example demonstrates the importance of schizo-visibility and framing, because what is coherent in one place does not make sense in the other, because the image has been altered. The image is separated from the source by a 90 degrees clockwise turn, so that the floor of the box becomes the stage right wall, and the stage left wall becomes the floor in the virtual world. This change in meaning of an action is the importance that Schaffer assigns to schizophonia. Schaffer suggests that the importance of schizophonia⁴³ as a theoretical term is that if the sound can be separated from its source, it can also be altered to represent something it is not. Schaffer gives the example of slowing down the sound with biting an apple so that it sounds like a tree falling in the forest. In the case of *Leo*, the image has

⁴³ Term coined by Dr. R. Murray Schaffer to denote the separation of a sound from its source, usually through technology, and the possible shifts in meaning associated with this separation. This includes any changes in the sound possible because of this split, such as changes in context, playback speed, editing, etc.

been altered (turned) so that gravity now pulls stage right, rather than down. In this example, it is important to see both the stage and virtual space in order to see the relationship between them. In this case, liveness is important as it highlights the alterations between the two spaces and enhances the effect of presence through the audience's ability to see both the original and virtual versions simultaneously.

During scene V,v of the OSC's *Julius Caesar*, when Caesar's ghost haunts Brutus, the stage space is darkened while the virtual space is present. A stylized version of Caesar's face virtually presented to Brutus, and the actor is visible on the side of the stage with a motion capture device which is recording him live. The stage space is darkened, however the motion capture device⁴⁴ requires enough light that it can see the body, allowing the audience to see the actor as well. In this case, the stage space represents Brutus's tent (FDW), where Brutus is when Caesar's ghost appears to him, as well as the ERW of the actor who is being recorded. Like *Leo*, the stage space simultaneously represents two places. However, in this case liveness does not enhance the effect of presence. It does still highlight the differences between the physical and virtual spaces, but one of the principal differences is the presence of the actor. Féral notes this danger when discussing the work of 4D Art, suggesting that the comparison between live actor and projection often highlights the lack of presence (Féral 2012:16) While this critique may not be fair in cases where the virtual is discursively framed as mental

⁴⁴ I believe this is the camera system for an Xbox connect, but it essentially functions as a motion capture device.

space, a dream or hallucination, I believe it is the case when a FDW virtual space is placed within the same frame as a ERW space.

The important difference between OSC's *Julius Caesar* and the other productions already discussed in this thesis is the way they are framed, specifically the purpose of the frame. *Leo* clearly frames the virtual and stage spaces as separate, and there is nothing which crosses the frame. 4D Art, which is not analysed in this chapter, does not frame the virtual apart from the physical, and has the two spaces in constant interaction. In this case, a frame would be counter-productive, as the virtual is intended to be a constituent part of the dramatic place represented on stage, just simply another facet of it. However, the source and the image are in different spaces, the source is offstage while the images are onstage. *Julius Caesar* does not visually frame the virtual as distinct from the physical (4D Art), nor does it frame the source separate from the image (*Leo*). There is no legitimization of the technological intervention, which McIlvenny suggests can frame video usage in scripted and highly mediated productions, and little if any textual or discursive framing (McIlvenny 2010:270). The use of the unframed virtual, as a part of the internal reality of the FDW, is like that of 4D Art and the FDW retains its internal coherence. However, the ability to see the source and the technology, which belong to the ERW, within the stage space, hinders the transformation of the stage space into the FDW place and breaks the illusion that the effect of presence requires. In my experience, it is like watching a magic trick, but having someone explain how it is done while you are watching the magician perform the trick, the mechanism of the trick does not belong within the world of the

illusion and therefore breaks the illusion. This Brechtian framing technique, which exposes the theatricality of the performance, seems out of place in an otherwise realistic production. Framing is important because it focuses the attention to what the audience needs to see in order to believe the illusion; it organises the places within the FDW and indicates the relationships between places and spaces in both the FDW and ERW.

2.5 Conclusions

Frames serve two purposes, to visually delineate spaces and to provide the context which turns a space into a place. Visual framing devices can include black borderborders or lines, as well as empty space. Contextual devices can include the juxtaposition of different spaces or sequences, dialogue or narration and other sources of information available through the production. Frames can help create an *effet de présence* by grouping together like objects or characters into groupings which make sense within the FDW of the production.

In both *Les Aveugles* and *Rwanda 94*, the spatial notions which are inherent to schizo-visibility and schizophonia help to frame the virtual characters. While these are common techniques in modern media, and are the basis for television, it is still an important tool in analysing the spatial dynamics of the theatre. In *Rwanda 94*, which shows two locations at the same time, the visual is split from its source in order to allow images which are from Rwanda to be displayed in a TV studio in Europe. Paul McIlvenny's remark that the production needs to explain or legitimize the use of technology is also relevant. In the case of *Rwanda 94*, this explanation

is explicit, with the character's dialogue explaining the different locations for the audience. Another example of the same techniques *Leo* uses schizo-visibility to alter how gravity functions for the projected character. This is the premise of the production, but it is never explicitly stated, as the production instead relies on the audience to see that the image has been turned.

Les Aveugles and the Ottawa Shakespeare Company's *Julius Caesar* do not use the same contextual or visual frames as *Leo* and *Rwanda 94*. Instead of binding the virtual characters within a rectangular screen, *Les Aveugles* and *Julius Caesar* allow the virtual and physical characters to exist within a single frame. This allows the characters to interact directly with each other, without justifying how the characters are crossing a frame. In these examples, the contextual framing devices become more important than the visual one.

In *Les Aveugles*, the dialogue frames the characters as well as the setting of the play. The audience is told that the various sounds represent the bells of the *hospice* where the characters live or the sound of a river. However, and more importantly, contextual framing comes from knowledge of the artists involved. Both the original author, Maeterlinck, and the director Denis Marleau have experimented with removing life from the stage in order to have actors who are completely the character, and thus avoiding the Schechner's 'not-not I'. As the characters and plot are, in the original text, very static, the lack of motion in the projections helps to embody the characters, and to create characters which are coherent with both the

desires of the original playwright and with the questions of presence and absence which Marleau's work explores.

Finally, based on the work of 4D Art, as well as the comparison of OSC's *Julius Caesar*, *Rwanda 94* and Circle of Eleven's *Leo*, it can be said that liveness is not a key factor in creating an *effet de présence*. Paul McIlvenny's concept of interactionally relevant, the appearance that something is live due to the way segments have been juxtaposed, is more relevant, as it can make pre-recorded video appear live. This occurs by framing the pre-recorded video in ways which allow the character to interact with the other frames, even if these interactions are highly choreographed or contrived, as is the case in 4D Art and *Rwanda 94*. However, the appearance of liveness does help to create an *effet de présence* for the character, as it suggests that there is a physically present version in front of a camera, simply in another space. In the case of *Leo* and *Julius Caesar*, this appearance is confirmed by the production, as the audience can see the camera and the original as well as the projected characters.

Chapter 3: (Inter)actions

3.1 Introduction and theories

Having discussed, in previous chapters, ways in which virtual characters can be related to the real world and draw presence from that relationship as well as how virtual characters are framed, this final chapter looks at how the actions of virtual characters can contribute to an effect of presence. This includes interactions between physical and virtual characters, such as occur in *La Belle et la Bête*, as well as between virtual characters and their environment, as is the case in *Les Aveugles*. Such actions are of interest because they are present solely in the FDW, while in the ERW it is a actor interacting with something absent. This chapter explores how interactions validate and confirm the *effet de présence* of a virtual character.

Philip Auslander's analysis of video within the American legal system is a useful starting point for this discussion, as it demonstrates that presence and liveness⁴⁵ are related to interactivity as well as the potential for action in the heat of the moment. While the theatre stage and the court of law are not the same, courts of law are theatrical in nature, and do fit within a broad definition of a theatrical event. It is a set group of people getting together (lawyers, defendants, witnesses) in a pre-defined place (the court room) to communicate a message (the testimony

⁴⁵ The quality of "live" or simultaneous performance which makes it distinct from recorded performance. Liveness is the temporal partner to presence. If presence is considered as being strictly being in the same place as someone/thing, liveness can be considered as being at the same time as someone/thing, although not necessarily in the same place.

or evidence) to an audience (the judge and the jury). Like the theatre, live presence is considered essential to legal procedure (Auslander 1999: 113).

In studies of Pre-recorded Video Trials (PRVT), it was found that the verdicts, damages awarded and perception of the truthfulness of witness and other aspects of the trial did not change significantly (Auslander 119). However PRVT never became common practice in the USA, even though technical mediation has become increasingly common in society and other facets of legal practice. The acceptance of live, interactive video feeds and video evidence, such as Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), computerized or video re-enactments, without an acceptance of pre-recorded video depositions suggests that there is something different about live recordings with which the courtroom can interact compared to a straight playback of a tape or video file. Someone who is presented in a trial on a screen but can react to questions from the lawyers or judge is considered to be more present than someone who is presented via pre-recorded video to the same lawyers, judge and jury. For a range of reasons, PRVTs have never become a widely accepted practice. In the USA, this is partly because of the 6th amendment to the US Constitution, the so-called confrontation clause. This clause states that the accused will be “confronted with the witnesses against him”. However, there still have been cases of video depositions which respect the confrontation clause and are not accepted in court, affirming the “preference for live testimony” (Stores v State 827 in Auslander :123). This suggests the importance of the video’s interactivity. Ruling in Stores v State, Justice Connor writes that this is because “something could happen in ‘the maniacally charged present’ of the trial that did not

happen on the videotape” (in Auslander 1999: 124). This indicates that what is important may not be the persons’ physical presence in the room, but the ability to react in real time. This recalls Richard Schechner’s definition of presence, which is based on the risk that something might change during the representation and that the actor is the master of that risk. It is important to remember that, while both are theatrical events, a court of law in an environment in which consequences are not suspended⁴⁶.

Giving testimony virtually is something which is common in legal and other settings, such as parliamentary setting. In the previous chapter, *Rwanda 94*’s use of remote interviewing conventions from TV news were discussed, and are inherently similar to the video testimony given in a court case or a parliamentary committee. However, *Rwanda 94*’s video interview has the video-character pre-recorded, although it appears to be interactive or live⁴⁷. Paul McIlvenny calls this interactionally relevant⁴⁸, a term which emphasises the importance of reacting in order to be considered present. While the difference between interactionally relevance and a live video feed is minimal from the audience’s perspective, a distinction between these two needs to be made. This will be done if only because, a live-projected character is able to react and interact with the physically present in ways which a pre-recorded character is unable to do, especially when reacting to changes on stage.

⁴⁶ Recent interactive performances, such as *Sleep No More* or *White Rabbit Red Rabbit*, do question the suspension of consequences in the theatre; however these reality theatre producing mechanisms are not at play in any of the cases discussed in this thesis.

⁴⁷ News broadcasts do this and refer to it as double ender or a pop-in questions.

⁴⁸ Interactionally relevant is when footage or sequences are cut and arranged to appear to be interacting live, even if they are not.

This chapter will discuss the interaction between physical and virtual elements, focusing on *La Belle et la Bête* and *Les Aveugles*, in order to examine how these interactions can create or confirm the *effet de présence* created for projected characters. It could be said that basis for this line of inquiry is that if two characters can interact with each other, they are equally present. This will start with *La Belle et la Bête*, in which the virtual relies on the physical for its presence. In *La Belle et la Bête*, the virtual is not only dependant on the physical because of the framing, but also due to the way in which the actions are conceived. This compares the Tupac hologram at Coachella to the holograms in 4D Art. A secondary discussion of *La Belle et la Bête* follows, looking at the difference between live video and pre-recorded video interactions, in order to examine if they act the same way. This leads to a discussion about the importance of a character being portrayed by an actor or another object, such as a puppet. The chapter closes with a discussion of audience interaction and ways in which passive audience interaction can create presence, focusing of Freud's concept of the uncanny as applied to *Les Aveugles*.

3.2 *La Belle et la Bête* and live versus pre-recorded video

In the theatre, actors can be interchanged without altering the character they portray on stage. The work of 4D Art suggests that it is now possible, in certain contexts, to replace an actor with a projection. However, Féral points out that the characteristics of these projections are not the same, specifically in the case of 4D Art's holograms. While the characters appear to be animated in 3 dimensions, they

appear hollow. While this is true, the characters are framed differently than the live actors on stage, reflecting the difference between them. The virtually present characters are designed to be the physical character's mental place and are therefore dependant on the physical characters for their existence. This was, however, not the case for Coachella's Tupac hologram, which was both framed and behaved differently from the 4D Art's holograms, in spite of being technologically very similar. While both the 4D Art holograms and Tupac exist on a transparent screen within the FDW's physical space, the holographic Tupac appeared both with and without Snoop Dogg on stage and the two interacted as equals on the stage, which the 4D art holograms do not do. This accounts for some of the difference in the audience reaction to the two events. Based on the online discussions previously mentioned, audiences reacted as if Tupac was really present. Since Tupac was on stage for a shorter period of time, it is likely as well that the 'wow' factor of the 'trick' did not have time to wear off. In an article published in the online HipHopWired magazine, C Vernon Coleman states this clearly saying "Half of the awe of the moment was inspired by the element of surprise" (Coleman 2012). In retrospect, people have described the image as distorted, creepy and flat (2D), although these descriptions have gotten far less attention on the internet. However, these comments echo Féral's critique of Pepper's ghost holographic characters.

More important than the fact that Tupac appeared on stage alone, which the projected characters in 4D Arts do not do, is the way the characters behave once they are on the stage. The pre-recorded characters in 4D Art act as a foil to the

physically present characters, allowing for greater character development and character exposition to the audience. Belle's first conversations with her sister allow the audience to understand that she is an artist from a well-off family, used to being pampered, has lost her mother and has been depressed since that loss. These interactions establish presence for the sister. Belle and her sister are able to converse, and since they physically look different and call each other sisters, it is understood that Belle is not simply talking to herself. However, the interaction also confirms the contextual framing. In the scene, Belle tires of her sister's criticisms and tells her sister to "be nice this time". The sister then reappears and is complementary towards Belle's art. This interaction between them suggests that, while Belle and her sister are not the same character, the sister is dependent on Belle in order to create an *effet de présence* (see image 7). In the case of the Bête, this foil is physical as well as emotional. The virtual manifestations of the Bête are of a younger version of himself, one who has not been disfigured (see image 5). These apparitions torment the Bête, reminding him of his loss, and visibly shaking what little confidence he has. In contrast, the virtual version of the Bête is bolder, attacking the physical Bête and seducing Belle (See image 10). Like the character of the sister, the younger version of the Bête is a memory, and is only present on stage with and in contrast to another character.



Image 10: The virtual version of the Bête (Peter James) starts to seduce Belle (Bénédicte Décary) in her fantasy.

Just as there is a visual difference between the physical and virtual characters, there is also a difference in the interactions between two physical characters and those between a physical and a virtual character in 4D Art. When a physical character interacts with another physical character, the interaction is reciprocal. Both characters provoke and react to each other, both physically and verbally. This suggests an interactional equality between the characters. However, when a virtual character and a physical character interact, the actions tend to be posed by the virtual character, and the physical character reacts to these actions. For example, both sisters speak⁴⁹ significantly more to Belle than she does to either of the sisters. Belle then follows a projection of a horse (see Image 11), but never affects the horse. Later, when she fantasizes about the possibility of physical intimacy with Bête, she reacts to his virtual touches but does not make her own seductive advances (image 10). There are times when this difference in interaction

⁴⁹ The actors have microphones, and thus the recorded play-back sound of the holograms and the sound of the actors both come from speakers and appear to come from the same place.

is not present, such as Bête shattering a virtual mirror or Bête fights with a younger version of himself, but as a general rule the virtual character poses the act to which a physical character reacts.

This difference serves two purposes: it further reinforces the framing of the virtual characters as being separate from the physical characters, as well as establishes presence for the virtual characters. Recalling the definition of presence as the quality of a character's representation in which the audience takes interest, the fact that the actions are posed by the virtual characters helps keep the interest, focus and attention of the audience on the projected character. This is because the projected character is more important than the physical one because he is at the center of and integral to the action. Even when the physical Bête fights with his younger self and the Bête is hitting the projected version, he is reacting to the presence of the projected character. Also, the projected character appears to strike at Bête first, initiating the fight. This keeps the audience's attention on the projected character, since they are at the center of the action on stage. Given the working definition of presence, having the projected characters at the centre of the action helps focus the audience's attention on them, thus creating an *effet de présence*.



Image 11: Physically present Belle (Bénédicte Décary) walks behind a projected horse through projected brambles.

Another characteristic of the interaction between the physical and virtual characters is that it limits the risk involved, and therefore lowers the threshold for presence, according to Richard Schechner, which he believes comes from the risk of having a live performance, and the possibility for something to go different or wrong (in Féral 2012:37; Schechner 2001:308). This is because the movements of the actors are highly choreographed. In the master class given in Boston by Lemieux-Pilon, they said that the actors cannot see the projections while they are interacting with them. This leads to a more dance like motion for the actors when they are interacting with the projections, as the actor is relying on timing and the aural environment rather than visual cues from his/her scene partner. This elevates the risk involved in the performance and the physical actors do not have the leeway to react to any changes since the projected characters cannot adapt to changes or errors made by the human actors. It is worth noting that this change not only affects the projected characters, but the actor's characters as well. The actor

is no longer responding to the FDW or the audience, but to sounds which bridge the gap between the two worlds. Therefore, if there is an error in the projection, the actor would not know and would not be able to compensate for this error, unless there was a corresponding error in the soundscape⁵⁰

The different examples discussed above are all cases where a physical character interacts with, or more accurately reacts to, a pre-recorded character. However, these observations change when the character is projected from a live video stream. There are a few moments when this happens in *La Belle et la Bête*, although the audience is not aware of the difference, unless they have attended a talk back or other discussion with the artists. The clearest example of live projections in *La Belle et la Bête* is about a third of the way through the production, when Belle arrives at Bête's castle (Image 12). There are statues which watch Belle, one outside and one inside the castle. According to Victor Pilon, these statues are projected from a live camera feed back stage on which the actor of the Bête can watch the stage space. Spatially, this creates a paradox where-in the stage space is within the back-stage space (on the monitors) and the backstage space is within the stage space (through the live-projected character). More interestingly, however, is that live projections behave differently than pre-recorded projections.

The statues in *La Belle et la Bête* are more passive than the pre-recorded characters, and react rather than initiating actions. This is for two reasons. Most

⁵⁰ If a projector was to be bumped or the image shifted position for any reason, the actor would not know, but if the sound and image cut out or froze, the actor would be aware that something was wrong.

importantly, while these are projected and moving images of the human form, they are not characters as much as set pieces. There is an element of character-like behaviour, because the Bête is able to observe Belle through them, like a telepathic nanny-cam. They are also character-like because they appear to move autonomously, but they do not advance the plot, they do not speak and the actions the statues pose are passive. While they may not be proper characters, these statues do display characteristics similar to other live projected characters from productions outside the consideration of this thesis. Instances of live projected characters are able to be less assertive in their interactions partly because of the time delays associated with the technology which intervenes to make the projections possible. These delays, although less than a second, affect the inherent liveness of the projected character and therefore limit the character's capabilities for interaction⁵¹.

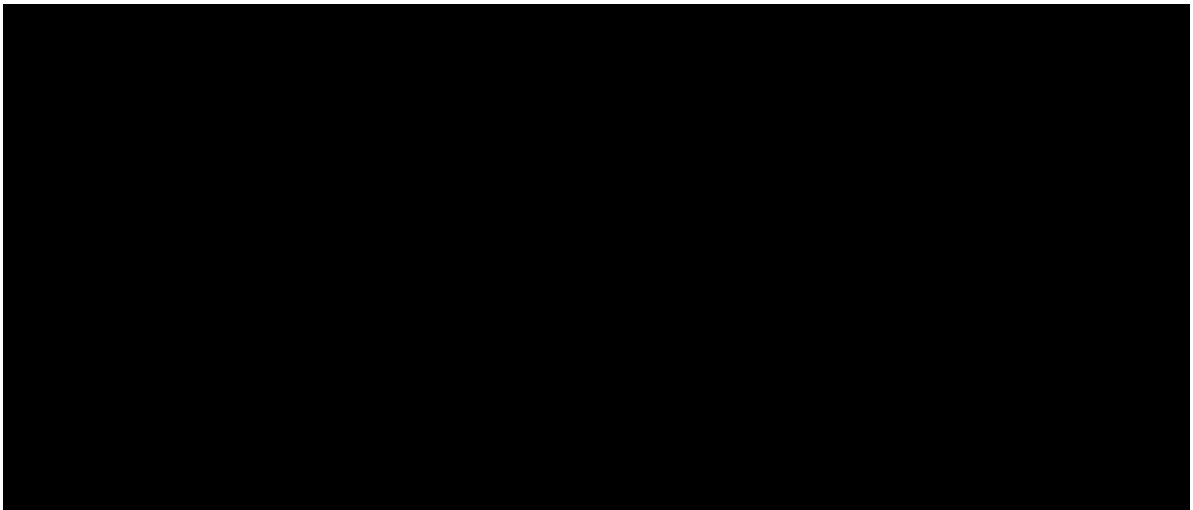


Image 12: A live projection of Bête doesn't engage directly with Belle.

⁵¹ Similar delays are present in *Leo* and can be seen in track 7 of the attached DVD.

In 4D Art's *La Belle et la Bête*, there are actually three types of characters: physically present actors, pre-recorded virtual characters and live virtual characters. These three types are based on their interactions, specifically with the physically present, and these actions are limited by the technology involved in the reproduction of the character. Interactions which involve a physical actor and a pre-recorded projection have pre-recorded characters which are more assertive than the physically present actor, while live-projected characters are less assertive than physically present actors. Sometimes this means that the physical characters are only reacting to the words or actions of the physical characters, while at other times the physical character appears to ignore the virtual one. This may be due to the limits of the technology and its ability to adapt to changes on stage, however it is also inscribed into the logic of the production. The physically present characters exist in the present and are remembering or imagining the pre-recorded characters. Therefore the present is reacting to the past, while the projected characters belonging to the set (live projected characters) react to the present.

3.3 *Les Aveugles*

In certain circumstances, it is possible to replace the actor with a projection, the way an actor can be replaced with a puppet, which is a physically present object that remains lifeless outside of the FDW. While the techniques are different, projected characters are not dissimilar from puppets, especially in the case of *Les Aveugles*. The twelve masks in *Les Aveugles* are unanimated and lifeless until

manipulated by a projection/projectionist, like a puppet without a puppeteer. In a 2008 article published in *Semiotica*, Yana Meerzon elaborates on the link between puppetry and *Les Aveugles*, as staged by Marleau. She notes that in Marleau's show he attempts to create "a troubling relationship" with the audience, thereby implicating the audience and creating an "emotional and intellectual bond with a 40-minute video installation" (Meerzon 2008: 204). She also suggests that sound and the character's interactions with the aural environment create a "secondary fictional world" which is stronger than the visual environment (Meerzon 2008: 208). This echoes Ludovic Fouquet's observation that hearing is the primary sense with which the production engages. These both note the creation of multiple spaces and two unique sets of interactions, one between the visual and aural spaces and one between the stage space and the audience space. How these two sets of interactions create presence for the FDW, and by extension the characters, will be discussed below, starting with the interaction between visual and aural space.

Ordinarily in theatre, actors interact with each other and with objects on the stage to transform the space into the FDW. What is water in a cup in the ERW becomes a poison when Claudius puts it on Laertes' sword or when Gertrude dies from drinking it in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The audience sees the different actors move and interact on stage, and it is through these sights that context and transformational meaning is provided to create a place. However, in *Les Aveugles*, there is no visual interaction aside from a few facial movements, and unlike *La Belle et la Bête*, there is no distinction in contextual framing between the physical and virtual spaces for interactions to cross. That said there are still interactions

between the characters and the environment around them. While there is no visible ERW on stage, interactions still transform the soundscape by framing it within the FDW and defining the sounds. What is initially a sniffing sound becomes a dog when the characters mention that it is the dog from the residence, and loud rustling or flapping noises become identified by the characters as the sound of bird's wings. The audience never sees the ERW source of the sound, a separation which R. Murray Schaffer calls schizophonia. Schaffer uses this term to describe the change which can occur when a sound is split from its source (Schaffer 1969: 43). In the case of *Les Aveugles*, this separation is both from the original sound as it was recorded as well as from the source in the theatre itself (the audio speaker). This allows the production to define what the sound is, and thus the interactions of the characters with the environment change the environment. As the characters interact with the soundscape, they are equally present, helping to confirm the *effet de présence*.

In Marleau's *Les Aveugles*, the FDW is constructed from aural, not visual stimuli (Meerzon 2008 :209). There are two levels of sounds presented to the audience, those which represent the characters and those which belong to the surrounding environment. The sounds which represent the characters are used to animate the otherwise motionless characters. Puppets, which are inherently lifeless, are invested with life and meaning through the manipulation of the puppet master, which causes the puppet to pose an action. In the case of *Les Aveugles*, this cannot happen in a physical sense, since the characters do not move. However, as the dialogue is the only action in the play, they still interact aurally.

This has two effects. Firstly, it increases the presence of the soundscape and decreases the importance of the visual, allowing the characters to be present, including the characters that are not visible (dog and baby). Secondly, it amplifies the absence of the dead guide character, which is neither seen nor heard.

The differentiation between visual reactions and aural actions also represents the tension between life and death in the production. This differentiation does not occur at the level of the action, but rather at the level of the characters reactions. Early in the play, when the carrion birds are heard, there is no noticeable visual reaction by the characters. According to Henry Rose, the carrion birds are a symbol of death (Rose 1974: 126). This can be contrasted with the baby and the dog, which are both symbols of life. When the baby and the dog initiate actions, the characters have visible reactions. The twelve visible characters are caught between life and death, and the aurally created actions represent passage to either one of those states. Life and death, in the FDW, are invisible and thus the audience is looking at a purgatory state between life and death, as represented by the negative space. It is worth noting that life is able to provoke a visible reaction in the characters, while death (the guide) is not. However, the characters' inability to interact visually, even when prompted by signs of life, indicates that they are bound to the purely aural actions, those which represent a movement away from visible reactions and therefore towards death. This is supported by Henry Rose's interpretation of the original Maeterlinck text, which he describes as a journey towards death. The interactions between the aural and visual spaces therefore do

not only establish presence, but are inscribed within the symbolism of the text and the production.

The creation of presence through aural stimuli in *Les Aveugles* is important in creating an *effet de présence* for the projected characters. However, it is also used to create presence for the baby and the dog. About half way through the performance, a baby starts to cry and is heard by both the audience and the characters, although it is never seen. The conversation between characters identifies that this crying belongs to the child of one of the blind women. As the crying is an action which affects the other characters, this helps define the baby as a character, and as this action is posed without visual cues to the audience, it confirms that actions are posed aurally in *Les Aveugles*. A little while later, a sniffing is heard and the characters remark that it must be the dog from the residence. The characters' ability to interact aurally while not being visually present confirms that presence is created aurally and not visually. This is achieved in two ways. Firstly and most importantly, the interactions create characters the audience hears but does not see. Secondly these characters provoke a visible reaction from the projected characters. While neither the baby nor the dog are visible on the stage, the characters react to the noises by identifying the sounds and talking about them. Since presence is established aurally, the audience could close their eyes and ignore the visual. However, in the case of the dog and the baby, this would cause the audience to miss the character's facial reactions to the baby and the dog. Some of the men wake up because of the crying child, and the characters react to being 'licked' by the dog. These visual interactions also help to confirm the

presence of the dog and the baby. For the characters, being unable to see the dog or child does not impede on being able to recognise their presence and this gives the audience a similar point of view to the characters.

3.4 Audience interaction

In *Pratiques Performatives*, Féral suggests that interaction between elements of the stage craft and the audience can be a way of creating an *effet de présence*. While this is both simpler and more evident in participatory theatre where the audience members directly interact with and can influence the events of a performance, audiences passively interact with all performances. Yana Meerzon suggests this in her article by citing Denis Marleau's desire to "create a troubled relationship with the spectator" (in Meerzon 2008: 204), and suggesting that an emotional bond is created between the audience and the performers or performance (Meerzon 2008: 205). In any theatre production, individual audience members make choices which affect their individual experience of the production. This includes, but is not limited to, what they pay attention to, how they understand symbols and perceptible reactions such as laughs or applause. These actions not only affect the creation of presence within the performance, but they affect live and mediated elements differently. Recalling the definition of presence as a quality of the immediacy of the character in which the audience takes an interest, it is important to consider the audience's reaction to interest in the virtual characters on stage, and how these reactions might contribute to the creation of presence. However, since audience reaction is highly subjective and varies between different

spectators, the audience's reaction will be considered through the productions' intentions to provoke a reaction in audience members.

The passive interaction between the audience and projected characters can create a feeling of the Freudian uncanny. In online reactions to the Tupac hologram, comments such as "It made me think that he was still alive that hologram looked to real to be fake" [sic] (anonymous 2012) "I was completely freaked out" (The Cajun Boy 2012) and "it made me feel creeped out" (Supersonic 2012) are common. These suggest that the audience was reacting to a character, and that this made the audience uncomfortable or conflicted. That the descriptions of the reactions are personal suggests that this feeling is on an individual level. While Freud may no longer be the dominant current of thought in psychology⁵², the uncanny (*umheimlich*) is an aesthetically important concept for something which is both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. This concept was elaborated by Freud in a 1919 essay entitled *The Uncanny*, and has become a part of 20th century aesthetic theories⁵³. There are, according to Freud, many different possible sources of the uncanny including sightlessness, the confirmation of otherwise discarded childhood beliefs or fears and the animation of the unanimated or the dead. People returning from the dead is a common source of the uncanny, and Freud notes that "Many people experience the feeling in the highest degree in

⁵² Anthony Grayling of the University of London has said that "Philosophies that capture the imagination never wholly fade....But as to Freud's claims upon truth, the judgment of time seems to be running against him" (Grayling 2002). Others have noted that the American Psychological Association has demonstrated a tendency away from psychoanalysis and towards genetic or biological determinants.

⁵³ This essay extends and critiques Ernst Jentsch's 1906 analysis of Ernst Hoffman's *The Sandmann*.

relation to death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts” (Freud 1919), which makes the uncanny a concept relevant to both *Les Aveugles* and the Tupac hologram at Coachella.

In *The Sandmann*, the children’s story by Ernst T.A. Hoffman which is discussed by Freud in his essay, the title character terrorizes and steals the eyes of children. This character appears several times in the story, and is always the same person (Coppola), but with variations. This makes the character both familiar, because it is the same character stealing children’s eyes, as well as unfamiliar, as he changes from being a businessman to a puppet-maker to a stranger. This slight repetition and variation is similar to Marleau’s *Les Aveugles*, in which two actors have been reproduced six times each in order to portray the twelve characters, but with minor differences in mannerisms and appearance. In his original analysis of the uncanny, Jentch also stresses the importance of sight and sightlessness, a theme central to *Les Aveugles*, both in the text and in the staging. Freud extends this by saying that the alienation from one’s senses is a source of the uncanny. In Maeterlinck’s original text, this is not especially powerful since the characters are the blind ones, not the public. However, in Marleau’s staging, the audience is unable to see some stage elements, which effectively blinds the audience as well. The audience hears the dog and the baby, and learn about the setting and the dead body through the dialogue, but Marleau alienates the audience’s sense of vision. This alienates the audience from one sense, while heightening another to allow the audience to hear the birds overhead, the far-off water and the dog who sounds very close. The production manipulates the audience’s senses, and

therefore is interacting with the audience, even if the audience is not participating in the production. Being able to hear the birds or the dog caused a reaction in the audience, which for me was an expectation of seeing the birds or the dog followed by a discomfort that the audience was 'blind'. The final, relevant, source of the uncanny is the animation of the inanimate, and the revisitation of childhood fears such as toys coming to life. In the case of *Les Aveugles*, as with puppetry, the animation of what the audience knows to be an inanimate piece of wood or plaster can remind the audience of childhood games in which toys were believed to be alive.

Freud's uncanny results from the interaction between two opposites that are able to both be true at once. In the case of *Les Aveugles*, there are several sources of the uncanny which stem from the interaction between the FDW and the ERW. The audience is both blind and sighted at the same time, blind to the environment and yet able to see the twelve main characters. Those principal characters are both individuals and are copies of each other. In the text they are referred to individually, although with numbers rather than names. In the Marleau staging, the characters have individual characteristics or identifying habits, such as the man who always sleeps, the twitching woman, crazy woman, the two who speak the most (one man and one woman), etc. However, they are also all replicas of each other, with the same face projected on a mask of the same size. Thus they are the same and different at once. There is also an uncanny feeling created by the constant yet unmentioned presence of death in the production. The characters make reference to sickly flowers, carrion bird and other symbols of death as they

slowly proceed towards death, but they are ignorant of death's presence.

Therefore, from the audience's perspective, death is present through these symbols and through the lack of an actor on stage, and yet never acknowledged and is therefore also not present. While the uncanny is felt by the audience only, it occurs because of a reaction by the audience to the virtual characters. In this way it is an interaction, although a non-reciprocated one as the characters do not react to the audience's presence. However, since the characters are able to solicit a response from the audience, and thus interact with them, this suggests they share a presence and this can help confirm the *effet de présence* for the virtual characters.

It is worth noting that not all virtual characters create this emotional reaction with the audience, and that this reaction is highly subjective and thus hard to make generalizations. Based on my own experience as well as reviews of *Les Aveugles* and the work of 4D Art, this familiar and unfamiliar feeling is much more important in *Les Aveugles* than it is in 4D Art. This is for two reasons. In 4D Art, the holograms are less physical than the masks, and are therefore more recognizable as projections. 4D Art's characters are projected against a clear screen, and appear to come from thin air. The audience sees the appearance and disappearance of these characters, which highlights the lack of physicality of the characters. However, in *Les Aveugles*, the characters are constantly present, and are projected against a solid mask. While the white mask is not visible during the performance, its physicality is perceptible as the surface of the projection. Further, the characters in 4D Art derive their presence from being placed with a FDW which

explains their ethereal quality. However, in the cases of *Les Aveugles* and Coachella, the FDW suggests that the characters are present, and does not qualify their presence as subordinate to or dependent upon the presence of the physical. So, while the hologram used at Coachella is much more similar to 4D Art's holograms, it creates an uncanny effect like *Les Aveugles*. This is not only because the 4D Art holograms are framed differently from the Coachella hologram, but also because both the Coachella hologram and the projected characters in *Les Aveugles* are able to act as if they were not inanimate objects.

3.5 Conclusions

Even while not being physically present on stage, video characters can and do interact with the physically present characters and can solicit a reaction from the audience. These actions can be highly choreographed, as is the case with 4D Art, or can be more spontaneous or passive, such as the interactions between the FDW and the ERW in *Les Aveugles*, but in both cases these interactions are transformative. The ability to pose actions and to interact with other elements, either on stage or with the audience, not only transforms the object into a character, but also can create a presence for a character when none existed before. This can happen through the communication of information about the character and how these are inscribed into the logic of the production. In *La Belle et la Bête*, the interactions are indicative of the relationships between the virtual and physical spaces. In *Les Aveugles*, this is a desire to disturb the relationship

with the audience, and thus provoke a reaction through sensorial deprivation and through subject matter (in Meerzon 2008: 204).

Unlike prior chapters in this thesis, this chapter notes a general difference between pre-recorded and live-recorded characters, based on their interactions with physically present characters. Pre-recorded characters tend to assert actions, which the actor reacts to, while live projections tend to be more reactive. This observation is supported by the three productions discussed in this thesis, but should be confirmed in further research, analysing other productions. However, it does allow for an interesting observation regarding the relationship between framing and interactivity. In cases such as *Rwanda 94*, where pre-recorded video is framed as live and as equally present as the physical space, both the physical and the virtual character can assert actions. This occurs during the interview between Dr. Kimali and Mme Bee Bee Bee. Such interactivity may be possible because of the framing. However, since the delay which is inherent to live video streams is also present in the satellite interview form the production is recreating, it is less disruptive than it would be in the context of other, non-mediated interactions.

The interactivity of the virtual characters in a theatre production is not limited to interactions between the physical and virtual spaces. *Les Aveugles* uses interactions between two different virtual spaces, the aural and visual spaces, to mutually confirm the presence of both. These actions are transformative actions which provide context and symbolism to the sounds. They also create a hierarchy

of the audience's sense which leads to the establishment of presence for the characters through their aural rather than visible actions.

Finally, interactions can occur passively, and be unequal or one sided. Unequal interactions adequately describe the physical/virtual interactions in *La Belle et la Bête*, in which one character is dominant and the other is reactive. However, this is more interesting when applied to interactions between the stage and audience spaces. In all productions, the audience reacts to what they see, and this is especially true of virtual characters due to the novelty of these techniques. The novelty or "wow" factor is most apparent with 4D Art and holographic projections, as the techniques used to create the images are not known to the vast majority of the audience. However, in the cases of *Rwanda 94* and *Les Aveugles* the virtual characters can have a troubling, uncomfortable effect on the audience. This can be an emotional reaction to the form, as is discussed for *Les Aveugles*, or to the content. In *Rwanda 94*, the audience has an emotional reaction to the content of both video sequences. This reaction helps to create presence for the virtual characters of both Dr. Kimali and the ghostly apparitions. As presence is the quality that attracts and holds the audience's attention, the audience's reaction to the images of extreme brutality and stories they tell is the basis for presence. While this reaction is based on history which the audience knows to be true in *Rwanda 94*, the interaction between the audience and the virtual characters is a basis for presence in all three productions, because of the audience's reaction to either the technique or content of the images.

IV. Projections for Further Research

Over the last few years, projected characters have taken an increasingly important place in the theatre. Some of these projections, especially earlier versions, were not technically complex or inherently different from a television or movie screen, and used techniques which date back as far as the 1920's and Erwin Piscator. However, experimentation and technological advances have allowed for virtual characters to be increasingly interactive and to appear more or less three dimensional and lifelike, especially in the 21st century. While projected characters are still not perfect replicas of human form or presence, this progression can be seen in the three main examples of this thesis, which starts, chronologically, with *Rwanda 94's* TV like screens and ends with 4D Art's holograms which appear to exist three-dimensionally in thin air. Similar technological experimentation and adaptation can be seen in other entertainment media, such as 3D cinema, television and the rise in popularity of holographic musical artists⁵⁴ such as Hatsune Miku. The increased interest, effectiveness and popularity of projected characters indicate that they are not simply a fad. Thus, the methods through which these virtual beings acquire presence is important to consider, both in the context of theatre as well as culture in general.

There is valid comparison between theatre and other artistic art forms, especially dance and music. While many analytical tools presented here have been borrowed or adapted from film studies, theatre, dance and musical performances all involve the co-presence of the audience and the artist, which film does not

⁵⁴ Vocaliods. See the attached DVD for an example.

require and thus interesting examples of mediation and projection exist in both dance and music. Many of these have not been discussed in this thesis, but could be part of a greater discussion of projections and technology in the performing arts. While this thesis has discussed the Tupac hologram at Coachella, treating it as an isolated theatrical event, it should be noted that Vocaloids are an increasingly accepted artist creation/practice, especially in East Asia. First appearing in 1996, and becoming popular in 2007 with Hatsune Miku, vocaloids are artificial musical artists who “create” music and “perform” concerts, but for whom there is no material body (Black 2008:38; Kenmochi 2012:1). Within more classical music, projections play an integral role in Robert Lepage’s operatic stagings, although these have yet to include a projected character. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet’s 2011 production *Alice In Wonderland* also included projections, including projections of the Queen of Hearts character, demonstrating that virtual characters are relevant in a range of performing arts disciplines.

Each production examined establishes its own internal logic or internal reality, which governs the Fictional Dramatic World (FDW). These conventions are in the FDW and are based on and intern affect different elements of staging. This is not dissimilar from the External Real World (ERW), where each culture functions within a varying set of conventions which are both created by and influence cultural practices in the society in question. As we have seen, this reliance on conventions is what makes artistic creations mimetic, according to Matthew Potolsky. Mimesis, which is often understood as copy or imitation or reality by the arts, is not the exact replica of the original object, but an interpretation of the object through techniques

which the audience can understand. A marble statue does not need flesh-coloured paint to indicate skin, nor does it need fabric to indicate clothing, as this distinction can be made through lines and texture. Equally, the holograms in 4D Art's *La Belle et la Bête* do not need to come from the physical character's head for the audience to understand that they represent a mental space, partly because 4D Art has used this convention throughout the body of their work. For both the classical statue and *La Belle et la Bête*, the code has been established prior to the work in question. However, there are also clues in the production which serve to both reinforce these conventions and to initiate individuals who are not familiar with the pre-established rules. In the case of 4D Art's holograms, the simplest code is that the holographic characters embody the thoughts of the physically present characters. In spatial terms, the stage space represents the dramatic place, while the virtual represents the mental space of the characters in that dramatic place. Similar statements can be made for all of the productions discussed in this thesis. In both segments of *Rwanda 94* which were discussed, the stage space represented Europe while the screen was a television screen which usually displayed Rwanda. In UBU's staging of *Les Aveugles*, the physical space represents absence while the virtual space represents presence, and both these spaces depict the dramatic place.

The conventions of mimesis do not only define the locations within the FDW, but also how elements from the ERW are transformed through interpretation. In all the above examples, the body of the actor is recorded and redisplayed on a surface via a video projector. However, the three major cases examined all altered the image subtly before redisplaying it. In the case of *La Belle et la Bête*, this is

fairly straight forward to understand, as the bodies change size and appear hollow, reflecting their role as embodiments of the character's thoughts. In *Rwanda 94*, many of the characters in the first video sequence are in black and white, which is also fairly simple for the audience to understand. However, the alterations in *Les Aveugles* is less obvious. The projected faces, which exist in two dimensions, need to be altered to appear realistic on a three dimensional mask, and enlarged slightly to reflect the size of the mask. The fact that the virtual space replaces the physical space requires that the projections exist in three dimensions, just like faces do in the ERW.

The final example, *Rwanda 94*, demonstrates that while the conventions exist and apply within the Fictional Dramatic World, they are often based on established techniques from television news broadcasts in the External Real World. Like the work of 4D art, this means that the audience has some familiarity *a priori* with these techniques.. It can therefore be assumed that they also are familiar with the social or media conventions within which they live. *Rwanda 94* uses this familiarity with media conventions in a specific way to frame the information and characters which appear on the screen, according the creator Jacques Delcuvellerie (Delcuvellerie 2001: 55). Within this production, these framing devices enhance the mimetic quality of the projected characters, by placing them within the context of a news broadcast.

Frames define and contextualise an object. These two roles both give the audience information about the object in question. Visual frames help to define the

object and separate it from other objects. Féral notes that these frames often create isomorphic regions, where everything inside a frame shares certain characteristics which make it distinct from whatever is outside the frame (Féral 2007: 55) While she is discussing geographic and cultural borderborders, it can be applied to the theatre as well. In *Rwanda 94*, the characters who are presented as being in Rwanda during the performance, such as Dr. Kimali or victims of the Rwandan genocide (the ghostly apparitions), are kept within the screen, while that which is not on the screen is set in Europe.

Frames can help focus attention on the object which is isolated. *Les Aveugles* is a clear example of this, as the frame of negative space isolates the character's faces and focuses the audience's attention on them. Given the definition of presence adopted for this thesis, which requires the audience pay attention to the character, this helps to heighten the presence of the characters by removing everything else from the audience's sight. Both Yana Meerzon and Ludovic Fouquet, in separate commentaries on *Les Aveugles*, note this. They also suggest that the frame focuses the audience's attention not only on the characters, but on the aural rather than visual stimuli. This happens because the frame eliminates almost all visual stimuli, favouring aural ones instead.

Frames can also be contextual rather than visual. Contextual frames create expectations about the objects they frame through providing information about the object. While this occurs in *Rwanda 94*, when the screen is referred to as a TV screen, contextual framing is most clear in *La Belle et la Bête*. In this production,

the narrator frames the characters, both physical and projected, and in doing so reaffirms the conventions guiding how virtual characters are used. In this example, while the projections have a different appearance from the physical actors, there is no clear frame, and the audience therefore needs the contextual frame of the narrator's comments to correctly understand why some characters are physically present and some are not.

Observations similar to those that the narrator provides in *La Belle et la Bête* can be made through an analysis of the action on stage, and the interactions between the live and projected characters. For example, the fact that all projected characters are dependent on a live actor for their presence can be observed because that the projections only interact with one character at a time, and usually are only present when there is one physical character on stage. Further, the projected characters rarely interact with each other, indicating a difference in presence between them and the physical characters who do interact with both physical and virtual beings on the stage. However, the interactions also help establish presence, as it is the virtual characters who initiate interactions with the physically present characters. This helps draw attention to them, fulfilling the basic requirement of presence, the ability to attract the interest of the audience.

While all three major case studies involved pre-recorded video footage, the interactions make it appear as if the video is live. This is what Paul McIlvenny calls interactional relevance, and this helps create and sustain the *effet de présence*. It simulates the immediacy of presence by making it appear that both the physical

and virtual characters are active within the space and are able to react to changes in the space. This is most obvious during dialogue between live and physical characters, which does not lag but retains a realistic and normal pace. However, in *Les Aveugles*, the importance of interactional relevance is different. While the dialogue between the characters is important, the apparent interactions between virtual characters and the environment are important for establishing the setting for the characters. This happens when the characters react to environmental stimuli, such as the wings of birds or the ringing of a church bell. This helps demonstrate for the audience that the environment exists, even if it is not visible. It also helps to prioritize and rank the senses, establishing the importance of auditory stimuli over visual stimuli, even though this is not what a theatre-going audience is used to.

This thesis uses a relatively small sample to look at how an *effet de présence* is created for projected characters in the theatre, while attempting to acknowledge that the range of possible uses is much larger and more varied than the sample discussed. Mimesis, framing and interaction are tools which work well for *Les Aveugles*, *Rwanda 94* and *La Belle et la Bête*, however these may not all be so easily applicable to other productions. For example, when considering *Leo*, framing is a significantly more useful lens than interaction, as there is little interaction between the two different spaces, although interaction in *Leo* could be considered in ways similar to *Les Aveugles*. However, there are many other productions which use mediated characters, and not all of these mediated characters are visual projections, for example radio plays. In this vein, the analysis could be extended outside of theatre to include other art forms, such as the work of

Janet Cardiff. This thesis also does not consider the use of video elements other than characters, such as set pieces, costumes or even subtitles. These are all avenues of possible research, and comparisons could be drawn between usages of virtual characters and other video elements in order to establish analytical tools for all video usage in theatre. Another avenue for future research would be the relationship between liveness and presence for projected characters, focusing on characters who are both live and interactionally relevant.

Through the cases studied and various theoretical perspectives used, there are some recurring trends and rules which allow projections to acquire an *effet de présence*. This includes having projections which can assert actions and be interactive with the environment around them. This can be physically, like the 4D Art holograms, or through dialogue like the characters in *Rwanda 94* and *Les Aveugles*. The way the characters are framed, both visually and contextually, is also important. However, all of the characters discussed in this thesis are accurate interpretations of the human form. While there are some changes made, the images are not abstract or unrecognizable, and are not given powers which are not unrealistic within the context of the production. While broader research is needed to confirm this, the most important aspect of creating an *effet de présence* for virtual characters is this realism, which the audience can understand both within the perspective of the production and from the proliferation of virtual bodies within the audience's daily life outside of the theatre.

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VI. Annexe 1: List of definitions and acronyms

Any definition which is based on a discussion in the text has the relevant page in the text noted in parentheses.

Effet de Présence (effect of presence): The appearance of presence for something which the observer knows, objectively, is not present.

ERW: External Real World is the world in which the audience exists, and where the actor is himself and not the character (6).

FDW: Fictional Dramatic World created by the production through the staging elements such as text, set, acting, lighting and sounds. In this world, the actor is a character(6).

Frame: The visual and contextual elements which isolate/define and inform a space in order to make it a place. A frame can be visual, like a picture frame, but can also be non-visual, such as dialogue (36).

Interactional Relevance: A term proposed by Paul McIlvenny for instances where video play-back appears to be live, but is not. This appearance is the result of the way the video clips are edited and mounted together so as to make it appear that they are interacting when really they are not.

Place: Based on Tim Cresswell, place is a space which has been given context or meaning (6-7).

Pre-recorded Video Trial (PRVT): A type of trial in which all evidence is video recorded and then played back to the jury at a later date, in order to avoid scheduling conflicts. In PRVTs, the recordings are edited so that only admissible material is shown to the jury, and all members of the court are present at all filming segments, allowing the lawyers to interact with each other as well as the judge in real time. This differs from a video deposition or video testimony as those forms generally do not have interaction between the witness and the rest of the court, while PRVTs maintained the live interaction. For more information see Auslander's book *Liveness* or Elizabeth Robertson's *Juror response to prerecorded videotape trials* (63).

Presence: as a quality of the immediacy of the character's representation which the audience takes an interest in and allows the audience to believe in the fiction as communicated by the artists. Essentially, presence is what makes the audience pay attention to a character (2-3).

Schizophonia : Term coined by Dr. R. Murray Schaffer to denote the separation of a sound from its source, usually through technology, and the possible shifts in meaning associated with this separation. This includes any changes in the sound possible because of this split, such as changes in context, playback speed, editing, etc. This is discussed in his 1969 book *The New Soundscape* (pages 43-47).

Schizo-visibility: Adaptation of Schizophonia to apply to visuals, especially video recordings and the alterations of images which have been recorded. Schizo-visibility is important as it considers how the visual can be changed when it is separated from its source.

Space: Based on Tim Cresswell, space is delineated, a neutral or meaningless area (6-7).

Vocaloid: A computer based voice and character simulator which uses a pre-developed bank of phonetic sounds to, when programmed, perform music. Vocaloids are given personas which are associated with the visual appearance of the vocaloid, but not necessarily reflective of the individual programmers. Thus one Vocaloid can, and often does, have multiple programmers working with the character independently to create different songs.