

# **Speaking the Unspeakable: Applied Puppetry in Practice**

Matt Smith

The Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance

Royal Holloway, University of London

A thesis submitted as a partial fulfilment of the university's requirements for the degree of Ph.D.

September 2016

## Declaration of Authorship

I, Matt Smith, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Abstract

This thesis explores applied puppetry and how it works in practice. I examine how bodies and objects interact in workshop spaces in a practice-as-research (PaR) project conducted over two years in an immigration removal centre (IRC) through writing and a series of lecture performances. I also provide a consideration of why puppetry in traumatic contexts with groups and individuals is conducted in particular ways. I explore the complex dynamic between puppet participants and facilitators as a space of political and ethical problems. The thesis applies contemporary theories of biopolitics and new materialism to derive a performance practice that might be a model for using puppetry responsibly in relation to participants.

This PhD contributes a new approach to applied theatre using puppets. One of the most significant findings is that puppets are effective in developing dialogue and alternative creative spaces. Disruption of scopic regimes is only possible when puppetry is used in an ethical and flexible manner. Therefore the artist in an IRC has to take into account the powerful biopolitics that surround this workshop practice. Furthermore, the puppet and performing objects after the closure of the institution concerned become witnesses to practice with groups traumatised by immigration detention. This witnessing is expressed when the puppets are present in lecture performances outside of the prison. The use of puppets cast as witnesses and collaborators and the issues surrounding their relationship to participants' is expanded in this work.

# Table of Contents

Declaration of Authorship.....	2
Abstract.....	3
Table of Contents.....	4
List of Figures.....	6
Acknowledgements.....	8
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	9
The Project at HMP Haslar IRC: Spectres of Uncertainty.....	9
Socially Engaged Puppetry .....	15
Biopower and Puppetry.....	22
Theatre in Difficult Circumstances .....	26
Lecture Performances and Thesis Format.....	38
Project Aims and Research Questions .....	43
Chapter 2: .....	46
Reflections on HMP Haslar IRC Workshops and Performances. ....	46
Chapter 3: .....	97
The Immigrant Identity Represented as ‘Über-Marionette’: Developing an Approach to Participants in an Immigration Removal Centre. ....	97
The Context of Haslar .....	103
Bare Life and the Puppet .....	111
Cultural Geography and HMP Haslar IRC .....	116
Shadow Representations .....	119
Chapter 4 .....	124
Hand-to-Hand: The Ethical Puppet Workshop.....	124

The Puppet Workshop Borders.....	126
Hospitality and the Welcome in the Workshops.....	132
From Face to Shoulder to Hand.....	135
Spontaneity, Control and the Limits of the Puppet Workshop.....	148
Chapter 5: .....	157
The Puppet as Witness.....	157
Absence and the Puppets' Presence .....	161
The Alien Experience of the Puppet.....	166
Border Theatre and Vibrant Objects .....	176
Puppet Witnesses .....	180
Conclusion .....	188
Wider Implications.....	199
Appendix 1: Feedback from Four Detainee Respondents.....	203
Appendix 2: Script for Lecture Performance .....	205
Appendix 3: DVD of Lecture performance May 20 <sup>th</sup> 2pm Caryl Churchill Theatre, RHUL Campus Egham.....	221
Works Cited .....	222

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Marble sculpture of the Earth in the gardens inside HMP Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith. 2015. ....	9
Figure 2. Corridor leading to the education block in HMP Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith 2015. ....	46
Figure 3. Painting of Venice by immigrant detainee behind bars in corridor of HMP Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith 2015. ....	49
Figure 4. Institutional bell that was rung to indicate the closure of the educational department. Photograph. Matt Smith 2015. ....	55
Figure 5. The music room in the education block of Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith. 2015. ....	58
Figure 6. Benches in the prison yard where puppets were constructed as part of workshops. Photograph. Matt Smith 2015. ....	66
Figure 7. Giant chess pieces in the prison yard. Photograph. Matt Smith 2015. ....	69
Figure 8. Music room in education block HMP Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith 2015. ....	71
Figure 9. Audience at the community day event October 2013. Photograph. Rose Morton 2013. ....	72
Figure 10. Shadow puppet performance at the community event October 2013. Journeyman puppet crossing the ocean with fish. Photograph. Rose Morton 2013. ....	72
Figure 11. Empty tool box with the shadows of tools on the back board education block HMP Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith 2015. ....	73
Figure 12. Long corridor connecting dormitories in HMP Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith 2015. ....	77
Figure 13. Shadow puppet of journeyman with drawn acetate background by detainee. Photograph. Greg Smith 2015. ....	82
Figure 14. Female dancers. Marionettes constructed in HMP Haslar. Photograph. Matt Smith 2014. ....	90
Figure 15. Master of ceremonies puppet built in HMP Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith 2014. ....	92
Figure 16. Bird marionette constructed in HMP Haslar. Photograph. Matt Smith 2014. ....	96
Figure 17. Shadow puppet in prison. 2015. Photograph. Gregg Smith. ....	97
Figure 18. Hands crossing in the lecture performance. 2016. Photograph. Walid Benkhaled. ....	124
Figure 19. Cardboard finger puppets demonstrating otherness in lecture performance. Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled. ....	125
Figure 20. Goat marionette constructed for residency and workshops in prison yard. Photograph. 2014. Matt Smith. ....	131
Figure 21. The ex-detainee's hand projected over the head of puppeteer Matt Smith framed by maps of HMP Haslar IRC as part of lecture performance. Photograph. 2016 Walid Benkhaled. ....	135
Figure 22. Missionary meeting the Hand against map of HMP Haslar IRC. Collage sketch for lecture performance Photograph. 2016. Matt Smith. ....	137

Figure 23. Shadow puppets made from card and sweet wrappers of lotus flower faceless woman and birds. 2015. Photograph. Gregg Smith.....	141
Figure 24. Shepherd marionette constructed in HMP Haslar. Photograph. Matt Smith 2014. ....	142
Figure 25. Female dancer marionette constructed in HMP Haslar. Photograph. Matt Smith 2014. ....	144
Figure 26. Marionette constructed in HMP Haslar. Photograph. Matt Smith 2014. ....	157
Figure 27. A child's clothes at the perimeter wall of HMP Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith. ....	168
Figure 28. Footballer puppet constructed in prison yard and later painted by detainee. 2015. Photograph. Matt Smith. ....	170
Figure 29. Cardboard princess and hero puppets constructed in education block of HMP Haslar IRC. 2015. Photograph. Gregg Smith. ....	171
Figure 30. Humphrey. A puppet built in 1994 for Pickleherring Theatre. Photograph. Personal collection. ....	173
Figure 31. Performance of plastic bag with image of perimeter fence with plastic bag caught within fence. Photograph. Walid Benkhaled. 2016 .....	202
Figure 32. Projections of long string of humanity on backcloth. Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled. ....	205
Figure 33. Matt performing with Humphrey the puppet in front of projected maps of Haslar. Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled. ....	207
Figure 34. Projection of keys amplified through microphone. Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled. ....	209
Figure 35. Projection of riot gear shadow puppet with hammer head puppets. Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled. ....	210
Figure 36. Hand projection with Matt and Paul in performance space. Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled. ....	212
Figure 37. Matt performing with goat puppet. . Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled. ....	214
Figure 38. Scorpion shadow puppet on the overhead projector. Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled. ....	215
Figure 39. String of humanity shadow puppet in the visualiser. Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled. ....	216
Figure 40. Hary reciting story and Matt animating Spider. Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled. ....	217

# Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the men who worked with me as participants at HMP Haslar IRC for their time and their interest. I would like to thank my collaborators and supporters HaryGanesh Praveen, Walid Benkhaled, Gregg Smith and Paul Rogers, Ben MacPherson and Konstantinos Thomaidis.

I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Matthew Cohen for inspiring my research with his excellent analysis and complex questions. I also wish to thank my advisor, Professor Helen Nicholson, who provided constructive comments and insightful questions that developed my research.

I am indebted to the School of Media and Performing Arts, University of Portsmouth for supporting my research.

Thanks for the support and advice from staff and students at RHUL.

Thanks to my family for their patience and love.

Particular thanks to HaryPraveen who has taught me that one of the greatest outcomes of artmaking is friendship across borders.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to late great puppet expert Henryk Jurkowski. I had the good fortune of spending time with him throughout my career. He was very inspiring and helpful, and he remains one of the most important authorities on puppetry.



## Chapter 1: Introduction



Figure 1. Marble sculpture of the Earth in the gardens inside HMP Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith. 2015.

### The Project at HMP Haslar IRC: Spectres of Uncertainty

From June 2013 to February 2015 I conducted puppetry workshops at Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Haslar Immigration Removal Centre (IRC), Gosport, on the south coast of Hampshire, England. This institution was based on the grounds of an ex-borstal and military installation and was operational as an immigration detention centre from 1989 to 2015.<sup>1</sup> Working together with men

<sup>1</sup> 'Prison Finder' <http://www.justice.gov.uk/contacts/prison-finder/haslar-immigration-removal-centre> (Accessed 12 August 2014, no longer live)

detained in the immigration system, I conducted a project that aimed to describe and analyse the possibility of making puppet practice in this difficult environment. The needs and views of the groups and individuals living at Haslar influenced the way the workshops and performance events developed. Due to the sensitive circumstances of the individual participants, and the subsequent closure of the IRC, the dissemination and assessment of this prison-based practice is conducted through lecture performances and is analysed reflectively in this written submission. I use practice as a way to communicate and represent my thesis beyond the context of the detention centre. The closure affected the way I continued the Practice as Research (PaR),<sup>2</sup> but it also presented an opportunity to cast the puppets as witnesses to this institution in lecture performances.

The workshops in Haslar challenged my established assumptions and skills in delivering puppet workshops with groups. Since 1992 I have conducted workshops in a myriad of settings, including schools, community centres, festivals and prisons. The usual format in these workshops is making puppets constructed from waste materials and these so-called junk puppets are quickly constructed using sticky tape. These puppets at the end of the workshop perform in short devised scenarios by the participants. The participants in these settings are either voluntary or recruited as part of institutional activities, so the attendance of the group was usually guaranteed. These workshops, often with

<sup>2</sup> The approach to PaR is informed by the model of media scholar Robin Nelson (2013). Nelson defines PaR as 'theory imbricated within practice' as a form of 'material thinking' (3) that can respond to the issue of knowledge production in art making. Nelson further defines PaR as research in which 'practice is a key method of enquiry' (8). For Nelson 'knowing doing' is at the heart of PaR and important for the researcher. Throughout this process the researcher is encouraged using Nelson's schema to 'make tacit knowledge more explicit' (20) in the journey of the praxis. There is some degree of choice about how this knowledge is presented and Nelson suggest that the 'gestural poetic modes of expression' (35) can be invoked to represent the insights and findings.

young people, aimed to be inclusive, open and democratic in the way the activity was encouraged (Smith, 2009: 77). The goal of these workshops was to perform with the group stories that reflected the individual's interests and concerns. Creativity was encouraged but not explicitly structured. Overall these workshop spaces were spaces where artistic autonomy was respected and usually all people involved achieved the task of performing and making puppets.

In contrast, the workshops in Haslar were reactive to the demanding prison space and were more unpredictable. These workshops produced performances, but they also enabled dialogues. One of the most challenging elements I encouraged in Haslar was making puppets because of restrictions on materials, tools, and security. So, in Haslar more time was spent performing with puppets instead of making them. One of the difficult challenges of this workshop space was waiting for extended periods without participants and encouraging engagement non-coercively. One strategy employed was to encourage engagement by using the unusual appearance of puppets to generate interest. The puppet workshops were offered as a positive distracting alternative to the everyday context of detention. The scale of the workshops was developed to fit the spaces of Haslar like the education rooms and the prison yard. After the long periods of waiting participants would begin to trust me and engage with the puppets.

Overall, it was possible to create a temporary positive space in the Haslar workshops through fluid negotiations, waiting, gaining trust, facilitating playful improvisations and devising performances. Overcoming the difficult context and oppressive geography of Haslar was also part of this process. The workshops in this environment attempted to transgress inter-subjective

boundaries that separated the men from me. This creative process of crossing borders was possible through flexibility, listening carefully and reacting appropriately to the situation of the individuals incarcerated in Haslar.

Throughout this practice in Haslar the spectre of uncertainty was present in the background. This uncertainty was due to the unknowable situation of the men in Haslar. Their position in the UK border system appeared fragile and unpredictable because immigration detention in the UK is a state of limbo for individuals criminalised in this way and left in traumatic spaces. In these uncertain circumstances hope seems futile and the men I interacted with appeared to display quiet desperation about their predicament. The experience of practice was affected by this background pressure of uncertainty.

Additionally, the wider political landscape, political rhetoric and context in relation to immigration mutated during the period of this PhD. As presented in chapter two this uncertain process is framed by media stories about global incidents that involved the plight of migrants. Often changes and removals in Haslar IRC happened overnight and I was powerless to intervene or support. These pressures exacerbated the uncertainties, which meant I had to be reactive and creative in moving the project forward. Towards the end of the workshops Haslar closed but the continuing issue of immigration detention evolves regardless. There has been an escalation in racism connected to immigration particularly recently around the UK's referendum on the European Union. Immigration is a central issue of party politics and many aspects of border control are more military in their style of discourse since changes in

government policy during this PhD, for example the new title of 'Border Force' for home office operatives.<sup>3</sup>

Through the exploration of practice in the context of HMP Haslar IRC, I was able to observe and experience how puppetry operated within a challenging and traumatic space. The approach to practice developed a sensitive method when using puppets in regards to the bodies of the participants. In relation to the issue of bodies in practice, cultural geographer Robyn Longhurst argues: 'Questions of the body—its materiality, discursive construction, regulation and reception—are absolutely crucial to understanding spatial relations at every scale' (2010: 94). The spatial relations of detention affected the men I worked with as participants and inevitably affected my body. Therefore, questions about the body and spatial relations informed my viewpoint of the participants in the context of immigration detention and in the practice. In particular, I am very aware of the way the discursive construction of immigrant detainees' bodies are represented and how bodies are regulated in systems of power inside detention. These questions about the body of the detainee informed my analysis of power in the critical reflection.

Inside the jail, this particular context of power, where vulnerable bodies are within a carceral frame, meant that the practice was challenging. To create in this context is operating at the practical limits of what is possible with applied puppetry. The task of engaging participants was time-consuming, the situation of men detained uncertain and language barriers meant communication was limited. I was also concerned about coercively involving participants. The

<sup>3</sup> 'Theresa May to split up UK Border Agency' <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-17099143> (Accessed 21 August 2016)

approach adopted aimed to avoid this coercion, but this method also created limitations around how I could involve participants. Developing informed consent in this context took time to achieve and involved sensitive conversations.

The approach at HMP Haslar IRC changed my practice as I had to justify an unusual art form within a securitized and controlled space. My original aim of exploring immigrant detainee stories was irrelevant to the men in Haslar, who wanted instead to divert their attention away from pain and fears of immigration and deportation.<sup>4</sup> Alternatively, through the experience of practice in Haslar I learnt that myths invented and improvised opened up creative spaces to imagine beyond the daily trauma of detention.

In Haslar the role of puppetry changed through this approach to practice. Initially, at the beginning of this project, I valued the puppet in the workshop space as a secondary entity to the participants. After the experience of Haslar, I transformed this viewpoint into recognising the puppet as a collaborative element in workshops. The puppet then became a form through which I could develop and articulate my practice as an artist and thinker. Through this method, puppets gave me the opportunity to express the pain of the spaces and trauma at Haslar. Art theorist Jill Bennett suggests that 'trauma-related art is best understood as *transactive* rather than *communicative* (original emphasis)' (2005: 7). Influenced by Bennett's concept of trauma-related art, my aim is to communicate trauma indirectly as part of the transactions in my work. I am

<sup>4</sup> I am referring to the interned population of Haslar IRC as 'men' throughout my writing as this was the vernacular used in this context. This naming is a political act using 'men' as well as the officially sanctioned IRC title of 'immigrant detainee'.

aware of trauma as expressed by the men at Haslar but avoided directly communicating individual trauma through performance or testimony. My practice is an indirect expression and reaction to a traumatic context.

After reconsidering the role of the puppet and how they affected power in the carceral environment I realised the power of the puppet in applied theatre is evident in its ability to provoke dialogues beyond the walls of Haslar. This potential I discovered when the puppet became a collaborative element. The puppets function developed in Haslar into a role enabling the possibility for dialogues and social interactions. Evidence of this change is demonstrated when I employed the puppet in the organic and fluid practices of the workshops in Haslar. Another shift in perspective is when I consider the puppet as part of the lecture performances created after the workshop engagement in Haslar. In this lecture performance mode I presented knowledge and thinking through the puppet as a type of witness and collaborator in performances. This performed knowledge established the puppet as the significant creative element within the process of exploring experiences in Haslar. This adaptation in the role of the puppet, particularly in the lecture performances, demonstrated that puppetry could comment upon experiences of immigration detention. This ontological transformation meant the puppets were not just tools used to instruct or impart information but cast as witnesses to the traumatic spaces of Haslar with a story to tell.

## Socially Engaged Puppetry

My practice is positioned in relation to the history of socially engaged puppetry practice. Through recognising the mix of powerful contextual forces around puppetry in history I have developed a heuristic for my application of

applied puppetry. In this way I use accounts of historical puppet practice to learn from the past. After considering historical accounts of socially applied puppetry I situate my work in relation to this practice. Moving beyond the historical accounts of socially engaged puppetry I present my contemporary approach to applied puppetry as a dialogical practice. This new applied form of puppetry is presented as a practice that avoids instruction and uses collaboration and co-creation with participants. I developed this model of applied puppetry by attempting to avoid instrumentalising the puppet. This instrumental use of the puppet reduces the puppet to a mere tool or weapon. In the contemporary forms of applied puppetry I aim to explore the puppet as a collaborative element that enables dialogues as opposed to being used didactically. In contrast to some historical examples, the approach adopted in Haslar aimed to encourage active participation, avoid didactic pedagogy and circumvent imparting dogma. This dialogical approach is difficult to articulate in practice, and I have described when I struggled in my endeavours to be effective in enacting dialogical principles. Next I will introduce some of the examples of historical puppetry for social change that inform my viewpoint on practice.

One of the most important sources in historicising 'puppetry in social care' in Europe comes from puppetry scholar Henryk Jurkowski (1998: 125). Jurkowski saw the relationship of puppeteer to state and authority as one of support and oppression in the twentieth century (139). Socially-focused puppetry could become an 'instrument of ideology' (125) that could 'be of use in every area of life and in all circumstances' (172-173). Jurkowski argued that puppeteers in the twentieth century were influenced by state patronage to



deliver social programmes but also became the victims of social movements and oppression, for example from fascist or communist regimes. Puppet scholar John Bell's description of puppetry and modernity in the USA also emphasises the social function of puppetry. Bell suggests that during particular moments of history, such as depression-era USA, puppeteers took on social responsibilities in regards to 'community building' and 'health propaganda' (2008: 69).

Surveying the history of social puppetry, I am particularly interested in looking at puppetry in the context of trauma and conflict. Accounts of the survival and the purpose of puppetry, including stories of puppetry during the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, the siege of Leningrad in 1942 and the Spanish Civil War 1936-39, stood out as relevant to my study. These examples provided perspectives on puppetry's necessity during traumatic points in history. In the account of the Warsaw uprising by Krystyna Berwinska (2008: 9) I was particularly struck by the use of the propaganda glove puppet shows as both a way to impart ideology and as a distraction from trauma. In the Leningrad account the municipal children's theatre puppets were saved from becoming firewood though the conditions were atrocious and this demonstrates the importance of puppetry during this trauma. According to the account by Faina Kostina (2009) the puppet theatre continued in Leningrad entertaining the people and the troops at the front line.<sup>5</sup> Theatre scholar James McCarthy explores the significance of puppetry in the Spanish Civil War, emphasising the direct potential of the puppet: 'One of the most ancient theatrical forms,

<sup>5</sup> 'Even in the darkest days of the blockade, we preserved our marionettes. Despite the terrible cold, not one doll was burnt' 'Voices from Russia'. <http://02varvara.wordpress.com/2009/01/25/the-puppet-theatre-during-the-blockade-of-leningrad> (Accessed 20 January 2016)

puppetry became for the republicans an element of contemporary struggle, adopting a role in antifascist propaganda, which, in the words of one enthusiastic reviewer, saw the puppet as no less useful than the rifle in the successful prosecution of the war' (1998: 44). These examples demonstrate the direct use of puppetry in social contexts and the cultural value of the puppet during extreme social moments. These performances gave desperate and traumatised people hope and escape. This social purpose and value is one reason to acknowledge these accounts as precursors of applied puppetry. In relation to my work in Haslar these accounts also represent the possibility of puppetry in culturally uncertain contexts.

My reading of historical social puppetry led toward accounts collected in the compendium *Puppet Therapy* (1977) by British puppet authority Alexis Philpott and his collected descriptions about social puppetry, experiments and effects on groups from the 1930s onwards. Many of these accounts stressed the importance of puppetry to impart information and normalise as opposed to encouraging agency and resistance. For example, Philpott presents a strange analogy for puppetry, arising from observations in an asylum in India where the 'puppets, without exaggeration, had moved the inmates, who were very unruly and disturbed, to such calmness, and had pacified them so completely...that no straitjacket could have soothed the patients better' (42). This extract is partly a comment by Philpott and a section of a report from one of the innovators of Indian educational puppetry, Meher Contractor. The patients in the above source appear constrained both by the space of the institution and the passive nature of the experience of being an audience member at a puppet show. In these accounts of practices, puppets can be read as promoting docility,

changing attitudes and used for fighting ideological battles. In this way the puppet is deeply involved in the political. The straitjacket analogy of the puppet show in the Indian asylum relates to how the disciplined subject becomes a docile subject under the surveillance of authority and the spell of the puppet show. We see in these historical accounts the problematic antecedents of applied puppetry: puppetry used as a 'straitjacket' to promote docility in groups and a 'weapon' used to impart ideology and deliver messages to a mass audience (Smith, 2015: 533).

The establishment of the Educational Puppetry Association (EPA) in 1943 attests to an important moment in the history of social puppetry in the UK (Allen and Shaw, 1992: 74). During the Second World War and the dark times of post-war austerity the EPA presented a very hopeful vision for puppetry with a social purpose. One important source, produced by the EPA that debated the use of puppetry was *The Puppet Book* (1953) in which they recognised the mass social and political purpose of puppetry (217). American educational puppeteer Marion Batchelder also recognised the powerful effect on the participant of puppetry programmes when she suggested that: 'The ever-flexible art of puppetry is equally successful as a diversion for many people, or the creative expression of an individual' (1947: 9). The emphasis on flexibility, creativity and puppetry as a diversion continues to resonate in applications of puppetry with groups.

There are a number of key practitioners who have influenced my approach to making applied puppetry. The pioneering work of puppeteer Gary Friedman and his exploration of the power of the puppet in South Africa in promoting post-apartheid democracy and working in prisons in 1996-1997 is

particularly engaging. Friedman's prison projects show a committed response to social and political issues in challenging contexts.<sup>6</sup> His work exemplifies how puppets can open up dialogues in prison about sensitive problems and issues of identity and politics in a transitional South Africa. The British-based artist Tony Gee similarly employs puppet's to open up dialogues between participants. Gee describes his workshop approach as a space where important changes using creativity and puppets can occur between groups.<sup>7</sup> The example of Welfare State International and their important history of using puppets and performing objects as part of community events from 1968-2006 is also influential. Their practice used large scale and small scale use of performing objects as a way to capture the imagination of communities and present resistant images in the UK.<sup>8</sup> Artistic director of Welfare State International John Fox and I have had the good fortune to meet and collaborate in 1999. His idea of the puppet in practice encapsulates ideals I aspire to: 'Tiny things and tiny puppets discovered and created in an environment of accessible non-competitive play can transform us totally' (2007: 23). The use of the puppet to be part of creative change is a theme in the work of Fox, Gee and Friedman. This notion of the puppet as a transformative element in practice is explored throughout this thesis.

Consultants Keith Allen and Phyllida Shaw in their report *On the Brink of Belonging* (1992), noted that in the puppet community in the UK: 'Almost three quarters of the companies surveyed work in schools and more than half in

<sup>6</sup> 'Puppets in Prison' <http://www.garyfriedmanproductions.com/puppets-prison.html> (Accessed 14 March 2016)

<sup>7</sup> Gee, Tony. *A Movable Feast*. Totnes: Kingfisher Print, 2003. Print.

<sup>8</sup> Coult, Tony, and Baz Kershaw. *Engineers of the imagination: the Welfare State handbook*. Methuen Drama, 1983. Print. This text provides a practical and critical guide to the work of Welfare State International.

community centres; performances and workshops in residential homes and institutions are common, and a handful of puppeteers work with the health service' (43). My own practice in the field of puppetry in the applied setting began in 1992 and my experiences echo the concerns of this report for puppetry to be accepted as a relevant artform for a wider audience. Many of the issues around acceptance for puppetry in the UK have changed for the better and puppetry as a whole has a positive position in diverse performance cultures and applied theatre. I have seen first-hand evidence of this through the popularity of workshop practices and projects in the UK with schools and local councils. The 2005 report from the Scottish Arts Council by Alison Hogg suggested that: 'Puppetry is becoming increasingly prominent within educational, health and cultural based arts initiatives' (5). Over the last twenty years a new viewpoint on a whole series of puppet practices has shifted. During this period puppetry has moved from the 'brink of belonging' in the UK to the recent position of having a wide appeal to diverse audiences. Puppets can be found as the main performance medium in the Broadway musical *Avenue Q* (2003), incorporated into large-scale productions like The National Theatre's *War Horse* (2007) as well as in the wider context of professional touring shows. The popularity of puppetry in the community or educational based workshops in the UK has also significantly developed in relation to this global theatre market.

In 2005 American educational and therapist puppeteers Mathew Bernier and Judith O'Hare recognised that there was a need to further the debate about puppetry used for social purpose. They demanded that there 'is a need for more study, research, and reflective writing about the power of puppets in education and therapy' (xvi). My project is not looking specifically at education and therapy

but my thesis is partly a response to Bernier and O'Hare's demand for 'thoughtful discussion about the unique characteristics of puppetry' (xvi) in the context of socially engaged practices. It is not enough for applied puppetry to only develop skills and advance new techniques. It is becoming more relevant to analyse and reflect critically about whether puppetry is effective at enabling groups – particularly vulnerable populations. This critical appraisal of the use and misuse of puppetry for a social purpose is one of the concerns of this thesis.

I witnessed evidence of the contemporary field of applied puppetry at the Hands On Symposium events at Little Angel Theatre on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January 2011 and the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of April 2013. In the first event, the UK context of applied puppetry was represented by companies like Helium, Zenwig puppets, Bamboozle and High Voltage Theatre. This work involved projects with diverse groups from early years' groups to working with adults with dementia. In this work the concern was expressed that the use of puppetry could address local issues with a sensitive approach. In general the companies represented were avoiding universalising discourses of puppetry for social change. Alternatively the diverse practices described at this event were attempting to respect the agency of the participant and avoid employing the puppet as a blunt instrument in practice.

## Biopower and Puppetry

Considering socially engaged puppetry involves exploring the power of puppetry affecting and influencing groups. A stark example of this power is Bil Baird's *Puppets and Population* (1972) project developed as a method to promote

population control. This example of biopolitics involved the nexus of subaltern bodies, US imperialist foreign policy and the introduction of new puppet forms in the discourse of Baird's text and play. My analysis of this form of Theatre for Development (TfD) convinced me that biopower is a useful concept to deploy when analysing socially engaged puppetry (Smith, 2015: 534-534).

The project Baird created reproduced a form of power embedded in the interaction of the community, state authorities, local and global economic forces. In this project the rural subject is turned into an object that embodies and demonstrates normative values relating to sexuality and population. As human subjects turned into objects the subaltern does not speak in this example. Instead the subaltern is represented as the puppet. This representation gives voice and bodily form to an authoritative other constructed from western discourses of sex and 'power over life', medical information and population control messages. The subordinate group is represented, but, in this context, they are unable to speak. Baird's controversial project in India I employ here as a heuristic to critically consider the operation of power. To critically analyse Baird's project I use the concept of biopower drawn from Michel Foucault's definition.

Biopower, as Foucault defined it in *History of Sexuality* (1998), is an analytic emphasising the way life is normalised and changes in relation to power (141). I use this analytic reflexively to look at my own practices as I deal with power and bodies in my practices. I develop my knowledge of biopower beyond Foucault through the works of philosopher Giorgio Agamben (1998), discussed in chapter three. This critical process employing biopower also

became relevant when considering a pronounced space of inequality like Haslar IRC.

In chapter five of *History of Sexuality*, Foucault defines biopower as a force that is an all-pervasive and 'uni-directional' process (1998: 139). In this network, it is impossible to escape power, but individuals can create their own resistant forms of biopower. The process of biopower produces new knowledge that changes the individual subject within the context of social formations. An important aspect of these processes is the 'action of the norm' that operates through the way powerful ideas are enacted and produced about the body.

Forty years on from Foucault's introduction of the concept of biopower, there have been a wide range of applications of this biopolitical viewpoint to the analysis of social relations. According to Italian studies scholar Timothy Campbell and law scholar Adam Sitze in *Biopolitics* (2013), the expansion of interest in this concept has formed a 'biopolitical turn' (4) and this field of thought has influenced my PaR. Philosophers Vernon Cisney and Nicolae Morar in *Biopower-Foucault and Beyond* (2016) define biopower as a means by which we can read structures and practices (1). Biopower is presented by these authors as an expansionary way to view the ubiquity of power in all parts of life (14). According to Cisney and Morar, the relations of security, territory and population have become the central themes of biopower since Foucault (7). These themes link to the context of immigration detention and the way power is explored in my practice.

Using the concept of biopower to analyse puppetry applied to social agendas emphasises the significance of the human body in this type of performance. The way physical bodies relate to the puppet and the way



discourses frame bodies is evident as part of processes of social puppetry in practice and texts. To understand the way power operates in puppetry from the biopower perspective, it is important to consider the bodies *connected* to the puppet. This power is directed towards audiences, which gather as temporary communities. The production of power in the puppet show is discovered through actions, spoken text and narratives, and this discourse is developed in the audiences' imaginations and responses to the spectacle. This power may be in the service of the authority or the state, especially if this puppetry is for programmes addressing social problems. What Foucault's concept of biopower describes is that the social body is changed by the complex relationships and production of power through knowledge and this is present in the exchange of discourse. This discourse and knowledge is part of the practice and documentation of applied puppetry, which often appears to have the aim of changing the views of groups, individuals and communities. This concept of the power of puppets is found in texts and documents related to socially engaged puppetry — for example, in puppet expert Livija Koflin's *The Power of the Puppet* (2012).

The critique of practice in *Speaking the Unspeakable* draws on the post-structural theory of biopower and raises questions about the politics and ethics of applied puppetry. Applied puppetry exists in relation to the diverse identities of the group members, affects the bodies of the people involved as audience members or workshop participants and involves them in processes that produce opportunities for both docility and resistance. Biopower is exchanged through the interactions between subjects, spaces, the puppet performance and the broader discourses surrounding and involved in practice.

For cultural theorist Joanna Zyliniska using the concept of biopower applied to immigration can become a form of ‘ethics of bodies that matter’ (2004: 523). This use of biopower is used to resist normative racist portrayals of the migrant. Zyliniska offers an alternative to the way immigration is perceived and regulated through this reading of the politics of the body. These concerns with power and corporeality indicate the potential of applied puppetry, used in immigration detention, through an awareness of biopolitical interactions. Puppets have their own relation to biopower as uncanny and metaphorical objects, and it is important to consider this when conducting applied puppetry in specific communities and workshop settings. This knowledge of biopower informed my workshops at HMP Haslar IRC and subsequent research events like the lecture performances.

## Theatre in Difficult Circumstances

Positioning *Speaking the Unspeakable* in relation to the field of applied theatre is necessary as this field has impacted on the application of the term ‘applied puppetry’ in this thesis. The PaR explored in this thesis is impacted by applied theatre practices but also aims to make a contribution to applied theatre by causing its practitioners and theorists to consider more actively the roles played by non-humans, specifically (but not exclusively) puppets. Next I explore the relation of some key voices in applied theatre to my project and how they informed my view of theatre in difficult circumstances.

The issues of reciprocity, working on the margins and the complexity of difficult contexts inherent in applied theatre are relevant to understanding applied puppetry. This thesis is influenced by the emphasis on reciprocity and the problems this causes as described by applied theatre scholar Helen

Nicholson in *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre* (2014). The practice I offered in my PaR was shared with participants as a form of gift opening new creative horizons which chimes with the emphasis on exchange described by Nicholson (160-161). This emphasis on exchange in applied theatre looks at the positive social aspects but Nicholson acknowledges the inherent risks and uncertainties in these processes (163).

The contribution of applied scholar James Thompson in the way he developed applied theatre and analysed prison theatre as work that traverses borders near and in relation to conflict influences my approach. In *Bewilderment and Beyond* (2008), Thompson stresses an awareness of the costs of working with marginal and vulnerable groups near conflict. For Thompson, 'bewilderment refers to both the disruptions faced by various populations or communities as they shift in place and time, and the questions that emerge from the re-location of theatre forms to new arenas' (1). Thompson suggests that by accepting bewilderment the practitioner can harness the potential energy of this in recollections of practice (23). My research accounted for bewilderment and disruptions in the PaR and this is evident in the practice and throughout critical reflections and documentation.

One of the most important contributions to the field of applied theatre with asylum seekers is Alison Jeffers' study *Refugees, Theatre and Crisis* (2012). Jeffers' definitions and study of techniques to engage with exilic identities recognises the importance of myths about fragile identities (52). Jeffers' emphasis on dealing with pejorative myths and representations of people marginalised due to asylum or immigration related issues are important points of reference. Treading the path between issues of representation,

working within challenging situations and understanding how practice is reciprocated are key concerns drawn from the field of applied theatre that inform my practice.

Theatre and migration scholar Emma Cox in *Theatre and Migration* (2014), like Jeffers, emphasises the issues around representation of identities and the way context impacts practice. Cox describes these forces as part of a 'mythopoeitics' of migration that are 'an accumulation of visions of foreignness that have collided in the globalised, bureaucratised present' (10). In reaction to these visions Cox documents how artists and theatre makers have created and reacted to migrant identities with alternative imagined communities (48). She concludes her book by defining positive practices using performance as managing 'to push beyond unexamined metaphors' (76). Certainly in the practice demonstrated in Haslar and in the lecture performance I used the puppet as a performer that troubled metaphors and notions of identity in regards to migrant representations. In the project in Haslar issues of representation were important, but the puppets often circumvented some of these issues as they did not directly represent an individual's identity.

In *Applied Theatre: Resettlement* (2015) applied theatre scholars Michael Balfour, Penny Bundy, Bruce Burton, Julie Dunn and Nina Woodrow present the Australian context of working with migrant identities in specific projects. In this context and in relation to fragile identities they discuss fluid positions and suggest that 'transience is permanent' (26) in this difficult ecology of communities and issues. For the collective authors 'arts practices that seek to represent the other may be driven by ethical outrage, but risk oversimplification and either presenting individuals as either traumatised or oppressed' (45). For

the authors 'ecologies are not always benign and are rarely stable' and in these spaces 'transition and settlement is influenced by cultural paradigms' (196).

Overall in the frame of resettlement, they argue that even though resilience is desirable, it cannot be artificially built in relation to migrant identities (198).

A relevant text that explores applied theatre as PaR is the edited volume *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance* (2011). The chapter by applied theatre scholars Jenny Hughes, Jenny Kidd and Catherine McNamara defines applied theatre as research having at its core considerations of context, research perspective and creative intention. These elements are found in practices that develop 'reciprocal and ethical knowledge' (187). For these scholars, the practitioner as researcher should consider the challenge of 'direct engagements with practice' and how this PaR is presented for a wider audience. They suggest that issues of unpredictable contexts and messy methods puts pressure on practitioner-based work (191). For example, in applied processes and in uncertain contexts it is very difficult to make general points based on findings. Hughes, Kidd and McNamara state that applied theatre 'is a performed and performative process intimately connected to questions of power and identity' (206). In my practice, this emphasis on power and identity is a thread that weaves throughout the PaR and connects to biopower as participants bodies are drawn into the process of knowledge production. Drawing from Hughes, Kidd and McNamara, I employed improvisation to respond to the way participants changed in the project. This improvised process was reactive to the possibilities and impossibilities presented within the location and experiences at Haslar.

To explore through practice the difficult context of Haslar I am influenced by performance studies scholar and anthropologist Dwight Conquergood's conception of radical research. His concept of practice is based on his experience of difficult situations such as detention centres and slums. Radical research for Conquergood is 'experiential, participatory epistemology, ethnography of the ears and heart, a hermeneutics of experience, relocation, co-presence, humility, vulnerability: *listening to and being touched by*' (Italics in original) (2002: 149). Taking account of the emotional weight of applied or engaged practice for Conquergood is important and he acknowledges this as part of research. Looking back at the Haslar project, I acknowledge that a great deal of what I felt was embodied, and this experience is unavoidable when in the presence of trauma and suffering. Also, much of what I listened to was internalised, and this did have an emotional impact. Cycling away from HMP Haslar IRC brought a feeling of relief but also guilt and grief for the dispossessed souls left behind me. These 'felt narratives' were embodied but also present in the puppet forms that were constructed and performed with inside and outside of the prison. Influenced by Conquergood's 'hermeneutics of experience', embodied knowledge is expressed and described through the medium of performance as well as through the documents of practices in my work.

Peter O'Connor and Michael Anderson in *Applied Theatre Research: Radical Departures* (2015) emphasise the need for applied practitioners to employ 'critical hope' (37), when engaged in applied projects. At HMP Haslar IRC and against the wider developments in immigration detention in the UK this is a difficult position to adopt. This difficulty in applying hope is a reaction to the

harsh language used by the government and how the immigration system has become increasingly military in its form in the UK.<sup>9</sup> In relation to this context, one hope I express is for immigration detention to cease entirely. Working with marginalised detainees, I also hope that awareness of their plight could encourage knowledge of issues and contexts of immigration detention. Using puppetry, a historically 'marginal' form in Europe (Jurkowski, 1988: 85), I aimed to connect with marginalised detainees, and then convey this knowledge to a wider audience through practice.

The principles of Applied Theatre as Research (ATAR), according to O'Connor and Anderson's conception, include conflating the personal and the political (2015: 86). In the embodied practice of applied theatre the personal and the political cannot be separated. O'Connor and Anderson also introduce the importance of the practitioner clarifying in their practice the 'fictional frame' (67). The fictional frame adopted in Haslar workshops often shifted in regards to who was participating and shifted away from the realities of day to day detention into a mythic and comedic imaginary fictive space, for example, in shadow puppet performances with archetypal characters and quest narratives. In line with the ambition of ATAR as expressed by O'Connor and Anderson, my practice sought to expand a unique research position and knowledge in regards to the traumatic setting and individual identities involved. Additionally, my personal politics shifted because of the effect of the suffering witnessed in Haslar and the biopolitical context.

<sup>9</sup> 'Theresa May to split up UK Border Agency' <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-17099143> (Accessed 23 July 2016)

This traumatic setting of the border found at Haslar is defined by anthropologists Hastings Donnan and Thomas Wilson as the 'borderland': a site of contested power around identities and nationhood (1999: 4). Applied theatre scholar James Thompson in *Prison Theatre* (1998), also emphasises the importance of borders and applied theatre when he defines the range of practices of prison based theatre as '[a]ll struggling to define work at the borders, at the margins of arts practice and literally at the edge of society' (11). This struggle at the margins and borders was often the case and experience of my work in immigration detention.

Throughout this research I define HMP Haslar IRC as a prison. This act of naming the IRC as a prison emphasises the carceral system in the contemporary UK border zone. Prison performance scholar Caoimhe McAvinchey *Theatre and Prison* (2011) states that 'theatre and performance practice can make visible the institution of prison, allowing us to critically examine its social, economic and cultural impact' (16). This point chimes with my own endeavours to use theatre as a means through which to examine a specific prison environment through performance. The field of prison theatre is relevant to the practice conducted in my project, but in Haslar the immigration detainees are not called prisoners. The debates about incarceration by Thompson and McAvinchey are relevant, but I am cautious associating the men who participated in my project with penitentiary discourses too closely, as their imprisonment was complicated by UK immigration law.

Throughout this thesis I have explored the contested space of crossing borders in the prison space of an IRC and explored the possibility of performance in this liminal space. For North American performance scholars



Harvey Young and Ramon Rivera-Servera in *Performance in the Borderlands* (2014) this type of performance at 'the border sensorium exceeds the artificial limits of the national boundaries, travelling in embodied, as well as mediated forms, tactics, even feelings, and extending its temporality well beyond the act of crossing' (4). They also suggest that borders challenge homogenous conceptions of nationhood and involve diverse performances (5). In the performed space of the border for Young and Rivera-Servera 'space, knowledge, and power converge through the circulation of bodies' (8). The work described in this thesis shifts across the borders of detention, the borders of applied theatre, puppetry, between the liminal interstices between categories, definitions and the bodies of participants.

Through the practice I explore how applied puppetry can be employed in this border sensorium as applied theatre. Through this exploration of practice one of the aims of this thesis is to challenge the field of applied theatre to consider the problem of materiality in applied practice through puppetry. Using puppetry with participants as co-creators potentially demonstrates how objects could play an important role in applied theatre. As part of this reconsideration of materiality in applied practice I emphasise the importance of objects as collaborative elements and as uncanny witnesses in applied theatre. In this way, the PaR explores a method to think *through* and *with* objects in applied puppetry practice. This perspective about objects and their increased vibrancy in practice also offers insights into the way materiality, in applied engagements, can affect change in relation to biopolitical contexts of crimmigration.

## The Context of Crimmigration

The context of crimmigration in the UK is a mixture of failings of British law and government in dealing humanely with migration. In the local situation of Haslar the men came from diverse backgrounds - fifty-nine nationalities were incarcerated there during one of my residencies. They were in this prison context awaiting bail or deportation. Many were asylum seekers and the majority were not detained for criminal activities. It was emphasised to me by the prison officers at Haslar that these were not 'proper' prisoners as they had not been incarcerated for a 'real' crime. The only reasoning for their criminalisation was that the men were presented to me as 'at risk' of fleeing from detection if not incarcerated. This biopolitical processing of migrant bodies is part of a system framed by surrounding discourses of fear, exclusion and bigotry. This zone of crimmigration where policy and diversity clash is the setting for this thesis.

Donnan and Wilson in *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State* (1999) propose that 'Borderlands are sites and symbols of power' (1). They argue that because of late twentieth-century globalisation there has been a political and geographical shift, creating fluid borders and a weakening of the nation state (3). This shift of borders has meant that immigrants and displaced persons at the border are caught within the polarities of 'us and them' (107) in the way these groups relate to the nation state. Vulnerable bodies in the border zone are 'liminal migrants' (109) in a space where official and unofficial narratives collide around subaltern voices (114). Donnan and Wilson acknowledge that displaced people are situated within the gap between how they are viewed by the state and humanitarian organisations (115). In relation to

these points by Donnan and Wilson about gaps and liminality I am aware of both participants and myself falling into the interstitial cracks between state authorities, sovereign power and border narratives. These border issues formed a contextual pressure that I often directly engaged with, for example when I dealt with both state (United Kingdom Border Agency UKBA) and sovereign institutions (Her Majesties Prison Service) to gain permission to work with detainees at Haslar.

‘Crimmigration’ used by criminologist Katya Franko Aas is a phrase that describes the criminalisation of identities in the border zone (2013: 25).

Criminologist Mary Bosworth in *The Borders of Punishment Migration, Citizenship, and Social Exclusion* (2013) describes detention centres as ‘sites where exclusionary migration policies clash with the long history of immigration to the United Kingdom and its resultant diversity’ (150). For Aas and Bosworth, border control activities and punishments ‘become blurred and merge with various forms of migration control, deprivation of welfare, and social exclusion’ (vii). The penal systems response to migration and punitive measures against migrants has reached a level of complex ‘hybridity’ according to Aas (25). This process of ‘crimmigration control’ has been adopted to address the biopolitical processes of population controls globally (25). Both authors describe how the public are unaware of the plight of migrants in the UK:

In the United Kingdom, for instance, the government rarely publishes details about those held in prison under Immigration Act powers. Details about the make-up of the detained population beyond raw figures are also hard to come by. We [the wider public] know very little, in any

country, of what happens to those who are removed or deported. (2013: xi)

In the monitoring of these populations the individuals punished in the borderland are often invisible. The invisibility of the participants to the wider public outside the confines of the prison that I operated within became a major concern during the practice. Working with individuals coping with a high level of uncertainty and lack of representation was a continual concern when conducting practice in Haslar.

This problem of visibility leads the Inspector of Prisons Hindpal Singh Bhui in his introduction to *Borders of Punishment* to describe the way migrants are conflated in 'the media, in political debate, and in populist rhetoric, with terrorists, criminals, those who are not to be trusted ('bogus'), or the socially unworthy, who place a burden on public services' (2). Singh Bhui describes this process as 'objectification in action' (2) and in this context the detainee is not cast as an individual but as a shadowy 'other'. Through the 'funnel of expulsion' the body and identity of the detainee is made into an 'object' (12). Singh Bhui suggests that invisibility and pejorative representations of migrants can be addressed through 'counter-narratives and a promotion of the voices and experiences of migrants and detainees themselves' (14).

Criminalising the migrant population is a response to the issues of immigration and fears about foreigners. Immigration controls and detention, as reviewed by philosopher Michael Dummett *On Immigration and Refugees* (2001), are generally created as a deterrent for people wishing to move to the UK (38). He presents the tactics for keeping immigrants and refugees to a minimum through three processes; first, make the rules for admittance

restrictive, second, enforce visa restrictions on countries with people likely to come and third, create disincentives that may involve detention, forcible dispersal or reduced welfare (70). Throughout his book Dummett is clear that blatant or less visible racism cannot be separated from immigration controls and restrictions. The policies of UK government in regards to immigration can be traced specifically to the Aliens Act of 1905, a policy introduced and 'designed principally to keep out European Jews' (3-4). The underlying principles of immigration in Europe that Dummett introduces in 2001 are relevant to the problem of understanding immigration policy and controls even though the territory of borderlands has shifted.

Within the context of crimmigration the local situation of Haslar was one part of an environment for processing and removing people who are unwanted. This local situation was enmeshed in the global problem of people treated as human 'waste'. This environment is framed by the discourses of fear and exclusion, racism and bigotry in the media. Experiencing this environment felt like I was within a border zone 'heavy' with the emotional weight of crimmigration. Throughout the thesis I refer to this context, its felt narratives and how, I positioned myself artistically and responded to these issues and pressures. In my project in this context of border enforcement, puppets are adopted to enable the promotion of 'counter-narratives' in response to the traumatic uncertainties and fears inherent in and around immigration detention.

## Lecture Performances and Thesis Format

In relation to the context of crimmigration I intend to view how practice can be conducted with puppetry in relation to vulnerable participants. To achieve this aim I developed and presented lecture performances at Royal Holloway University of London, international and national conferences and symposia from 2014-2016.<sup>10</sup> During this experience, I found that the lecture performance format offered a vibrant opportunity to discuss sensitive situations and processes, and this is a reason to adopt this mode. I decided to use the lecture performance as a way to interrogate my art making processes and as part of my response to the context of crimmigration. I explored how the environment of immigration detention with its inherent uncertainties and vulnerable population could be expressed through this form. The lecture-performance discusses working with puppets in Haslar, it also consolidated my thinking about the workshops, creating a space in which I play with representations and disseminate my process.

I connected my scholarship and artistic practice outside the prison environment through the lecture performance. The final resulting performances are nuanced, textured and collaborative in form, presenting multiple visual and aural layers. The aesthetics of these lecture performances were affected by the closure of Haslar and absences became theatrical and performative in this format. Telling the story of Haslar this way is inspired by the institution closing

<sup>10</sup> I presented performed lectures at the Academy of Arts in Osijek, Croatia as part of European Definitions of the Puppet Concept and Professional Puppetry Terminology, November 2014, and at the Copenhagen puppet festival, Symposium on Puppets and Politics in May 2015. I also presented at the University Of Connecticut, Puppeteers of America Festival, Critical Exchange August 2015.

and in response to how this IRC could be forgotten. This process also offered the opportunity of collaborating with ex detainee Hary Praveen. I kept in contact with ex-detainee Praveen after his release, and talked to him as a friend. We discussed collaborating, as Praveen identifies as an artist. Through this process I helped him develop his confidence in performance. He came into my space of the drama studio, as I had come into the detention centre, his space at that time. When Praveen came into this process I invited him to make some additional puppets collectively, co-wrote text while I supplied dramaturgy. The other key collaborator is composer Paul Rogers and we have a reciprocal relation as collaborators from previous projects. He responded to materials I had, and we made a sonic environment for the lecture performance. The lecture performance format provided an appropriate and unusual performance space that evoked the uncertain environment I had worked in Haslar. In developing this lecture performance, I also collaborated with filmmakers Greg Smith and Walid Benkhaled to record the film and documentation of this project (Appendix 3).

The video of the lecture performance and its script in the appendix are not supplements to the written documents. Rather, I encourage them to be read within the thesis, after this introduction. Part of my inspiration in adopting the lecture performance is the documents of performance lectures by artists Joseph Beuys and William Kentridge, whose lectures use objects imbued with significance and life. Beuys, through his 'actions', is presented by critic Patricia Milder as the father of the contemporary phenomena of the lecture performance (2011: 15). One of the most famous of these works is *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* created in 1965, in which the hare becomes according to art

historian Donald Kuspit, 'A kind of puppet-surrogate for Beuys, its [the hares] struggle to move through space represents and can be equated with his struggle to establish a new space for himself' (1995: 46). Beuys' and Kentridge's performance lectures re-articulate their practices and provoke audiences to reconsider their practices with art objects. Both Beuys and Kentridge use the lecture performance to open the art-making process to a wider audience and disseminate the traces left by their practice.<sup>11</sup> This possibility for the lecture performance format to rearticulate practice influenced the adoption of this mode of lecture performance.

The first manifestation of my performed lectures in 2014 was entitled *Open and Closed Hands: The Applied Puppeteer as Meek Hero*.<sup>12</sup> In this piece, I engaged in debates about the role of the applied puppeteer through the historical example of the celebrated hero of puppetry, Bil Baird. I contrasted his example with my own PaR project with men incarcerated in immigration detention. Additionally in this lecture performance, I discussed the notion of the workshop leader as meek hero, and this I connected with themes of power, globalisation and ethics. The adoption of these themes was influenced by cultural studies scholar Nikos Papastergiadis and his monograph *Cosmopolitanism and Culture* (2012) in which he discusses the role of the artist

<sup>11</sup> I am influenced by a number of monographs relating to these artists. In relation to Beuys I found curator Mark Rosenthal's (2004) descriptions of his actions important. In regards to Kentridge and his use of shadow puppets in animation and other artefacts political philosopher Tom Hickey's (2007) edited monograph on Kentridge influenced my practice. I am also particularly inspired by the images of Kentridge's puppets when they were juxtaposed with historical maps in curator Carlos Basualdo's (2008) edited *Tapestries* (see Figure 21).

<sup>12</sup> 20-minute lecture-performances using objects at Royal Holloway, University of London AHRC event 11<sup>th</sup> December 21014, and the University of Portsmouth 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015.



involved in cosmopolitan practice 'as both interventionist and meek in equal measure' (196). His definition of meekness 'does not imply passivity or resignation, but refers to a way of relating to the other that is not bound by instrumental calculations of fear and benefit' (197). This 'active meekness' is an attitude adopted both in performance presentations and my wider practices as a principal and approach. This initial lecture performance playfully animated debates about these identities of meek artist, researcher and practitioner set against the hero artist educating the world.

The second development of the performed lectures in 2015 was entitled *The Puppet Goat as Witness: Applied Puppetry on the Borders of Immigration Control*. This was another 20-minute lecture-performance using puppets and objects. Through the monologue of a puppet goat, the event described the lives of a group of large goats on the perimeter of Haslar IRC. I presented this viewpoint through the eyes of the puppet goat who commented on the geopolitical landscape of Haslar. This event developed the idea of the puppet, puppeteer and goat hybrid as a type of irreverent witness to events in Halsar.

The final lecture performance in 2016 (documented in the appendix in video and script) is *How to Explain Immigration Detention to a Puppet Goat*. This version appropriates Beuys' famous lecture title *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*. This event is an amalgamation of the two previous lectures with an additional temporary exhibition of puppets built at HMP Haslar IRC. The lecture performance with installation format provokes questions about how puppetry operates in workshops. To do this, I explore the complex dynamic between puppets, participants and facilitators as a space full of politics and ethics delivered through actions and images. This performance then reflects

about how conducting puppet practice relates to absent bodies in Haslar. Argued implicitly in this lecture performance is that objects are important to reconsider in applied theatre. This viewpoint about the position of objects in culture is influenced by museum expert Fiona Candlin and visual cultures scholar Raiford Guins. These scholars state that the study of objects is a 'contested' ground between the philosophy of things and the social history of objects (2008: 6). In this event I am exploring this critically 'contested ground' of objects through performance emphasising their materiality and otherness. I also demonstrated in this performance that puppets and performing objects represent ideas developed through practice.

As a puppeteer, academic, and facilitator I am used to using many voices and tongues in practice and this is reflected in the thesis format. This use of heteroglossia, a term I draw from literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, from *The Dialogic Imagination* reflects the multi-mode format adopted (1981: 324). The use of an extensive reflective practice journal form in chapter two then enables me to partly capture the experience of the live practice. This chapter offers an insight into embodied, exploratory and playful experiences in the workshops at Haslar. Another mode adopted in the writing is a poetic rendering of texts involving speculations about objects and puppets. This comes later in the thesis, particularly in the script (Appendix Two). This mode is inspired by philosopher and computer game theorist Ian Bogost's inventive text, *Alien Phenomenology or, What it's Like to be a Thing* (2012). In this poetic mode I assert that, by speculating through objects, puppeteers as researchers can develop knowledge of their practices. Also adopted and inspired by Bogost is the use of the litany as a discourse that evokes the relationship and network of

objects, space and participants in practice (38-39). This use of litanies explores knowledge by considering objects within a network and is a method explored in chapter five. This multi-modal approach enables me to describe and reflect on practice as unresolved experiences of knowledge production.

## Project Aims and Research Questions

The initial aims in my practice were to work effectively with immigrant detainees using puppetry. This process involved questioning applied puppetry as a practice by testing if it could operate in a difficult situation like Haslar. In this context, I was responsive to the sensitive circumstances of the environment of Haslar and aimed to understand and work within the daily practices of the centre. I describe the workshops as creative practice using storytelling, puppetry and performance techniques. The creative space of the workshops in this project provided a space for the men detained to create, speak and tell stories using forms like shadow puppetry and simple string marionettes. Through this practice I wished to collaborate with participants and produce puppet's that could be shown publicly in the lecture performance. In this project, I addressed and troubled concerns about representations of voices and stories through applied puppetry.

In relation to representations I am influenced by cultural studies pioneer Stuart Hall. He suggests that it is possible to develop counter strategies to intervene with representations and transcode negative images with new meaning. For Hall this process opens out the 'politics of representation' which is a struggle over meaning that is continuous and unfinished (2013: 277). The

lecture performance with puppets troubles representations and opens a space in which to explore bodies, politics and their context as unfinished knowledge.

Argued throughout *Speaking the Unspeakable* is that the critical view of applied puppetry explores power, both in the puppets themselves and in the networks of participatory practices. Power is often invoked in puppetry's operation, but warrants further investigation. Reflexive hermeneutics applied to my practice drive a rigorous debate about how power and objects are used in relation to participant's bodies in workshops. The way puppets interact with bodies in practice is explored in this thesis through the way they relate to biopower, ethics, witnessing and materiality. To engage in this space and the context of the practice at HMP Haslar IRC, the answers to three connected questions are debated throughout this thesis:

1. How effective is puppetry in providing an expressive form through which participants can create in specific community contexts? This question is specifically explored through the two years of workshops at Haslar and self-reflection.
2. How can a puppet become a witness to the trauma of detention? This question is explored after the workshops in the prison and developed in relation to the lecture performances and closure of Haslar.
3. Can the workshop and lecture performance puppet be employed ethically in relation to the subjectivities of others? To answer this I engage with the postmodern ethics of Emmanuel Levinas in chapter four.

The puppets used in my practice to explore these questions were in the form of shadow puppetry, marionettes, lip sync puppets, finger puppets and multimedia

projected puppets. These puppets were documented photographically, filmed and documented outside of the prison context. Later in the lecture performances puppet forms were literally inscribed with texts about immigration, maps and the knowledge of Haslar. Using these puppets and allowing myself to be moved by them, I meditated upon my questions and their meaning in practice.

## Chapter 2: Reflections on HMP Haslar IRC Workshops and Performances.

---



Figure 2. Corridor leading to the education block in HMP Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith 2015.

Reflective practice can enable a mindfulness of the gap – an awareness of and willingness to tackle border issues. (Bolton, 2014: xvi)

The reflective accounts in this chapter, often written inside prison walls, represent the two years of applied practice in HMP Haslar IRC. In this process I was consistently dealing with what creative writing for research pioneer Gillie Bolton describes above as the ‘border issues’ of writing about practice. To evoke the experience at the border the reflective style of writing in this chapter moves from the recall of events to the impressionistic, fragmentary and poetic

style adopted at points throughout the rest of the thesis in performances and documents. It was difficult to write about this practice from a distance because I was positioned and physically imbricated within the meetings, workshops and performances described here. Throughout practice in the prison, I was dealing directly with borders and cracks between spaces and places of immigration detention. This background of border issues is omnipresent in this reflective journal chapter. My discoveries as artist and researcher were through this experience of the border and this writing opens up this interstitial space for the reader. Through this chapter I respect the anonymity of individuals throughout, as this was an ethical agreement of the project between RHUL and HMP Haslar IRC.

Critic and famous author of fiction Marina Warner introduces the diaries of performance artist Bobby Baker as creative reflections that 'reopen glimpses into lived experiences' (2010: 3). Through this personal writing Warner describes how Baker presents 'the rush of sincerity' (3) a quality that I evoke in this chapter. In documenting my practice I am also influenced by the way performance scholars David Williams and Carl Lavery document the work of Lone Twin. Their aim in documenting this company was to construct from a multi-modal style a book that 'articulates different kinds of knowledge, bringing to the surface some of the intuitions, uncertainties and flashes of inspiration and insight that contribute so centrally to generative processes' (2011: 24). By presenting my 'generative processes' in this way the insights into my practice are not intended to describe a linear path but instead describe the spiral of knowledge that developed over time. Similar to Baker and Lone Twin I wish to collaborate with the reader and open up the interstitial spaces of my practice.

*28<sup>th</sup> November 2012, Meeting with Deputy Centre Manager (prison governor).*

The imposing architecture of the Halsar prison witnessed for the first time.

Surrounded by zip wire and military architecture. Riding my bicycle to the centre, I feel vulnerable as I approach the main gate. The prison staff at the gate instruct me to leave my bike there and that it will be safe from theft because of the amount of video surveillance. My bike's structure looks weak against the imposing image of the prison wall. This part of Gosport feels like a military zone. This military presence feels close with signs of martial power everywhere on the walls and in the objects outside the prison.

The deputy centre manager is a warm and open person and the conversation is relaxed and easy. This is the 'trust' meeting. The meeting in which the 'face-to-face' opens up an opportunity or closes the gate shut. We discuss the nature of the project and my aims in the workshops. I tried not to sound too elusive without sounding as if I had firmly decided what I could do with the groups of men. We discussed cultural difference, language and the transient nature of the groups. I presented my approach as flexible in reaction to these issues. We discussed the issue of exchange and about how this project would benefit my future and also add to the cultural work at HMP Haslar IRC. I presented the idea of using the myth of Daedalus as a starting point and this was positively received as a concept. <sup>13</sup>

During the meeting with the assistant manager, I invoked the word 'community' to attempt to describe the men who were at that point invisible to

<sup>13</sup> I used mythological authority and famous literary figure Robert Graves version of Daedalus myth as basis (1992: 311-314) for my work with this story.



me. Using this word in reflection is troubling. I feel a sense that this invocation of community is a powerful act because of the nature of Halsar as a prison. This invocation is an imagined community. The next stage is to move beyond this weak definition and towards a location that perceives the multiplicity held within this troubled environment.

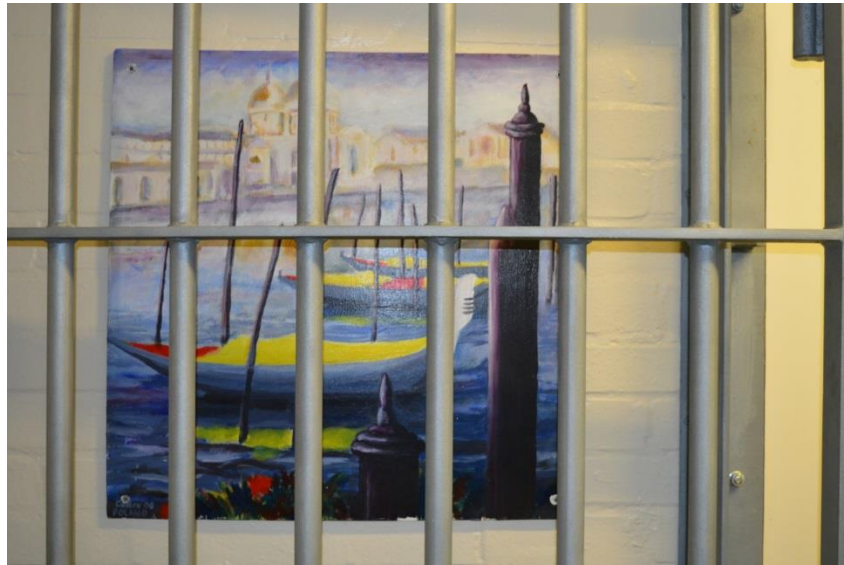


Figure 3. Painting of Venice by immigrant detainee behind bars in corridor of HMP Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith 2015.

*16<sup>th</sup> April 2013, Induction Activities.*

Anticipation and nervousness after the achievement of security clearance, from the Home Office, formerly the UKBA. The wider climate for the project is strange because of the way the border agency has been recently abolished by the government and home secretary Theresa May. My small endeavour feels insignificant in relation to these wider events of national importance.

My journey to HMP Haslar IRC is becoming familiar but full of new discoveries and thoughts in the geography of the route. I am going to the prison

with a sense of uncertainty and concern about what I can achieve in the few days I have. I must remain open, flexible and tenacious.

Why am I here at the induction? The other two men are prison officers from the decommissioned HMP Kingston prison in Portsmouth. As we meet in the admin office suspicion and awkwardness eases after conversation. One common leveller in our conversation is around the subject of the ridiculous nature of large institutions and how they operate and appear to waste resources.

There is a discussion about the question of the issue of mobile phones. The prison allows detainees to carry phones, the border agencies also carry them but the prison officers do not. This bothers the prison officers and to them does not make any sense. They expressed tensions between the border agency and the prison service at points throughout the induction. The prison environment is very busy with staff under pressure. The prison officers mentioned the chaos of institutional change. There is uncertainty as to when I could tour the prison. After the initial awkward meeting, there is, some humour and friendliness offered me by the staff.

The security PowerPoint involves seventy one slides and lots of information that is not relevant to my project. Even so, it feels necessary, as I need to conform to the protocols of the centre to gain access. The issue of using cameras and recording equipment is clear in this induction as a major security breach. Public discussion and security fears are an ongoing issue. There is some gang culture in the dormitories and they avoid grouping of nationalities to try to counter this but they find that this socialising is respected to some degree. Nationalities will naturally group together and to some degree,

this helps the detainee to deal with their trauma. There is a strict system for the use of tools.

A bizarre story of goats is discussed during the PowerPoint session. The story is that two goats came from a laboratory and the idea was that they could graze on the sports field. This did not work because the goats would defecate everywhere and the job of cleaning this was too much of a problem. So the goats moved to a space nearer the perimeter to the sea. They still were a nuisance, as they would hit alarm buttons during the night. Is this an ironic myth worth exploring later with puppets?

I experience slight discomfort at feeling part of the establishment because of the induction activities. I must conform to their rules and power system to gain access and trust in this environment. Am I being subsumed into the system, as I am made more aware of the system of keys, doors, uniforms, codes, acronyms and protocols?

One of the staff I am working with mentions a shadow performance on TV when I discuss my puppetry skills. Both the prison officers are impressed by this popular TV shadow show and the potential for this form. I feel that this is encouraging. The brief conversation about prison theatre is also positive. During my induction I realise my intention to engage with any of the men is not going to be possible yet because of delays. When I wait in reception at the gate, I am drawn again to the National Offender Monitoring Scheme (NOMS) statement on the wall about equality.<sup>14</sup> On the poster, the word offender has a label over it and the word detainee is written on the label. The word offender is seen through

<sup>14</sup> 'Equality and diversity - National Offender Management Service'  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-offender-management-service/about/equality-and-diversity> (Accessed 20 August 2016)

the label after scrutiny and this erasure seems significant. The publicity for Halsar is in blue with a large H within which is the name of the centre. The 'H' wears the crown of the state of the British sovereign and underneath there are two hands shaking. One hand is white and the other black. The symbolism of this icon is powerful when considered against the contradictory context of immigration detention.

One unexpected part of the induction is the emotion displayed by the two prison officers for the closure of Kingston prison. The power in this space of the closed prison in Portsmouth is clear from the prison officers I am inducted with. They display and vocalise the sorrow for the demise of their former jail as a working prison.

I am left in the boardroom of the centre for a short period and notice a wall with wipe-boards. The language written on the boards in the form of headings and categories is powerful; 'perpetrators, negotiators, demands, casualties, weapon risk, intervention, regime issues, surrender and care issues'. This is the web of discourse of the prison environment. I noted that only one category is about 'care' issues.

During the afternoon, I am taken to the gymnasium through the heart of the prison which is a long corridor from which the dormitories and many of the facilities of the prison branch out from. The detainees are moving relatively freely around the environment it seems. The pace of how things are conducted in here feels slow and this must be because everyone is waiting.

In the afternoon, I have my fire awareness induction. By the end of the day, I am exhausted by the experience of the environment and waiting around. The staff are generally friendly and welcoming. I shake many hands and this is

ok but I am concerned I have not shaken any of the detainee's hands yet. I am waiting for the moment presented in HMP Halsar's logo when different hands are joined together.

*17<sup>th</sup> April 2013, Induction activities*

I have a strong feeling that, through this induction, I am becoming part of the system. I am inducted into the system and then I am part of the faces of authority to some extent. It is important to preserve a sense of an independent identity in the face of all of this power. I recognise the irony of my situation. To work ethically within this environment as a researcher and an artist it has become necessary to adopt the pretence of a neutral attitude and approach. The hospitality I am afforded by the staff at the prison is open and seems comfortable. I am trying not to use the vernacular of the prison language from previous professional engagements in the justice system, as this feels inappropriate. All this induction activity has made me feel an increased responsibility of working in this environment.

When I see the men imprisoned here, why do I smile? What is a smile? Is it an appropriate or even a real connection? The men look like prisoners to me on first impression. They have a strange and sullen appearance and demeanour. Underneath their apparently relaxed exterior I imagine a coil of tension. I am detecting new feelings inside me; I feel a passion for making something happen here. This feeling is tempered with the harsh reality of the prison tour that I have just experienced. I need to try some practice with the men to settle my uncertainties. The land across from the prison was described to me as the burial grounds of a leper colony and this makes me think that this geography has a long history of the dispossessed, the unwanted and unnatural.

I am told that the old water tower is full of asbestos. I have signed documents that mean I have to be careful with my descriptions in regards to how I use information and security. My anxieties will not diminish until I actually conduct workshops and the education block seems the best place to locate my practice. The multi faith room offered as a potential space for workshops feels too loaded with the detainee's spiritual needs.

The people who work here are good people working in an unfair system.

In the prison, I felt meek in returning the detainee's glances and during these moments I offer a return look and a half smile in an attempt to show that I cared. What am I offering in these looks? Is this look an apology, greeting or recognition? I am getting tantalisingly closer to an engagement with the men by building the necessary trust with the authority.

"Gosport – Your Haven" this piece of local authority marketing adorns the gymnasium in the prison. What is called the reception area feels the most depressing part of the establishment. In here, the initial security and bodily processing of the men occurs and it feels dark and tarnished through fear and anguish.

The question of keys is brought up in the induction and whether I should have a set of keys. This is definitely a step too far as I do not feel comfortable coming in with keys, as I feel as though I will be the jailor. It does mean I have the extra problem of being escorted around the prison, which is extra work for the prison officers.

*7<sup>th</sup> May 2013, Meeting with prison officers (PO) R and S*

R and S express enthusiasm and encouragement towards the project. They expressed problems with previous drama work by other groups and individuals.

The problems were associated with the commitment from the detainees and the way the visiting practitioners did not establish a clear sense of the purpose of their practice. They like the idea of putting on a show. They expressed that what the men want is a place to improve English language skills in particular. They described detainees as liking physical work and music based activities. I discussed the legacy of the project with the view of possibly bringing students in after my PhD has finished. A sense that the prison staff will support my work after this meeting is established.

Photo documentation is possible as long as men write disclaimers, which is a view different to the one expressed during induction (in the end this was still very sensitive and not implemented). We discussed issues of stress caused by institutional changes and the issue of immigration in relation to the rise in power of United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP).



Figure 4. Institutional bell that was rung to indicate the closure of the educational department.  
Photograph. Matt Smith 2015.

*19<sup>th</sup> June 2013, First Workshop*

A taster workshop, in which, I attempted to apply workshop drama exercises in the prison activities room. My initial feelings were that this session was hard work and demanded my utmost flexibility and attention in relation to the men. When the session started, I had six participants until men left and there were two. The session started well with name exercises but was disrupted by the men's need to depart and do some other business. A prison officer called out one man. The two men who stuck with the short session seemed to enjoy the experience and gave positive feedback at the end of the session. 'Small acorns' prison officer said while he was escorting me. I had made a start with the practice.

There were issues about language for half of this small group. A simple drama game involving the repetition of "one...two...three" caused much confusion and was a bad choice. Refocusing to the two men from the bigger group was demanding. The session made me reconsider the approach to the full week in the prison. The idea of running the session for two hours was too ambitious and was too much for the men. I managed about 40 minutes before the time felt right to stop. There were smiles and laughter and I took this as an indicator of limited success. I had problems remembering names, this was unusual, and I think due to my nerves. Essentially, what I was doing did not capture their attention enough and so I lost the attention of the larger group.

The two men who stuck with the session comprised of one man who was confident and spoke good English and another man who was very fatigued and confused. I did not push the need for feedback but just asked whether the session was good for them and they answered in the affirmative. They



appeared to enjoy the experience. The difficulties involved challenged my view about what type of theatre is possible in this environment. Is there any point to theatre in such a harsh environment? The demands and tough nature of the practice reminds me of my experiences delivering drama in a residential care home for young people. In this context, success was measured in small increments, events and performances.

A major issue was that the space I was using was a place for playing pool and video games and it had been commandeered for my workshop. This space was a recent change in this part of the prison. I felt very uncomfortable with this situation as it meant my work was denying the men a form of recreation. I was certain I could not use this space again as it was a serious challenge to their choices.

With the two men who stuck with me, I used movies and television as a way to connect and this partly worked. We recreated a strange version of *Britain's Got Talent*. This then moved into a proxemics exercise in which we made very simple tableaux. These ended up being about improvised scenarios set in hairdressers about girlfriend trouble. The next exercise was a chair objective game.

Overall reflecting on the workshop, and my delivery, the introduction and name games were positive and good icebreakers. The 1-2-3 game was a false start and too confusing. I was not confident enough in the space and not dynamic enough from the start. It was a hot day and the men mostly had freedom to be outside the buildings. The room was an unfocused space and was hard to work in.

Reflection on my aims: What were my initial aims for this session?  
Explore the possibility of drama in this environment. Introduce puppets to this environment. Understand the issues of the engagement with the men. How were these aims met? Drama is possible but in short bursts of energy. The men's imaginations need to be captured. The puppets were there as I had brought some and sat them on chairs, but we did not get around to using them. The poolroom is unusable.



Figure 5. The music room in the education block of Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith. 2015.

*24<sup>th</sup> June 2013, Day One, First Residency*

The staff in the prison are getting used to me and seem genuinely supportive. The education activities are quiet and do not seem well attended. I can only guess that the men struggle to find the point of the education hard to grasp given their circumstances.

After setting up in the music room space, I am introduced to a young man who is my translator for Punjabi speakers. He encourages a group of South Asian men to come into the space and then I had a group of eight men.

The group felt like a large presence in the small space. They seemed curious and amused by me. Lots of laughter at the situation of my study being about doing puppet theatre in a prison. Overall, my attempts at drama games as a warm up seemed futile with this group of men and the conversations about culture and misunderstandings were more significant. My pronunciation of "Kathputli," the string puppet tradition of Rajasthan, was a good source of amusement.

Once we start to play with the puppets, I ask them to give the puppets voices as I move them and the men start to be playful. The form of puppetry does not seem that weird or childish even in this context. The engagement with my activity seems to last with the large group for 40 minutes. After this, the men seemed bored and left the space. Three men remain and I ask them what they think of what I am doing and they suggest using music with the puppets as the language bores them.

Although in this day I have stretches of time without men to work with, I am pleased with the way the men engage voluntarily with what I am doing. The support of the translator was vital to actually making anything happen. The short session in the morning feels like a success and I am feeling more confident in the space and prison. It is difficult to sustain anything with groups as they really want is a distraction. When I am not distracting from the pressures of detention my activity does not serve a purpose and I lose them.

During lunch I joined the men and the canteen is a strange space where all the men lined up for food. In this canteen you see the extent of the population and the range of nationalities. You also see the scope of sadness in HMP Haslar IRC. After this lunch, I am faced by an empty space. Later my

translator/assistant turns up but with no one else. We run out of conversation and there seems little point in carrying on until he calls two of his friends. We start to talk in a relaxed way and they ask me questions about what I am doing. This easy conversation opens up the opportunity to improvise with the puppets. With one of the more confident men, we improvise a strange scene between puppets inside prison about their frustrations and desires. The other two men watch and seem entertained. This brief moment feels like a breakthrough and even though the theatre making is brief it feels important. The men then discuss the importance of writing a script and tomorrow they will participate.

My feelings are between the poles of doubt and success. Small events are happening that break the monotony of the prison experience for the men through what I am offering. More importantly, the dialogues between us are opening up and becoming more relaxed. The puppets allow a space to open up the dialogue with the men. Getting the men to participate is hard work but the puppets do seem to open a space in the confines of the music room.

*25<sup>th</sup> June 2013, Day Two, First Residency.*

A quiet morning as my translator/assistant is playing volleyball. A younger man comes in to play guitar. I decide to jam with him and show him a few things on the guitar. He came into the prison the previous night. His situation is harsh and close to my heart as he has been kicked out of university. He was arrested for a small infringement of his hours agreed on his visa. We play an Elvis song *Love Me Tender* and he briefly plays with shadow puppets. We talk and I discuss whether he has consulted a charity and almost at the same point Refugee Action call him. He leaves and I feel very concerned about his situation. This

man reminds me of my students. His life was a total mess and he just wanted to go back to his country of origin.

My assistant/translator comes back with his friend and we improvise dances with the puppets with drums as accompaniment. I start to consider working on some form of approximation of Rajasthan puppets as they use dance and music. Rajasthan puppets are an immediate form and I can exploit the music resources.

Later that morning I meet one of the men from the last Wednesday's workshop. He is leaving for India later that day. I wish him luck and tell him I am pleased to have met him. What has happened in this moment? I shake another man's hand and offer him graceful respect in this moment. Does this make either of us feel any better? This did not feel to me as though it was false or inauthentic. I shake and high five lots of hands in the days spent in HMP Haslar IRC. This reminds me that Halsar's logo is a handshake between black and white hands.

As the routine and environment is less alien, I grow in confidence. During the afternoon, I am struggling to carry on. The men are non-existent in the education space and a member of staff comments that the men are particularly docile at that moment. They appear like passive bodies in the system. The education team keep strange hours and are in at different times. At lunch, I sit opposite one of the men I recognise and he suggests I would be more popular if I were female.

After lunch, I read an article in *The Guardian* that the state of Israel is cancelling a puppet festival. Israeli authorities fear the power of the puppet.<sup>15</sup> I realise it must affect some old friends of mine.

During the afternoon three Albanian men, arrive. They want to play music but I persuade them to play drama and puppet games. We discuss puppetry in Albania and its name 'Kukull'. We discuss that in Albania puppets are not just for children. So far, the men do not immediately associate the puppets with juvenile experiences. We improvised scenes with the puppets that seemed to involve a lot of masturbation. The improvisations were good fun and I developed an idea of the puppet being sick but still the humour went back to sexual frustration and masturbation. Maybe this reflects some element of the frustrations of prison. An innovative development was using the puppets in relation to language. We played out a scene with the puppets and the audience interpreted the scene and translated. I worked with the confident English speaker and his pals interpreted. This clearly related to the aim and benefit of developing English-speaking skills. We ended the session with some drama exercises. I attempted to learn to speak some Albanian and this provided much hilarity amongst us. After forty minutes, the session ran out of energy and dissipated. Again I noted how this seemed to be a manageable time for the men's energy and attention.

*26<sup>th</sup> June 2013, Day Three, First Residency.*

This morning I started working with my assistant/translator and his friend. We began by developing a script starting from the idea of 'the man who went out to

<sup>15</sup> 'Israel Stops Children's Puppet Theatre Show Over PA Link'  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/24/israel-cancels-puppet-show-jerusalem> (Accessed 23 August 2016)

buy a fish'. I took this narrative from Bertolt Brecht's *Man Equals Man* partly because the puppet used was borrowed from a production of this play. This simple starting point is a rich source. From this point we devised by playing 'what happened next' in the space. The men were happy to input new information into the narrative. The story was improvised and the interest grew into what we were doing and three other men came in to observe. The short scenarios were played out in which the man talks to his wife about the fish, then meets his mate and gets drunk, drives a car drunk and crashes it. He is then arrested, his wife finds him in the police cells, and he has a meeting with his employer who is unsure he can carry on his job, goes back to wife and tries to make up. During the performance of the scenes, the men as audience are very reactive to the puppets. For example, one of the men shouts "fuck off" to my puppet which I find amusing and positive. He is not allowed to curse in the prison as part of the rules but he is allowed to curse at the puppet.

The shadow screen set up behind the table was the stage for the puppets and I started to develop effects like the animation of a car crash. The men liked the tricks with the shadow form. I suggested that we needed more shadows and the men started to draw shapes to cut out. An older man drew strange birds that I started to cut out. There was a spurt of creative energy in this moment and I was both pleased and surprised at how this came about. At this point of the week, my intention to bring puppets into this environment felt somewhat vindicated and justified. There was a sense of trust that had developed from the beginning of the week. This trust developed because of the employment of my assistant to encourage the men to participate. The listener centred approach to art making practice as suggested by Suzi Gablik (1991:

112) that I adopted appears to have reaped benefits by this point of the week. The issue of 'drop in' workshops with indeterminate numbers of men like this is a difficult issue for an artist to deal with. It is important in this environment that the artist is an experienced and confident practitioner.

In the afternoon, the education space was closed so it felt pointless to try to change the space just for the afternoon. Instead, I invited myself to a meeting in which the men are given opportunity to discuss issues in the jail. I wanted to feedback and represent what I was doing. I also wanted to thank the men for their contribution. The meeting followed the familiar format of an agenda driven meeting and it was interesting to see how the prison authority and the men related in this exchange of power. This form of bureaucracy was a way of giving the men a say in the way their incarceration was administered. This meeting is a part of the dispotif.

*27<sup>th</sup> June 2013 Day Four, First Residency.*

It was necessary to swap the space today because the music tutor was in the space. I moved to an empty English room and set up the shadow screen. A very quiet day in which the men did not seem interested in my workshops. Two men drifted in and we had short discussions about what I was doing and I showed them some of the puppets. I used the time to develop and rehearse a shadow performance based on the drawings and cut outs from the previous day. I had also built an articulated shadow puppet inspired by Chinese shadow puppets the night before. The puppet wore a turban and handsome beard. Many men were glancing at my work and I thought I should be ambitious and perform for the men the next day. There was a certificate ceremony and I would have a 'captive' audience. The shadow show I was performing involved a man who



picked a flower for his love then travelled through the city and out into the country to take the flower to his love. During this time birds hatch from some eggs and later a snake and weasel fight over the remaining eggs. The man's lover stands by a giant lotus flower (drawn on the Wednesday). Eventually the man reaches his lover and they drift off the screen kissing in the style of the Marc Chagall painting *The Birthday* from 1915.

Throughout the week, the workshops had been announced through the prison public announcement system. I had to compete with the good weather, cricket, volleyball and football. There is something odd and surreal about the experience of bringing puppets into the prison. The puppets poke out of my bags and intrigue the men as I pass them in corridors. They provoke bewilderment and smiles and they never appear to represent a threat.

*28<sup>th</sup> June 2013 Day Five, First Residency.*

It is again quiet in the education department but eventually my assistant duly arrives. I ask him to persuade his friend and participant from Wednesday morning to come and see if he will perform for the other men. He comes down after getting out of bed. I ask him how he feels about performing in front of the other men and he seems confident. I begin by showing the shadow piece I rehearsed the previous day and ask for some feedback. We move onto developing *The Man Who Went Out to Buy a Fish* by using some new shadows. K makes a fish shadow and I prepare a jail shadow. The agreement is to perform after the certificates are awarded to men in the education department. I prepare simple questions for feedback and the men are happy to deliver this information. I also have prepared letters of thanks for participating.

For the performances, the room is packed with around fifteen men and staff. We perform the fish piece first and K is nervous but after the initial scene, he finds his feet and we play out the piece as prepared. The audience is very reactive to the plot and fate of the main character. The shadow of the jail provokes a strong reaction that is vocalised in the audience. The show is well received and I then perform the shadow piece. I am nervous and conscious of delivering the right rhythm for what is essentially a slow moving shadow piece. To contextualise the performance I make sure the audience is informed that the show was using puppets that the men had started as drawings. A good reception from the audience towards the performance of the shadows. The men are very relaxed and supportive of my work and I end the week feeling very positive in regards to the residency. I speak to the assembled audience after and wish the men good luck and that I hope not to see them in the prison when I come back. This is an emotional and difficult contradictory speech to deliver.



Figure 6. Benches in the prison yard where puppets were constructed as part of workshops. Photograph. Matt Smith 2015.

*10th July 2013 – Day One, Second Residency in Prison Yard.*

I am filled with trepidation about having to work in the prison yard. A very hot day and the sun will mean that the space is busy. I am met at the gate by a very friendly prison officer who will be with me in the yard. This presence of the prison officer is a worry as it means that the men will be with the officer and me, which is different to the music room where I was not escorted. The space of the prison yard is very tense. I feel very nervous, anxious, and alien in this space. I put my objects on a bench on the grass and set up to make the puppets. Most of the men are pretty unimpressed by the puppets. I set up the materials and start making in the yard. I am making Punjabi style marionettes to try to connect to some of the men's heritage, as there are many South Asian men here.

I walk the puppet goat over to the men sitting in the shade of the prison yard. They like this marionette and it produces laughs and smiles. Some men come over as they were intrigued by my presence in the yard. The sun is very strong on my neck. After my initial feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty in this powerfully oppressive space, I grow in confidence and more men come over and then play. The activity is not about watching puppets, the idea is for the men to make puppets. They are reluctant to go onto this stage and it feels that I will struggle to bridge this with the officer standing next to me. Overall, a different form of struggle to engage participants without using manipulative means compared with last week. I was happy that the goat marionette I prepared brought some joy to this strange space.

*15th July 2013 Day Two, Second Residency in Prison Yard.*

Escorted by a different officer today who is female, which brings a different dynamic, and she says she is interested in drama. It is a bit difficult not to be

engaged in conversing with this friendly woman. She encourages the men and I take the puppets around the yard and there is more smiles and laughter from the men but we struggle to get men to want to make puppets with me.

Eventually, an East European man who is confident is encouraged by the prison officer to participate. He begins to work on the head of a puppet and the prison officer makes another puppet. I feel the activity is stretching the limits of what I can achieve in here. Even so, a small group of puppets is emerging mostly from my making in this space.

My concerns about the materials are not as much of a worry for the staff. My main concern is that the cord for the puppets could be used for a suicide attempt. I improvise more scenarios with the puppets in front of the men lounging in the shade. The approach is growing in confidence even though encouraging docile men to make puppets is an issue.

*16th July 2013 Day Three, Second Residency in Prison Yard.*

Finishing off the puppets in the yard, I have two dancing girls, a goat, a shepherd, a snake charmer and a snake. I have realised that the puppets are effective as objects to entertain in the yard so I start to use this space as an open studio workshop. Producing some form of outcome now seems important so I rehearse a series of acts as a working scenario. I use the music space to rehearse in and announce a time for the show the next day and this news is passed around staff.



Figure 7. Giant chess pieces in the prison yard. Photograph. Matt Smith 2015.

*17th July 2013 Day Four, Second Residency in Prison Yard.*

It's the day of the shows and I have constructed a backdrop from cloth for the puppets that can be pegged into the grass in the yard. The show will be a collection of variety pieces that will have a Bollywood soundtrack. I had thought of using music that is more specific but the Bollywood songs are very popular. While I am rehearsing in the music room a group of men come and in and play drums and watch the puppets dance. They all start to sing a very lively song and the space comes alive. The room is transformed in this wonderful moment. I did not need to encourage this moment of flow as it seemed to happen out of the spirit of the men.

Encouraged by the impromptu performance I go to the yard and set up a performance space. I am very nervous again because of this oppressive space. The music CD is played on a small CD player from inside a small hut that is used to observe the men in the yard. Some younger men who I met during the last residency gather as an audience and I perform a show. The reception is very lively because of the music and the spectacle. The men sing to the songs and clap along. At the end, they give me generous applause as thanks. I show

a repeat performance, then one of the confident men comes over and performs with me, and then I let him perform alone.

The staff are very positive about this performance. Overall I am feeling sunburnt and tired as I reflect on this intervention in the space of the yard. The performing seemed to transgress this space through the playful joyous use of puppets. I would have liked more participation but the context and sunshine was too strong to avoid passivity and docility. Compared to the music room it is harder to control events in the prison yard. The style of street puppetry stood up to the challenge of the tense space.

*2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013 - Meeting with PO R and administrator S regarding community day.*

Generally, a positive meeting about coming in to develop a presentation for the community day. Discussed the increase in population at HMP Haslar IRC from 160 to 200 detainees and how in other establishment like HMP Verne the numbers are now up to 600. R said that one of her aims would be for the men to tell their stories and discuss experiences. The list of participating organisations was on the table and they all seemed either institutional or voluntary/charities. A detainee who had been asked to speak had dropped out due to confidence issues. I discussed the possibility of sharing performance material if things worked out with time. It was agreed by prison staff that two men could be on special project detail and paid to support my work. I have mixed feelings about this situation even though I know it would benefit participation.



Figure 8. Music room in education block HMP Haslar IRC. Photograph.Matt Smith 2015.

*7<sup>th</sup> October 2013 – Day One, Third Residency.*

Monday is slow start to the week residency and some key people who could support my work from education department are off sick. I spend a couple of hours working out puppets into order for performance. Eventually one man decides he is interested and we start working with puppets. I ask him whether he wants to come back tomorrow and he seems keen. No idea what happened to the men who were meant to be on special detail with me.

*9<sup>th</sup> October 2013 Day Two, Third Residency*

Tuesday is disappointing, as the man who I thought I would be working with has left the prison, probably deported. Slow again and hard to work towards outcome on Friday after this setback. Losing sight of the point of this residency and performance.



Figure 9. Audience at the community day event October 2013. Photograph. Rose Morton 2013.

*10<sup>th</sup> October 2013 Day Three, Third Residency*

Thursday is just as slow but in the last part of the session a man comes who says he is from Algeria. He is intrigued by what I am doing and likes to play the drums to accompany my puppets.



Figure 10. Shadow puppet performance at the community event October 2013. Journeyman puppet crossing the ocean with fish. Photograph. Rose Morton 2013.

*11<sup>th</sup> October 2013 Day Four, Third Residency*

Friday is day of the event. Unsure the man I worked with yesterday is going to come and play. He arrives almost on time and enthused. I start to collaborate with him as musician. We start to develop the sound landscape with more



percussive sounds. As we rehearse the door opens and a man comes in who looks timid and depressed. He sits, watches, and then joins the music making. Another man who plays Indian drums then joins us. He does not want to do the show but instead play during our rehearsal. The band then grows to three with another Algerian man. With a band of three musicians, I perform the show for the community event and discuss my approach with a question and answer session after. The men are invited to comment on the activity and they offer positive comments. The event felt very quickly assembled but well received. It also felt as though the project was justifying itself to the authority as members of senior staff were in the audience.



Figure 11. Empty tool box with the shadows of tools on the back board education block HMP Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith 2015.

*16<sup>th</sup> December 2013 – Day One, Fourth Residency.*

Epic journey on my bike this morning, in wind and rain. I am struggling to find motivation and energy. I left my mobile phone in my pocket by mistake. Five men came in and popped their heads into space to watch the puppets as I

played. One man came and stayed while I improvised a new set up with shadow puppets. H came in and wanted to learn some guitar so I facilitated this, as the puppetry did not seem to be progressing. He became more interested in my project. He showed me his artwork and displayed genuine pride. Slow as always to start these residencies.

Long lunch and then started to fall asleep in the music room. There was not much happening until two men turn up to play instruments and show interest in my puppet project. I discuss the nature of my project and they make some suggestions. We start to play guitars and discuss music – *Jingle Bells*, Nirvana. Then we discuss the project and how they could participate. To finish we play a Nepalese song and I suggest I will learn it for tomorrow. The story developed during discussions for puppets is about a hero and man as villain.

*17<sup>th</sup> December 2013 Day Two, Fourth Residency.*

Slight delay at the gate trying to gain admission into the prison. I was told that the participants from yesterday had borrowed guitars and were playing in a cupboard. This was due to restrictions on the music space. I brought them into the music room space and showed them a song sheet I had printed for them. They asked me how the show was progressing and that they would like to work with me. They were interested and we started to work on the scenarios. N suggested the characters should be king and queen like in the Ramayana story cycles. N suggested we needed obstacles to put in the way of the characters journey and we started to construct a story with zombies, villains and animals. Over lunch, I cut out more shapes with some based from drawings by the men.

For a lengthy period, N was alone and we began to improvise the story with the characters after a short introduction to the technique. I used the guitar

sounds to underscore this playing. I explained to the men that the story without speech would work because of language issues in the prison. This approach was easier with the shadows to develop. I took the projector off the floor and placed it onto a stand, which worked well. The long lunch kills the energy in here.

In the afternoon, I ran out of energy. The participants came over late in the day and I had already taken down the screen so we played guitars for fifteen minutes.

*18<sup>th</sup> December 2013 Day Three, Fourth Residency.*

The men were there and on time and willing to work. I brought along a songbook and we played some songs on the guitar to get us going. Then we started to retell the story with puppets with the written structure decided between us. B is happy to perform and work as puppeteer with his friend as musician. B is in control of the narrative. B is a very young man and seems vulnerable. N seems far more in tune with the world.

*19<sup>th</sup> December 2013 Day Four, Fourth Residency.*

We work only in the afternoon because of issues with space. N and B come in as usual but I was not sure whether they wanted to do the puppetry. I questioned their loyalty to the project, but didn't express this doubt. I worked with B on the puppets and he seemed to lack confidence, so I encouraged him. We rehearsed with B in control of the narrative again and he seems to grow in confidence. The performance of the shadows is his story. We discuss his influence from the stories of the *Ramayana* and *Arabian Nights* and we discussed how this puppet show is a mix up of these styles of storytelling. N improvises on his guitar to support the performance. After a few rehearsals, we

take a break and relax and the conversation opens up. We discuss issues of preserving folk traditions against waves of globalisation. Then we discussed their situation and how they were detained in HMP Haslar IRC. They explained they were detained for just a week because of visa problems. They described the situation in Nepal as dangerous with violence and civil unrest. We discussed in more detail my project and why I was there. We discussed the politics of immigration detention and that the whole situation was a mess. They said that HMP Haslar IRC was not 'very bad' and that the activities were a good positive distraction. They talked about an 18 year old detainee who's situation was 'bad' and another man who had been imprisoned for 3 years due to lack of legal support. The way this conversation flowed felt natural and a positive way to converse. This was a golden moment in the process of this project because the creativity had enabled the dialogue. We discussed puppets in films – Japanese and Indian. I discussed the odd way that the dormitories are named after British naval ships and how this reminded me of the history of British naval prison hulk ships.

*20<sup>th</sup> December 2013 Day Five, Fourth Residency.*

Arrived early, to set up room and there is usual confusion over my escort. Feeling positive today, but worried that the men will not be here anymore. R from education staff comes and collects me from the gate. She is positive as ever. They are all looking forward to the performance. I set up and wonder whether the men will turn up and I find them. We warm-up and run through. B is becoming more confident with small changes to his performance in each run and I let B take control of the performance. We have to wait a long ten minutes after the giving out of certificates. I briefly introduce the performance and that

the story was developed by B. The performance is a great success but the prince's arm falls off. The reception from the audience is very warm and we receive heartfelt applause. Many positive reactions to the performance especially from the detainees and audience of fifteen people.

My approach is more confident in this environment, but I feel exhausted. I felt I had worked effectively and felt satisfied. This positive reaction is mixed with anger at the system that I am working in and how it puts these men in prison due to immigration policies.

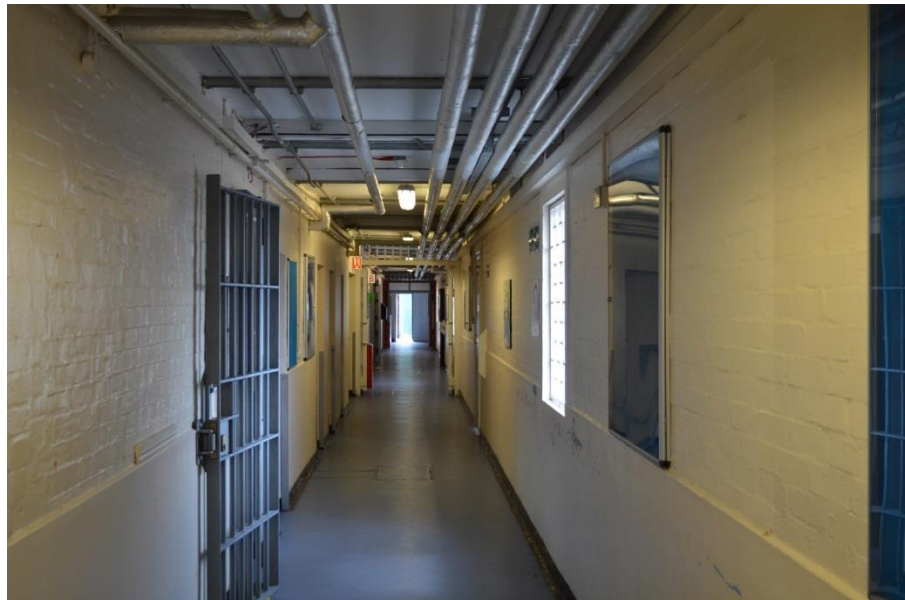


Figure 12. Long corridor connecting dormitories in HMP Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith 2015.

*31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 – Day One, Fifth Residency.*

Feeling underprepared and anxious going in today. Decided to do usual shadow workshop and see what happens. The home office have put up new signs outside on the walls and in the waiting room by the gate. “HOME OFFICE DETENTION OPERATIONS MISSION. DETENTION OPERATIONS, PART OF IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT, SERVICES...OUR PURPOSE IS TO

ENSURE...SECURELY AND CARED FOR WITH HUMANITY". Waiting again for someone to pick me up in the waiting room at the gate. Last night the radio reported about a woman who has died suspiciously at Yarl's Wood IRC.<sup>16</sup> Fire alarm goes off as I arrive at the education block. Lots of confusion in the education block for a short while. I set up my work in the music room.

After a short while, some inquisitive men come and have a look, but just for a short while. Two men – one from Uganda arrived and asked whether I was teaching music and I explained my project. They seemed mildly interested and the more confident man spoke about the contestants on *Britain's Got Talent* as a reference point. They said they had been in HMP Haslar IRC for a week and we began to play guitars. I showed them some chords and we had a conversation. One of the men left and the other stayed while I played with shadows. He seemed to be distracted and went off to the art room. He came back later and said I should record the shadows. Quiet morning waiting for interest from the men. I should make some new shadows and a performance more relevant to detention.

Lunch with the men is always strange and slightly tense with the collective awkwardness. I read the paper and discuss with the librarian the pain of the men and the illegality of their situation. She mentions an Australian friend who is being deported. It is very quiet in the afternoon, waiting for participation.

Two men arrive near the end of the hour and I ask them to sit for an improvised show using the stock characters and the soundtrack of the world music CD. I then had a good chat with man from Bangladesh who has been in

<sup>16</sup> 'Yarl's Wood Immigration Centre Detainee Dies' <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/mar/30/yarls-wood-immigration-centre-detainee-dies> (Accessed 24 August 2016)

UK for seven years and remembers festivals and puppets in the villages back home. The fishing analogy in regards to gaining interest and participation is embodied in these experiences. I struggle for a sense of purpose so I revisit my aims in the evening.

*April 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 Day Two, Fifth Residency.*

I am thinking about yesterday and whether I achieved anything. The two men who watched the improvised scenes was an interesting moment. They were very vocal in their thanks and looked intently at the way the shadows were presented in the show. The new cut-outs for shadows I will play with today. There is a dense fog outside, reflecting my mood. I think about my aims of promoting positive dialogues with men caught within the immigration system.

Very slow in the morning and so I started playing with puppets to see what I could develop. The Ugandan man came in again and asked about what my practice involves. I performed for him a rough version of the new story and he seemed interested in the instruments. We played guitars and I played a blues number. It looks like all that I will manage during this week is a short performance sharing. It is hard to sustain my energy for this way of working. I considered asking the Ugandan man to write me a story based on the puppets. The staff at prison have printed posters to advertise the workshops in an attempt to get the men involved.

Greeting detainees' involves the issue of when not to look at the other's face. Without looking away you would be staring or displaying an unwanted gaze. This gaze becomes an intrusion on the other person's private life. The flawed context of the prison serves to amplify the sense of these awkward looks. I feel a strong sense of this in the lunch hall when there are so many

disturbed souls obviously dispossessed and caught within the bureaucratic limbo of immigration detention.

Felt just as quiet as the morning until a Turkish man comes in and we discuss Karagöz shadow puppet theatre and the way the Home Office are making his life difficult. We have what seems a genuine conversation about puppets and how he thinks what I am doing is “nice”. Quiet period and just in the mood to finish and give up and a young man comes in and says he remembers the puppet show from Christmas time, and can he participate. I show him the old puppets and we look at the new ones. He starts to play and make up scenarios with the puppets and I feel a strong emotional reaction to the fact that he is keen after watching the show. At the same time I am concerned that such a young man with a lovely personality is locked up here.

The experience of this jail always makes me feel conflicting emotions. Every success or achievement is marred by the painful injustice of the context of these men. I am tired already and the uncertainties of this space are exhausting.

*2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014 Day Three, Fifth Residency.*

CCTV camera upgrade of the panopticon in the prison control room. Discussion about Bangladeshi puppetry and Karagöz with some men. Long periods of waiting and filling time mixed with the exhaustion of detention. The spark of something unusual during a moment of detention mixed with the spark of a connection. Dark feelings of uncertainty connected to questions around the purpose and the validity of my activities. I reflect on the wider philosophical implications around my research position. This connects to the way the immigrant detainees are represented.



The morning is spent with H. I set up expecting him not to arrive but he arrives and we started to work on the shadows. We develop the story about a journey; I encourage him to suggest dramaturgical solutions and suggest characters for the puppets. H then showed me the work on the walls of the centre and his file full of his certificates. I felt confident enough to ask him why he was in HMP Haslar IRC and he described his failed asylum case. He explains he was fleeing the civil war in Sri Lanka and that he was fighting his case but had no money. He was part of a church group and getting support from this community. He hoped to be leaving soon and I hoped for this too. I looked into his eyes and I felt love but also an overwhelming sense of uncertainty.

The kit that I am building for the shadow puppet workshop seems to fit well into the practicalities of HMP Haslar IRC. It all fits into bags and is easy to set up in the education department.

*3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014 Day Four, Fifth Residency.*

Arrived a bit early at the gate and waited. I am trying not to anticipate what might happen today. I try not to worry about whether the men I have been working with this week will be here or not.

Ten audience members at the performance; including six detainees, two prison officers and two educational staff. A warm reception from the audience towards the shadow theatre. With a bit of coaxing we managed to have an audience. H was very appreciative and said how he had enjoyed the experience. We took photos on the education department camera and made sure that H signed consent form. I gave H the letter I had promised him to add to certificates and said I hoped to meet him on the outside and buy him a

coffee. The 'buzz' of excitement about the performance passed quickly as I packed away the equipment. The performance was a successful way to end the experience and it felt appropriate ending in this way. H's drawings on acetates were a good addition to the shadow images. The story played out was connected to the experiences of the men with the migration narrative of a migrant man and the image of the jail in shadows.

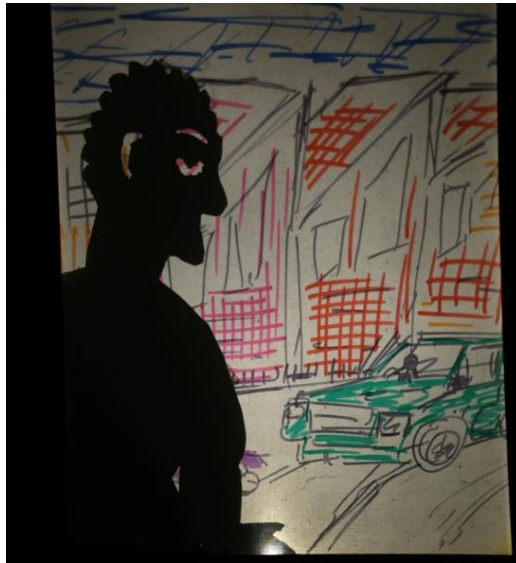


Figure 13. Shadow puppet of journeyman with drawn acetate background by detainee.

Photograph. Greg Smith 2015.

*8<sup>th</sup> July 2014 – Day One, Sixth Residency.*

I have been coming to this jail now for well over a year and there are familiar feelings at the beginning of the project in relation to this situation. The education block seems quiet as usual and one reason for this is Ramadan. I feel a strong sense of trepidation. The management staff are moving jobs since last time I was here and I notice new publicity about how the Home Office wants these places to be run. Evidence of this is to be found on the notices on the walls.

H comes in and it is great to see him again but frustrating as he is still in here. He says he hopes he has two weeks left before his bail hearing. He gives

me a hug. He is busy finishing a painting but wants to come in and work with me this afternoon. He is my only visitor in the first hour. It is difficult to be patient in this environment when my life is so busy.

My aims are to use puppets to tell stories with the men and possibly stories that are difficult to tell. Possibly attempt performing with Punjabi style puppets in yard, as the weather is good. Possibly a narrative loosely based on Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle* with baby shadow puppet. Detainee who calls himself Z comes in and likes the look of the shadows and we have discuss what I am doing. He is very interested and talks about the shadow company from last year on *Britain's Got Talent*. Z says of my practice "that is sick man". For some reason, there is early roll check so all men called to their dormitories. Briefly, very friendly man called S comes in and discusses his love of photography and that he remembers me from last time. A short morning, filled with the same waiting and anticipating.

In the newspaper, I read at lunchtime there is a report of the Australian navy sending Sri Lankan asylum seekers back. <sup>17</sup>Why is it that every time I come into HMP Haslar IRC a major story breaks about immigration? There is a clipping on the wall in the staff kitchen from local press describing how the local community is 'forging greater links with centre'.

I reflect on the language for policing borders as I read an article about Australia's 'operation foreign borders'. It reminds me of my return to UK recently and at passport control, the staff were labelled 'border force.' This military discourse is used to reflect the harsh management of this space.

<sup>17</sup> 'Asylum Secrecy on the High Seas is Designed to Foil the Enemy Within'  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/09/asylum-secrecy-on-high-seas-designed-to-foil-the-enemy-within-the-law> (Accessed 20 August 2016)

I keep shaking hands with every detainee. I cannot stop this mode of physical relation with the men and it feels appropriate. I do not perform this form of physical exchange in other social aspects of my life as frequently. Am I reaching out? Trying to make connections?

By the end of the afternoon, I have devised a scenario for the shadow baby puppet. The afternoon session is very slow and H is still finishing a painting of Kate Moss. The environment of the jail is tiring, especially when not much is occurring.

*9<sup>th</sup> July 2014 Day Two, Sixth Residency.*

Slow again today with three men coming in for chat about what I am doing but not interested enough to participate. H is still finishing his picture and I will not hassle him. As usual at the beginning of a workshop residency, the men are intrigued but not sure about coming into the workshop. I have not seen that many posters around about what I am doing. Should check how busy the yard is and if it might be more productive basing myself out there.

The waiting and not being active with participants makes me question the point and value of this activity. If H is not interested I will just prepare my own show for Friday as some kind of output. I am tired and lacking motivation so I begin drawing sketches of a goat puppet. I start to devise a loose narrative around a babysitter who loses the baby puppet. Goat takes baby, baby falls in the river and then fish takes baby to shore. Many men stand at entrance to the space and watch as I play with shadow puppets. The images seem to please the men who stop and watch. I start to think about animal stories and proverbs.

In the afternoon, I am packing away as I have run out of energy and just as I am doing this H comes in with another man who is interested. We briefly

make plans for the next day and that we should find some stories that we could adapt and make into a performance. The format of very slow and frustrating days at the beginning of the project seems to be a consistent way that these projects develop. You just hold onto small interactions and moments in this type of environment and believe that these events give purpose to the practice.

That evening I research Sri Lankan folktales and find one I like which is *The King Who Learnt the Speech of Animals* from village folk tales of Ceylon.

<sup>18</sup>An odd tale that ends in wife beating, but the idea of speaking to animals I like.

*July 10<sup>th</sup> 2014 Day Three, Sixth Residency.*

H arrives with books he has borrowed from one of the teaching staff – Roald Dahl and *Aesop's Fables*. We discuss these and the stories from Ceylon I found and the rough outline for the baby stories. H seems to like the idea of basing the narrative around the baby puppet that I have been playing with for the last two days. We easily devise a performance as I have already worked with H. I suggest that we add extra elements of a framing narrative in which we bring in the king who speaks to animals. We develop sections of the performance and the ambition is to use shadows to tell the story. We discuss H's village back home and the beauty of his home and we talk about his conversion from Hinduism to Christianity while in detention. I suggest we should meet up for lunch after his release.

<sup>18</sup> Vol. 3 by H Parker 1914H. Parker, *Village Folk-Tales of Ceylon*, vol. 3 (London: Luzac and Company, 1914), no. 238, pp. 258-60.

I read a story in news today about problems facing immigrants from Honduras in the USA. <sup>19</sup>

After all the waiting a productive morning but the man (not H) who wanted to join us has a football tournament. Looks like we could put on a show tomorrow and then next week work on the marionettes from the prison yard. Considered puppetry in Sri Lanka for inspiration in a museum collection online and it appears that the marionette is popular there. We work on script for the performance and develop voices. The ambition for H and me to vocalise during the performance shows a growing confidence in H and puppetry. In the afternoon, we work in the art room and this space has a very different dynamic. The way the art tutor works is very gentle and sincere and this space appears to offer some form of solace for the men here.

*July 11<sup>th</sup> 2014 Day Four, Sixth Residency.*

Reflection on performance day includes satisfaction tinged with sadness. H spoke about his traditional dance training and artistic family in Sri Lanka. The puppetry is even more accomplished with a new narrative and voices. H was confident and enjoyed making sounds and vocalising with puppet. The longer narrative in the show worked well and indicated a greater confidence. The story was simple and in keeping with *Arabian Nights* style epic narratives. Our story is; a king speaks to animals about what they can do for him; goat gives milk, peacock gives feathers, bee gives honey, horse gives a ride. The princess arrives, he asks her the same question, and she says she will give him a story. The story of the lost baby; the baby is given to baby sitter who loses baby to

<sup>19</sup> 'Flee or Die: Violence Drives Central America's Child Migrants to US Border'  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/09/central-america-child-migrants-us-border-crisis>  
(Accessed 20 August 2016)

goat who takes baby for a ride, baby then falls in the river. Fish saves baby from drowning and takes baby to shore. Baby is then taken to ducks nest and the baby looks after the eggs and protects the eggs from a fox and snake. A duckling hatches and the baby goes to a dark place with a dragon. The knight kills dragon and then takes the baby back to the baby sitter. The babysitter then takes the baby back to the princess before sundown. The knight finally proposes to the babysitter.

H seemed happier telling a more light-hearted and comic story than one about detention or exile. The reaction of the audience was very positive. There was eighteen squeezed into the music room.

I still feel the work I am conducting in HMP Haslar IRC is useful and ethical. Useful in the way the projects have a focus on performance even though the more important product is social. The joy and pleasure that the performances offer to the assembled audiences justifies the frustrating waiting that I have to undergo at the beginning of the week's residency. The ethical way that I situate myself to the bodies of the men in HMP Haslar IRC is also a key element in practice. I wait for their interest and for them to make choices and not to be chosen. Autonomy for their process is important. I inhabit the role of the meek hero with open hands and this is how I walk into the prison. I face my fears and look beyond the trauma of the context around me. Then the theoretical and philosophical problems about how as an artist I can engage in this space become a labyrinth of complex reflections connected to this practice.

*July 14<sup>th</sup> 2014 Day Five, Sixth Residency.*

H is busy with immigration and bail issues and the future of his case. S is busy also and I am just not interesting enough on a Monday morning. Very slow and

there is little interest and it feels like the start of last week. I need to review how I conduct these residencies. Feeling fatigued in this environment.

The news today is that the NHS has given access to the Home Office to look at records because of immigration fears.<sup>20</sup>

I notice that new riot shields have been delivered to the prison at the gate. In the afternoon two men arrive to watch shadows and one of them asks whether I have ever been to India. I start to think about how I have appropriated puppet forms from other cultures to connect to the men here. I build a weird puppet head with masking tape and then make a strange bird. Every puppet I construct in here feels different to puppets built outside of this environment. The ambition this week is to create a scratch performance by the end of week with new puppets. It is too quiet in the education department so I may work in the yard again with drums outside this time. I am thinking of the phrase 'be thankful for small mercies' in relation to the slow process here. It is a beautiful summer's day. Fatigue makes your attitude to practice oscillate between positive realism and negative pointlessness in here and the sense of passivity is infectious.

*July 15<sup>th</sup> 2014 Day Six, Sixth Residency.*

Very hot sunny weather and I bring more kit to make puppets. I am wondering where H will be at today as I arrive at the prison.

'Securely held with care and humanity'. I notice this phrase as part of Home Office signage.

H turns up, we begin to make puppets, and a picture of a Pakistani puppet I bring in inspires him. We discuss the issue of fast track deportations

<sup>20</sup> 'Home Office Accessing NHS Records to Help Track Down Illegal Immigrants'  
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/jul/13/home-office-nhs-records-illegal-immigrants>  
(Accessed 21 August 2016)



and that they have stopped because of judicial work that is going on in law courts. We also discuss how odd it is to detain men in this way. H suggests that some men like the prison but for him it is like a living hell where he has lost a whole year of his life. We are interrupted by a fire alarm test and a dog comes in sniffing for drugs.

In the newspaper today, the new boss of Wonga has axed the puppets used in the advertising campaign. <sup>21</sup>I discuss the story with the librarian. The Wonga puppets are accused of dehumanising in a cute way loan sharks. In addition, we discussed that if you are not employed by the system you are not part of the system. Is this my position in relation to HMP Haslar IRC?

I wrote this list of thoughts and concerns while waiting; Unfinished, waiting, knowledge, subjectivity, welcome, strangers, unfit, consumption, outsiders, looking backwards, staring again, wasting time, limitless love for the other, handshakes, smiles and broken conversations, time, interruptions, conflict, understanding, workshop, trying to make sense of the events and moments of practice, isolation, defining a sense of belonging.

In the evening, I watch the drama on Channel 4 TV, *Glasgow Girls*, about local people standing up to deportations and immigrants' rights. The repeated motifs of dawn raids and planes flying overhead chime with the experience of Halsar.

<sup>21</sup> 'Wonga Appoints Chairman with Blue-Chip Financial Credentials'  
<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/jul/14/wonga-appoints-chairman-andy-haste> (Accessed 20 August 2016)



Figure 14. Female dancers. Marionettes constructed in HMP Haslar. Photograph. Matt Smith 2014.

*July 16<sup>th</sup> 2014 Day Seven, Sixth Residency.*

I watch discarded socks blown by wind and brought to life outside the jail. It feels hotter today so the men will be even more docile and passive I assume.

In the art room with H finishing marionettes and I feel I need to leave him some autonomy in his building of the puppet as he is already well accomplished in artmaking. I take this approach to encouraging autonomy in most making workshop situations, as the participant is free to discover through the haptic experience. H paints his puppet in bold colours of yellow, red and gold. We do not speak much in the art making space and we share this space with men making loom bands and printed T-shirts. We carry on quiet considered making and then H has to leave to go for an important visit. I ask his advice in how to finish off the puppet.

Before the afternoon, I am asked by a grumpy member of education staff to leave as he suggests there is not enough staff, but I suspect this is just an excuse to get rid of me because he does not like me.

*July 17<sup>th</sup> 2014 Day Eight, Sixth Residency.*

Waiting at the gate, I notice a cabinet in the office with the text 'CS GAS POLICE' hand written over it and a key sits in the cabinet lock. The threat of violence is always lurking in the background of HMP Haslar IRC.

I consider how I will manage to perform in the prison yard. Apparently, the man who asked me to leave has apologised. H continued to work on the puppets without me yesterday, but he is stressed as his bail hearing is on Monday. He will be on a video link with a translator and a solicitor. We prepare the space for the puppets. H says he would love one day to graduate from a course like my students. Tomorrow we will make a show of short scenarios with the marionettes. I feel very positive after today. One of the education staff comments as I leave; "let's hope the puppetry will take H's mind off the stress of his situation"

*July 18<sup>th</sup> 2014 Day Nine, Sixth Residency.*

Performance day and it looks unlikely we can do the show in the prison yard as it looks like rain and I decide to perform in the music room again. Start to set up marionette theatre space with two large sheets of material, microphone stands and bamboo. It is an effort to make a proscenium in this way but we manage. As we set up S comes in and says he would love to play live music for us. We plot out the short skits in a variety style, the puppet built by H with pointy hat is the master of ceremonies, and he introduces the show. The acts are; dancing

girls, snake charmer, bizarre bird, goat and shepherd, dog and owner and finally footballer puppet.

Before the show, we discuss H's bail hearing and the video link and how he is stressed about this event. I express my sympathy and then we prepare by roughly rehearsing. The live drumming and rhythms gives the show an extra dynamic with the small audience clapping along and laughing. Another success at the end of a long week and I pack away feeling satisfied and melancholy. The teacher from education who ejected me the other day is still awkward. Another member of staff suggests that H should do puppet shows at the end of every week as they bring joy to the centre.

An odd thing happens in that I ask about the nationality of one of the men who looks unusual and the staff tell me he is from the USA, which is an oddity in UK immigration detention.



Figure 15. Master of ceremonies puppet built in HMP Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith 2014.

*23<sup>rd</sup> February 2015, Day One, Seventh Residency.*

Wind and rain on the journey to prison. Splattered face from rain on bin bag and walk through the gate with ease. Men look at the goat puppet in the corridors. Quick conversation with detainee who looks like he is a teenager with a very innocent face. Men and prison officers comment about the puppet goat. The puppet seems to produce smiles already but he is also still rather uncanny. Staff encourage the men to come in and work with the puppets but the detainees are bemused. P comes in and has a look at the puppet goat and shadows and he comments on how the puppet goat makes people smile and laugh. I show him how the shadows work and that he could join in. I use *Post It* notes of text to read and play with the voice of the goat, and I am unsure of what feels right; a posh or northern accent. Three men come in and seem interested, one man in particular seems keen, and I show him the technique. I try out some of the text of the goat and he approves. I play with “the grass is greener” line. The detainee has a go at using the puppet goat and talks to men in the corridor outside the room. This type of puppet elicits a different kind of response from the men, as its scale and ability to speak with movable mouth means it is more direct than shadow puppets. A positive morning that feels supported by the men and staff. Someone suggests that only female goats have beards.

I discuss with one of the men the difference between ventriloquism and my way of performing with puppet goat. The Prison Officer R wants to pet the goat. I have positive conversation with prison staff about the effect of the puppetry in HMP Haslar IRC.

I read article in *The Guardian* newspaper about prison populations rising from 1994 49000 to now 2015, 85000. “Prison works” is a slogan and not a solution.’<sup>22</sup>

A very quiet time in the education department for first half hour and then after this point strange shouts from one of the men. I was unsure what to make of these sounds and he started to pace the corridors shouting and sounding disturbed. I moved the puppet of the goat, as I did not want to disturb him any more by this uncanny creature. It does not feel like anything creative can get started now. According to the staff, the man’s shouts are normal as he does this regularly, but this sounds like the ranting of a mentally disturbed man. H’s puppets are so beautiful just standing there on top of the steel cupboard and I am pleased that H is not in here anymore. I need to be here a lot longer to gain trust of men to develop a show. Time always flows differently here compared to outside.

I achieved everything today in the morning and it was worth the effort to see the smiles and brief interactions that occurred. Is this place a space where poetry has no place? Does this project mark the limit to my art? These questions are difficult to answer when locked up in these spaces. It is time to go home and rest.

Nothing compares to the release and excitement when I leave the prison gate. Time really dragged in the afternoon with the repeated noise of the man jabbering to himself almost too much to bear. The puppet goat sleeps in the prison tonight and can be a witness to the troubled sleep of the immigrant

<sup>22</sup> ‘Nick Clegg to Decry Prison Numbers as Lib Dems Lay Out Justice Policy’  
<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/feb/23/nick-clegg-to-attack-growing-prison-population>  
(Accessed 20 August 2016)

detainee. He will sleep there for one night only. A puppet that has already connected to a number of people both inside and outside.

*Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015 Day Two, Seventh Residency.*

Frustrating day full of confusion and problems as I am labelled by the prison officers as representing the university and this means men want to talk to me about courses and how to get into education and that was not what I thought would happen. I am not prepared for this. For the first time after two years of coming to Haslar one of the men expresses that he thinks puppets are just for kids. I discuss with two men their situation, how they already have credits and could finish their courses. I set up and get ready for the show. The room to perform in is full of voluntary organisations and charities like Friends Without Borders, British Red Cross and Bail in Detention services, nurses and the Home Office operatives. I am very frustrated by the confusion about my contribution to this community day. Without a group of men to work with this activity lacks a purpose. The space is difficult to set up in and the shadow screen almost impossible to set up. I meet about five detained men who want to discuss their options and ability to carry on in education. They all speak perfect English and have other great skills to offer. The woman from the Home Office did not see the point in the conversation or a future for their education and makes that clear to me.

The set up was awkward and nervous, the show was not presented in front of the detainees and these problems were hard to resolve. The goat performed but the mouth did not work very well, he introduced the shadows and I briefly showed them a scenario. It was good to give the goat his inaugural performance but not without the detainees. There was not enough time to gain

trust and this is frustrating. Number of vans coming into HMP Haslar IRC has increased in volume. Channel 4 TV *Dispatches* exposes alarming undercover video footage of Yarl's Wood detention centre.



Figure 16. Bird marionette constructed in HMP Haslar. Photograph. Matt Smith 2014.



## Chapter 3:

### The Immigrant Identity Represented as ‘Über-Marionette’: Developing an Approach to Participants in an Immigration Removal Centre.

---



Figure 17. Shadow puppet in prison. 2015. Photograph. Gregg Smith.

At the end of a week-long residency at Haslar IRC, I asked five men I had worked with for some simple written feedback in response to the activity of puppetry (see Appendix One). One of the responders compared his situation as detainee as analogous to the pernicious passivity of a puppet: ‘I feel puppets is like us. Like us lazy who we spend in life and with puppets you can explain your idea and experience.’ I was startled and surprised at this comment about the situation of the detainee experience. Why had this man compared himself to a puppet? I did not feel it was appropriate to question him further about his comment. The complex situation of the prison was not practicable to question

him further, and access was restricted. In relation to the traumatic space of immigration detention both inside the prison and in the outside context of discourses about immigration, the man's comment makes a stark point. The immigrant detainee identified himself as docile in this comment. This reflected the prison environment, where the men appeared docile and as though they lacked motivation due to the disorientating space of the prison. The men were forcibly coerced into the prison by government forces, including the police, the United Kingdom Border agency (UKBA) and the Home Office. Related to this powerful process, in the context outside of the prison in popular media and public consciousness, the need to control individuals like the men I worked with made them appear puppet-like as docile bodies caught within the liminal space of detention. This was also evident when they were described within judicial, media and political discourses. The comment by the detainee also suggests that, in this system of power, the individual detainee performs within the everyday carceral spaces like a puppet. Conversely, the comments in the written feedback also indicated that the puppet workshop, in a positive way, gave him the opportunity to express ideas. This comment left a powerful impression on my thoughts as I was developing the workshops at HMP Haslar IRC.

Throughout this chapter, the writing develops a viewpoint of immigration detention that is considered with the puppet as metaphor and as a performing object in practice. I explore the tensions and challenges faced by the practitioner surrounding the politics of the representation of detainees during the early stages of a project. This exploration of the complex terrain and space of immigration detention focuses on problems of agency and power that connect

to the concept of biopower introduced previously in the thesis. How the body of the immigrant detainee is represented as an 'über-marionette' within the culture of detention is explored in this chapter. The term 'über-marionette' was first used by modernist theatre innovator Edward Gordon Craig in 1908 to describe an idealised artificial actor. This ideal puppet is related to power when Craig suggests in *The Mask* that the puppet 'waits until his master signals to act and then in a flash, and in one inimitable gesture, he readjusts the injustice of justice the illegality of the law ... the tragic farce of "Religions", the broken pieces of philosophies and the trembling ignorance of all policies' (96). This ability of the performing object to serve as heuristic to society through performance chimes with the issues around puppets and participants identities I explore in this chapter.

As part of my PaR engaging with the immigration network in the UK I undertook a negotiation with the power of the authority of the state and the bodies and the power of the individuals incarcerated by the state. This engagement provoked difficult questions about already developed assumptions troubling the ideals of community, the way practitioners approach groups on the margins and how we consider these groups as categorised collectives. As a PaR project, this practice developed a research position that was ethical, reactive and sensitive, because of the problems of representation and enforced categories. One method to explore practice in the field of immigration detention was by employing the concept of biopower. The concept of biopower explored draws on the arguments of political philosopher Giorgio Agamben and his philosophical development of Michel Foucault's original concept. The questions about interpretation and representation as part of my creative practice are

framed by post-structural theory as presented by Foucault and Agamben. These philosophers developed the frame through which the politics of dominant discourse interacts with power and bodies. In this exploration of how bodies relate to space, I explore the 'shadowy' imagined character of the immigrant detainee, a character described in literature that discusses the immigration context in the UK and overseas. This consideration of the theoretical and academic discourses frames the project with the immigrant detainees. The writing in this chapter references reflections on the earlier stages of the project with the men at Haslar IRC.

The use of the phrase 'immigrant über-marionette' in this chapter is inspired by the theatre and exile scholar Silvija Jestrovic in her review and critical essay of *Auslander Raus!* the controversial Austrian media event directed by Cristoph Schilngensief, in Vienna during 2000. In the article, the figure of the über-marionette is appropriated as a method through which to understand the authentic asylum seeker as a performed identity. Using modernist theatre visionary Craig's challenge to the actor from 1908, Jestrovic uses the über-marionette to critique the way the agency of the asylum seeker is represented in this public performance event. For Jestrovic, the performers as asylum seekers 'became bodies with a marionette-like quality that did not have their own agency but could be manipulated for a particular cause' (2008: 166), and the performers became objects in a 'morality play' orchestrated by the artist Schilngensief.

The problems of representation and agency provoked by the *Auslander Raus!* example were key concerns I experienced at the beginning of the HMP Haslar IRC project. During the early part of the process, I had not met the men

incarcerated at HMP Haslar IRC, and I felt I was dealing merely with representations and not identities. These representations were spectral images of the immigrant detainee that ghosted my imagination and prior knowledge. These shadows of immigration detainee identities were part of this early stage of the project. I later discarded these in practice when I met the men at HMP Haslar IRC. My aim in this workshop practice was to work within the creative workshop beyond the representations of immigrant detainees' 'shadowy identities' often described in popular media narratives. This was analogous to the puppet metaphor used by Jestrovic, who described the asylum seeker as a political puppet exploited by the press and government.

One of the ironies that Jestrovic notes in her article is that the simulation of the detention centre as part of *Auslander Raus!* was geographically close to the site of a real detention centre, but this institution was not directly affected by the performance. In this process, the artist did not directly work with 'real' asylum seekers and instead portrayed a fiction of their victim status. In contrast to Schilngensief's Austrian project, by entering the centre at HMP Haslar IRC, I was relinquishing my artistic autonomy to some extent. This was because my aim was to treat the agency and feelings of the participants with respect and sensitivity, but I was also complicit in this space. On the larger scale of *Auslander Raus!*, immigrant identities as an imaginary form were used in the wider culture and mass media as a form of über-marionette provoking questions about sovereignty and borders. In the smaller scale project at HMP Haslar IRC, the intention was for the men to be pulling the strings within the artistic frame of the project.

These problems with representation, approach and sensitivity in the field of performance and asylum is developed by the applied theatre practitioner and scholar Alison Jeffers in her article 'Dirty Truth: Personal Narrative, Victimhood and Participatory Theatre Work with People Seeking Asylum'. In this article, Jeffers offers her practical advice to the applied theatre artist about how they must be aware of the issues of victimhood acknowledged by Jestrovic. Jeffers describes how to counter the problem of victimhood for refugees and asylum seekers through a process of 'myth busting'. Through this process, the practitioner can deal with shadowy representations of the exilic identity. As well as addressing the issues of victimhood and myths in work with refugees, Jeffers advises that the practitioner employ a process of 'self-reflexivity' (2008: 220). This process for the practitioner was a reasonable aim but created potential problems in the context of the project at HMP Haslar IRC due to the unique biopolitical circumstance of the immigrant detainee as 'other'. How the immigrant detainee identity was represented throughout the PaR was complex, but I was mindful of not perpetuating victimhood myths. I also adopted Jeffers' prescribed self-reflexive position for working with exilic identities.

During the practice and its development, this complex viewpoint and position was hard to share with the detainees and was later more evident in the lecture performances. Operating in these intricate circumstances, I used the puppets — specifically, shadow puppets and marionettes — to give the participants performing objects through which they could construct their own representations and myths. This intention then allowed the participants to develop a space within which they could explore new discursive frameworks beyond the narratives of victim and perpetrator. Such narratives are often

ascribed by sensationalist media stories to immigrant detainees, according to the research into the representation of these groups in British newspapers by linguist Majid KhosraviNik (2010: 4). With regards to television representations of immigrant identities, sociologist James P. Walsh argued that these identities are cast as 'fearful others' in the security spectacle of border theatre (2015: 1). Reflecting back on this process through the experienced events revealed that the men were more interested in playing with puppet representations as a way of inventing entertaining hero narratives and images rather than as reminders of the world outside and 'busting' myths associated with pernicious representations of outsiders by the media.

## The Context of Haslar

HMP Haslar IRC was at the southern tip of Gosport next to the sea and the entrance to the port of Portsmouth. The facility had 160 beds and was a former army barracks. The dormitories were named after famous British naval ships.<sup>23</sup> A partnership of public and private interests handled the management and administration of the men, which reflects the move to privatisation documented by prison scholar Adrian James during the eighties in Britain (1997: 35). My engagement to develop the project and gain permission was split between the staff operating Haslar effectively as a jail and what was then the UK border agency (UKBA).<sup>24</sup> Through conversations with the prison officer staff and

<sup>23</sup> 'IMB Annual Report Haslar Immigration Removal Centre 2011-12' [www.justice.gov see Haslar Annual Report 2011-12](http://www.justice.gov.uk/annual-reports/2011-12/haslar-2011-12.pdf) <http://www.imb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/haslar-2011-12.pdf> (Accessed 3 July 2015)

<sup>24</sup> 'UK Border Agency - GOV.UK' [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk) (Accessed 12 August 2014)

education staff, it was discovered that the immigration detainees generally perceived the UKBA as the prime source of their oppression and incarceration. HMP Haslar IRC had a chequered history of reports that criticised the way the centre was organised and run. In 1998, Rachel Ellis produced a report for the Prison Reform Trust (PRT) and stated that there was a serious lack of opportunities at HMP Haslar IRC (then designated a holding centre) for the detainees, and the staff were insecure with the custodial nature of their engagement with the men (1998: 9). In this report, it was noted that there was a lack of incentives (14), medical facilities were sub-standard (19) and drug testing was oppressive and inappropriate (23). In 2002, Jane Shackman reported for the PRT that the imprisonment of asylum seekers in establishments such as Haslar was 'criminal treatment' and noted that there had been a huge increase in the population of immigrant detainees from 427 in 1998 to 1,830 in 2002 and that, at HMP Haslar IRC, there were 135 out of 150 men who were asylum seekers (6-7). The clearest recommendation in the 2002 report was that asylum seekers should not be in jail. It was also suggested that educational and recreational activities should be improved (20-21).

In relation to my approach to the authority of HMP Haslar IRC, there were concerns expressed towards the benefits for the immigrant detainees and the possibility of engaging them in theatrical activities. Through persistent communication with UKBA and explicit identification of the perceived benefits for the detainees, I was able to convince UKBA to accept my project in 2012. These are the benefits emailed before the workshops during negotiations with the Home Office for the use of drama in prison environment;

1. Boosts morale



2. Encourages praise and validation in the workshop environment
3. The goals of creating drama give a sense of achievement
4. Encourages empathy and social awareness through group-based activities
5. Performing is a good form of relaxation
6. Participation in drama workshop involves creative problem solving
7. Most aspects involve developing communication skills
8. Drama involves collaboration and cooperation
9. Individuals explore their imaginations through drama.
10. Workshops promote self-esteem and self-confidence
11. Encourages engagement with the outside world and individuals.
12. Encourages literacy in engaging with texts and creating new approaches to language

At this point, the UKBA was as an organisation disbanded amid a storm of media criticism and controversy.<sup>25</sup> I was told through my contact at UKBA that the organisation was, because of this action, subsumed into the Home Office, and the changes to title had little real effect on its operation. In relation to my PaR project, this engagement with the forces of state power put pressure on the workshops to deliver tangible positive results in what was presented by the prison governor and other prison staff as a difficult environment. In practice, what I learned was that there was access to education and recreation, but, especially for the education programme, the men imprisoned often struggled to

<sup>25</sup> Travis, Alan. 'UK Border Agency to be Abolished: Theresa May Announces.' *The Guardian, Manchester*. 26 Mar 2013. *theguardian.com*. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2013/mar/26/uk-border-agency-broken-up> (Accessed 13 April 2013.)

see the point, as they were in a state of uncertainty in which they were quite probably facing deportation. Haslar was a complex contradictory environment to enter. The staff were always very careful to express statements of equal opportunities in the prison because of perceptions of the state's approach to immigration as racist — a perception fostered by experts on immigration like Dummett (2001: 58).

At the initial stages of the project in 2013, there were detailed exchanges between the management of the centre regarding the nature of my PaR through meetings and email correspondence. One method used to introduce my project in these exchanges was through an extract of a document produced for the management of Haslar IRC at the beginning phase of the project's development. The proposal for collaboration highlights a number of concerns I felt as a practitioner at the initial stages of collaboration with HMP Haslar IRC. In the proposal, there is some stumbling over the appropriate name to give the men locked up in the centre. I used the word 'resident', and this is incorrect and odd when associated with the prison environment at Haslar and the idea of 'home' to men in the immigration detention system. I struggled to adopt the appropriate discourse and misunderstood the rules in this context of power relations. After discussion with the management at Haslar, I was informed that the correct category for the context of the men in the prison was 'immigrant detainee'. The transient nature of the situation for the detainee means they are never 'resident'. Instead, they inhabit a 'non-place' while detained.

There is a caveat in my proposal document surrounding problems about the healing nature of arts practice and therapy. This was important due to the

fact that I found in previous professional engagements that applied theatre is often misconstrued as therapy. A practical response to this issue of misunderstandings about therapy in engagements was to acknowledge that applied practice might have therapeutic benefits, but it is not therapy. Therefore, applied puppetry presented in my work is not a healing therapy like scientific or alternative rehabilitations through which the individual is 'improved'. The definition of applied puppetry is a separate category to puppet therapy in this thesis.

To frame the context of the project at Haslar, I found a useful document that expressed many of the key issues and concerns about working at Haslar: the *Haslar Visitor Group Handbook*.<sup>26</sup> I used the handbook as one resource, but, as a scholar involved in creative research, my role was fundamentally different to the important one played by the volunteers. My role initially was as an applied theatre artist and researcher working in this environment, not as friend to the imprisoned men. I approached my relationships as a professional in this environment, not promising support but instead offering a creative means of expression. Thus, my position fell somewhere between being a stranger and a friend.<sup>27</sup> There were also fundamental differences between my role as researcher and as visitor because, although I was not receiving a fee, I

<sup>26</sup> 'Visitors Handbook' [www.haslarvisitors.org.uk/visitors handbook-book.html](http://www.haslarvisitors.org.uk/visitors handbook-book.html) (Accessed 12 January 2013, no longer live)

<sup>27</sup> I had a very lively discussion with Lee Higgins, Associate Professor, Music Education University of Boston, about how community and applied artists discuss their role and relationship to group members. Higgins, Lee. 'One-to-One Encounters: Facilitators, Participants, and Friendship.' *Theory into Practice* 51.3 (2012): 159-166. His study based on interviews led him to believe that many practitioners see their role as friends to the group members. Throughout my practice, I have questioned this view of friendship to groups.

acknowledge that I benefitted from the nature of the project I was offering; the experience was part of my learning. Even so, the advice in the handbook on how the visitor should engage with HMP Haslar IRC aligns with much of my own approach as an artist and facilitator, especially as regards the emphasis on listening as a key skill.

For many years now, my approach has been influenced by the US art critic Suzi Gablik and her concept of the 'listener-centred paradigm' for contemporary art-making (1991: 112). This paradigm is described by Gablik in reaction to the history of irresponsible artistic autonomy as part of modernism. The artist through careful awareness and listening must respect the agency of the community in Gablik's conception of art-making. If the participant is not listened to and the agency of the participant is not respected, they can become a docile object in the process within specific spaces like HMP Haslar IRC and further subjected to the carceral logic expressed by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*:

A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved.

The celebrated automata, on the other hand, were not only a way of illustrating the organism, they were also political puppets, small scale models of power[.] (1995: 136).

Foucault's description of the docile body above echoes the point made by the inmate of HMP Haslar IRC about his condition as puppet in the opening of this chapter. The political puppet as automaton is a machine within the system, not an object with autonomy. For Foucault, society is caught within the contradictory trap of the carceral system that normalises the marginal character. Foucault's idea of the prison as an 'artificial and coercive theatre' (1995: 251) is

not confined to the temporal space of the penitentiary but permeates and illustrates how power operates in networks and through the utilitarian model of the panopticon. Foucault's critique of the prison illustrates that power is produced both in and outside the prison through marginality, and exclusion is part of that system. Penal reform has meant that the concept of the mind and soul is compared to ideas of the normal psyche, conscience and good behaviour. The body in the prison for Foucault was a site in which processes of normalisation can help to regulate and supervise the criminal. This modern process is one that reforms the prisoners' soul. In the penal setting, for Foucault, the individual is judged against a set of 'norms' about human behaviour and nature. As part of Foucault's concept of the carceral, he describes the sequence of how the body passes through order and through offense to the prison and returns to a 'norm' (298). This system does not fit the reality of the immigrant detainee, as they are destined for removal from the sovereignty of their country. The men at HMP Haslar IRC were mostly destined never to return to any position in UK society, as reported by Jane Shackman in her report for the Prison Reform Trust (2002). The immigrant detainee represents an exception to the logic of the carceral as described by Foucault, as she/he operates within a different system of power. The individual detainee is disciplined through similar means suggested by Foucault, but the final ultimate punishment is usually removal. The phrenology of criminal types presented in Foucault's history as a 'game of masquerades and marionettes' (1995: 259) is at odds with the shadowy image of the immigrant detainee.

The immigrant detainee is part of exclusionist immigration policies, and this makes them exceptional concerning the carceral system of power in relation to foreigners and race. Dummett suggests the following:

The principal actual motivation for exclusionist immigration policies is of course racial prejudice or sometimes more general prejudice against foreigners, which, when present, is always felt more intensely against those who are of, or are thought to be of, a different race. (2001: 58)

With this point, Dummett makes clear the problems associated with racism and xenophobia within the history of British immigration policy. It is recently understood that immigration has increased in the UK since the publication of Dummett's *On Immigration and Refugees* in 2001: approximately 3,500 were in immigration custody in 2012. What is clear is that, in the last ten years, the impact of immigration on British society has not been adverse for society, but politicians continue to use the issue of immigration to win votes in the popular media. A report in *The Guardian* newspaper from 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2012 by journalist Alan Travis claims '3,500 people were being held in immigration detention on any given day during the first three months of this year. While the courts say it is lawful to hold them while there is a realistic prospect of them being sent home, the inspectors say there is no statutory time limit on how long they can be detained.' (Travis)

In reaction to the specific issue of immigration and the carceral, I discovered a range of contradictory discourses on notice boards, in leaflets and in conversations at HMP Haslar IRC. This prison space became a palimpsest for these contradictory discourses often in erasure. In the waiting space in which I put my belongings in a locker for security reasons and on the wall of the

waiting area at the prison gate in the posters and notices, the idealism of respect for cultures and equality appeared clear in printed documents, posters and signs. On one such document, there was a label with the word 'detainee' written over the word 'prisoner'. This waiting space was experienced as a contradictory place where discourses written over texts masked the attempted erasure of the traumatic carceral process. My early meetings with the management of the prison echoed this aim to respect the different cultural differences and the needs of the detainee population in relation to issues of security and incarceration. This policy of 'equalities' did not attempt to justify the political process that incarcerated the men at Haslar. Instead, the experience of the detainees was not one of equality but, because of their status, was one of the exceptions to the law as bare life as expressed by political philosopher Giorgio Agamben.

### Bare Life and the Puppet

The philosopher Giorgio Agamben develops Foucault's concept of the biopolitical through a historical view of how the sovereign state categorises the body of the individual in *Homo Sacer* (1998). In relation to this process of power, Agamben presents the exceptional type of non-citizen that originates in the Roman state through the banning of individuals. These banned individuals in Roman society become 'homo sacer' or sacred life devoid of politics, not adhering to the usual norms of the law. In this ancient doctrine, the stripping of rights highlights the split between bare-naked life and the political life protected by rights and laws. This separation connects to the philosophy of Aristotle and the life lived in the *polis* (political life) and the *zoē* (bare life) (7). For Agamben,

this biopolitical process is earlier historically and not a product of modernity as it was for Foucault. The division of the *zoē* and *bios* was produced through a process of inclusion and exclusion in the state. The individual banned from the state and polis then becomes bare life and a form of *homo sacer* whose body can be treated by the state as an exception. Agamben uses the example of the Nazi death camps (167) as adherents to the logic of *homo sacer* in which the excluded other is categorised as differently human and whose death can be justified in relation to the sovereign. This logic of the camp for Agamben extends into the modern state during periods of crisis when rights for the individual are suspended and certain groups excluded from normal laws. The figure of the *homo sacer* by Agamben is used as a way to critique the categorisation and separation of the refugee.

Bare life is the life without the potential of political power according to Agamben. In the camp, all potential is removed from the body by the violence of the sovereign. As the writer and camp survivor, Primo Levi, described in his memoirs of the Holocaust, the *bios* of camp inmates was reduced to the level of *muselmänner* or 'non-men' (1996: 96). These bodies in the camps and within the frame of Agamben's argument offered no resistance, and their deaths were without ceremony. This production of bare life by sovereign power extended into post-war culture for Agamben and continues to be a type of political power that is difficult to overcome. Using the logic of Agamben, political scholar Jenny Edkins and expert in international relations Veronique Pin-Fat draw parallels between the detention centre and the concentration camp. In the two types of spaces of punishment 'both can be identified as examples of modes of being where there are no power relations and resistance is impossible: sites that mark



a state of exception.’ (2005: 17) This redrawing of the lines of power and life for the detainee means that for Edkins and Pin-Fat the detainees are ‘produced in a state of exception as not politically qualified lives but bare life.’ (19) One option proposed by Edkins and Pin-Fat as a way to creatively resist this power is through the boundless nature of poetry written by refugees and detainees. They suggest that through engagement with these texts a ‘radical relationality’ through and beyond the lines (wire) of sovereign power is possible.

Agamben’s arguments about homo sacer and biopolitics use a loose conception of the refugee to develop the historical view into contemporary concerns and debates (1998: 131-134). For Agamben, the refugee troubles ideas of how citizenship and sovereignty can be presented in the modern nation state through the rupture in categories and ideas about humanity:

If refugees (whose number has continued to grow in our century, to the point of including a significant part of humanity today) represent such a disquieting element in the order of the nation state, this is above all because by breaking the continuity between man and citizen, *nativity* and *nationality*, they put the originary fiction of modern sovereignty in crisis. (1998: 131)

The refugee on the borders of society as the homo sacer does not share the same human rights as others through this logic because they are separated from the social bond that makes them political citizens. Agamben claims that to develop a new politics beyond the constraints of this paradoxical trap of the homo sacer, the modern state should consider new categories for abject groups and individuals exiled from the rights of the state:

The refugee must be considered for what he is: nothing less than the limit concept that radically calls into question the fundamental categories of the nation state, from the birth-nation to the man-citizen link, and that thereby makes it possible to clear the way for a long-overdue renewal of categories in the service of a politics in which bare life is no longer separated and excepted, either in the state order or in the figure of human rights. (1998: 134)

In the macro perspective of global politics, this challenge to nation states is hard to see working in practice because of the mass industry of refugee and immigrant services developed as part of the move to privatise the prison system. This situation of privatisation was contextualised in the UK by criminologist Adrian James (1997: 34). These businesses thrive on immigration detention enforced through the logic of the category of homo sacer that allows individuals to be treated outside the law for 'normal' citizens. On the micro scale (seen through the project undertaken in Haslar), I found that it was an important part of the positioning of the practice to adopt a process and approach that attempted to work beyond the category of bare life and homo sacer. The immigrant detainee is caught within exceptional circumstances in the institution of detention but should not be treated as an exemption. He should instead be welcomed. In the workshop and through the exchanges when I was artist in residence, I sought commonality and intersubjective spaces where the oppressive situation was transgressed. In the context of the workshop, the puppet defied categories of clear classification and was complicit in this process of blurring boundaries between them and us, inside and outside, excluded and included. Awareness of bare life and the way the bodies of the immigrant

detainees were classified through the state of exception inspired the application of practices used to cross boundaries of categories. Through this process the intention was for the men to feel less of an exception, and, unusually, the puppet as performing object facilitated the breaking down of this space between subjectivities framed within the unequal space of detention.

In a subtle manner, the changes in the ontological status of the immigrant as 'political puppet' represented in the global discourses about detention contrasted with the local level of the project at HMP Haslar IRC. Through the experience inside the walls of HMP Haslar IRC, it was evident that the complex humanity of the men was present within the exchanges, meetings and dialogues, in contrast to their universal categorisation. Within the handshakes and smiles in corridors and the prison yard, the sense that bare life was contained at HMP Haslar IRC was dismissed momentarily in these intersubjective exchanges. A change took place when, as a temporary visitor, I left the prison walls behind and found myself looking back from this perspective to my memories of the immigrant detainees inside. From this reflective perspective, the knowledge about the men in the prison conformed to Agamben's concept of the homo sacer. The men became for me the exception in the sovereign state. They were relatively invisible to the wider context and hidden like social 'detritus' excluded from the relative freedom of the outside. Sociologist Prem Kumar Rajaram and political geographer Carl Grundy-Warr portray the way that according to Agamben's logic the immigrant identity becomes 'detritus in the system' (2004: 41). These representations of the men remind the citizen outside the prison (who is securely placed within the state) of the limits to democracy and law when, as part of the power of the state,

immigrants are incarcerated through the logic of the exception (Agamben, 2). This process of bare life and the perspective of exception, as witnessed, broke down at the early stages of the project when the detainees were involved in the participatory engagement and the men were more relaxed and enjoyed the experience presented to them. At that point, the category of homo sacer no longer applied to such a degree, in the small scale of the applied puppetry workshop at HMP Haslar IRC. Cultural exchange in this setting transgressed the oppressive forces of the state imposed towards the men, if only fleetingly. The puppets made outside and inside were 'transgressive objects' brought into the prison, which aided this exchange and broke down barriers, borders and distinctions. In a similar way as the detainee is conceptualised as other, bare life and sub-human, the puppets' ontology is also powerfully exceptional. The puppets in the practical engagement and through their uncanny nature, as described by literary scholar and cultural critic Kenneth Gross (2011: 35), are complex objects brought to life. These objects provoked exchanges in the workshops and blurred the differences between the detainee and practitioner. The puppet workshop was a dialogical space that disrupted the power that clearly defined the biopolitics and the detainees' rights as exceptions.

## Cultural Geography and HMP Haslar IRC

HMP Haslar IRC immigration removal centre is a marginal prison that is at the edge of the littoral space where sea meets land. Through my own experience of space at the centre, it felt like a fortress. In the geographical space of this corner of Hampshire, there is a heritage of forts reconfigured for new purposes described in local authority publication *Gosport Heritage* (1991: 8). The cultural

geographer Doreen Massey presents the problems around space and migration when she describes a boulder discovered in 1999 in Hamburg as an 'immigrant' in relation to its geological history. This boulder became a symbol for the open attitude of immigration in Hamburg, and a poster was produced to promote this attitude by the city (2005: 149). This poster, for Massey, is part of the ideological and cultural process of making space into place and the way the poster is constructed 'speaks of openness and migrants and lays down the possibility of living together' (149). This boulder, for Massey, is an object that, as an example, allows us to see 'Place as an ever-shifting constellation of trajectories (that) poses the question of our throwntogetherness' (151). The 'icon' of Hamburg in the migrant rock is accepted as a part of Hamburg as a place. Massey develops her argument in relation to the way cultural borders and transmission were developed concerning local political situations. This attitude to the immigrant by Hamburg as a cosmopolitan city is not a universally shared value of all our global cities and is not the experience of HMP Haslar IRC in relation to its cultural geography. Protection of borders is a contradictory process, and the purpose of HMP Haslar IRC provokes 'thrownoutness' in regard to the immigrant identity. As a symbol of UK control of its borders, HMP Haslar IRC is a closed space and attempts to be a fixed space that represents the limits of the idea of our 'throwntogetherness'. To negotiate this carceral and surveyed space from the position as researcher and practitioner meant I was traversing the closed borders of immigration control.

In the process of traversing the borders in the prison in the first workshops, I took with me a collection of puppets. These objects in their relative freedom to cross the border without the need for a search or screening

transgressed the normal everyday conditions of the prison. Carried in bags and suitcases, these puppets broke down the 'normal' conditions of the prison and provoked smiles, laughter and general irreverence. The production of ideology in space/place through the experience of socio-cultural exchange is central to the interests of the cultural geographer Tim Cresswell. Cresswell's argument in *In Place/Out of Place* develops around how spaces produce 'normal' values that develop the production of ideology within these boundaries (1996: 21). Against this set of dominant values and ideologies, there is the possibility of resistance through acts of transgression. These acts of transgression lead towards breaking the experience of feeling 'in place' and the new ideological position of the 'out of place'. An example of this type of transgression Cresswell describes is the invisible theatre practice of Augusto Boal (143-147). The theatre practice that I developed for HMP Haslar IRC, although it made use of different methods than Boal's theatre practice (1989), was also in relation to Cresswell's argument of theatre as a transgressive act. Puppetry in a prison is absurd, abnormal and 'out of place' in comparison to the daily operations. As a bold visual form, puppetry in the environment of the prison has the potential to change spaces through being part of poetic moments of creative freedom. Puppets have transgressed space in prisons and camps historically as accounts of puppetry in the Second World War concentration camps have been described by both puppet historian Henryk Jurkowski (1998: 183) and theatre historian and applied scholar Michael Balfour (2001: 122). In addition, more recently, the successful puppeteer Gary Friedman used puppets as part of applied theatre in

the prisons in South Africa to deal with taboo subjects.<sup>28</sup> Friedman's use of puppetry in the prison system from 1996-1997, was used as a way to break down the boundaries of power between inmates about what was acceptable to discuss openly, for example, the issue of rape in the prison. The puppet in Friedman's project was being used to disrupt everyday disciplinary practice in the prison space in which the puppets were 'out of place'. The puppets were used to show issues that are often hard to face in the tense and violent situations of prison spaces. This was also illustrated in Marcia Blumberg's description of Friedman's prison puppetry as 'an unusual mode' and a 'transformative force' (2001: 254). These temporary transgressions in the prison space with puppets change the space of the prison in relation to the powerful disciplinary structure. How to work within this ideological framework and space and allow the authority to sanction temporary transgressions with puppetry was a challenge for the practice at HMP Haslar IRC. Even so, every time the puppets passed the main gate of the prison, I enjoyed the way the puppets played with this boundary between permitted and transgressed.

## Shadow Representations

The immigrant detainees were faceless shadows at the inception of the project at HMP Haslar IRC. As a researcher developing knowledge prior to an engaged practice with participants, I imagined immigrant detainees as shadows and, after the embodied experience of meeting the men, I still struggled to assemble

<sup>28</sup> Blumberg, Marcia. "Puppets Doing Time in the Age of AIDS." *Performing Democracy: International Perspectives on Urban Community-Based Performance*. Ed. Susan Haedicke and Tobin Nellhaus. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan, 2001. 254-68. Print.

an identity from a web of exilic discourses and accumulated myths. This problem of representation of categories around concepts like the über-marionette provoked, through research and the subsequent practice, the following question: can one understand and assemble knowledge of a group in participatory practice before the moment of the welcome? This question was a source of tension in and around the initial uncertainties at the beginning of the project. Evoking shadows before the 'face-to-face' exchange in participatory artistic practice, I felt was an imaginary rehearsal for the moment of the first meeting with a group or individual participant.

These epistemological questions were part of the PaR from the beginning. This was a new experience because, previously, as a professional artist in my career, my knowledge of groups was often scant before the first workshop and often based on the practicalities of the context and contract between the funder and myself as artist. The usual position I found myself in before meeting a group was 'partially informed'. Arriving at the first meeting at HMP Haslar IRC with a critical knowledge as well as a flexible open attitude was part of these initial experiences. This knowledge in practice made the first engagements feel nerve-wracking and uncertain. The categories of bare life and über-marionette in relation to immigrant and exilic identities did not positively inform the first moment of engagement through practice. These a priori representations based on contextual and theoretical knowledge were outside the prison walls in practice when I was entering the space of the creative workshop at HMP Haslar IRC, because they could cause offense to both the men and the authority. The interpretations of the imagined and researched identities considered at the inception of a project prior to meeting groups does



not displace practitioners' fears associated with the imagined 'other'. One key element of practice at Haslar and other previous engagements that alleviated this fear was the practice of listening, as suggested by Gablik. Through listening and early dialogues, it was possible to move beyond my initial conceptions of the men at Haslar as a collective of shadows. Through the workshop, puppetry provided a creative source and method in the shift from the men being relative strangers to becoming collaborators. Skills of listening and the experience of different groups were the resources I drew on to cope with the initial stages of the workshops. This experience highlighted that the artistic practitioner prior to meeting multiplicities they work with for the first time has to acknowledge the fear of the 'other' as part of crossing the boundary into an uncharted space. This was the case in my first encounters at HMP Haslar IRC.

This chapter has explored the PaR events before and during the first encounter with a group detained in an immigration removal centre and the knowledge around representations considered before this meeting. With other types of workshop groups of individuals who are not dealing with trauma and stress, the detailed knowledge of researching their biopolitical context is not a practical necessity for applied theatre. However, it is appropriate for the practitioner working in the sensitive context of immigrant detainee space to arrive with an informed approach. In relation to this point about the sensitive traumatic space, the project at HMP Haslar IRC did not have the explicit aim of studying stories, encouraging testimony or healing wounds. Describing the set of circumstances that led to these individual men becoming a victim or product of the biopolitical system was not an aim for the PaR. Understanding the perceived benefits towards the immigrant detainee through reflection of the

experience and qualitative information was part of this action-based reflective practitioner project.

The cultural geographical problems associated with space influenced the PaR, as the carceral experience was one felt through space as well as through the bodies of the oppressed. Both the biopolitical identity and the carceral space are present in the contradictory power and disciplinary space of the prison. The dialogic moment of the workshops reinforced and challenged some of the epistemological explorations undertaken, and many of my plans for practice and workshops had to change almost immediately when I was in the prison. Puppetry as a form of 'transgressive' activity in the space of the prison was fraught with risks, mostly in relation to authority, which is a challenge also evident in the work of the puppeteer Friedman.

A key point drawn from this chapter is that the immigrant detainee's experience is unique, particular and individual, but often discussed as universal. In popular discourses, the immigrant is represented through myths — a key point to the arguments made by theatre and migration scholar Emma Cox (2014: 5). Working through exilic myths that are present in dominant Western discourses must be avoided — for example, the European myth Daedalus was rejected in the PaR workshop in the prison as a starting point as it did not relate to the immigrant detainees' experience and was not an appropriate or open text for the particular space and multicultural context of HMP Haslar IRC. Other myths and sets of knowledge that present immigrant detainees' experience as one of racism, one of victimhood and of the poetic were challenged or dismissed through the process of working as a reflective practitioner and researcher in the prison with the participants. As an artist and researcher

working in this context, understanding theories and contexts of the practice was important, but I also needed to be open to the multiplicities encountered within the groups of immigrant detainees.

The puppets used in HMP Haslar IRC performances were both entertainments and a creative way to escape mythology found in both the dominant and local discourses of discipline and punishment. Whether the puppet can represent the power associated with these networks was something that was part of the research journey at HMP Haslar IRC. Reflecting on the feedback in which one of the men compared himself to a puppet and the context that surrounded that individual, his comparison suggests a description of the way the individual body is subjugated and disciplined into a docile passive category. Compared to this evocation of the puppet, the manipulated identity of the immigrant detainee is represented as a form of über-marionette in media and the popular British consciousness. Conversely, inside the jail away from the contradictory interpretations and discourses around exilic identities, in the workshops, the participants' identities were incommensurable with these myths. We were simply complicated men playing with puppets at HMP Haslar IRC.

## Chapter 4

### Hand-to-Hand: The Ethical Puppet Workshop

---

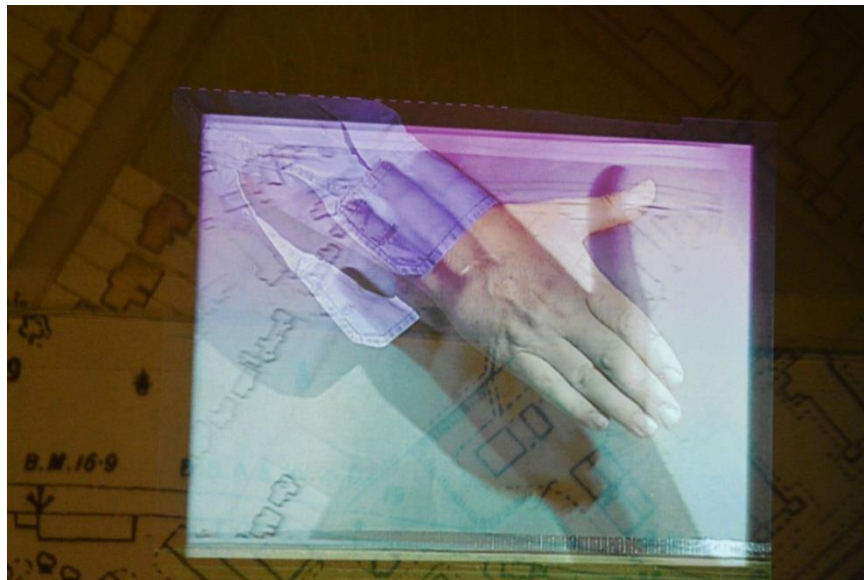


Figure 18. Hands crossing in the lecture performance. 2016. Photograph. Walid Benkhaled

During one of the residencies inside HMP Haslar IRC, I met a young man who I had briefly worked with in a workshop. I asked him whether he would like to join the workshop again, and he told me he was to return to India that afternoon, as he was awaiting deportation. I told him I was glad to have met him, and we shook hands and smiled. I recognised through my reflections of practice that, in the way that I interacted with the men, I was shaking many hands and exchanging smiles in the education department, corridors, canteen and prison yard. These exchanges happened around and inside the space of the puppet workshops and often happened in the first meeting stages of the practice. This handshake and this moment of welcome was an attempt to bridge the alterity in this situation through the way I engaged the hand and face. This bridge

between the self and the other was an ethical problem in the practice of applied workshops and engagement at HMP Haslar IRC. The men I met could feel some sense of connection to me as outsider through these exchanges. The power of these meetings when the face-to-face meets were pronounced at HMP Haslar IRC. This event of the face-to-face changed further in practice when two individuals touched through hand-to-hand contact. The ethical problem of Levinas' face-to-face is not resolved in the handshake or puppet workshop; it changes through exchange of touch with the other.

In this chapter, I argue that the puppet workshop is a radical artistic event in which ethics and power combine. Using Jacques Derrida's concept of 'hostipitality', Emanuel Levinas and his ethical philosophy and the contemporary philosophy of Simon Critchley to frame the ethical events of practice in the puppet workshop, this chapter presents a critically reflective approach to the workshops with particular focus on the hand-to-hand. Examples of puppet workshop practice at HMP Haslar IRC are described, explored, analysed and interpreted throughout this chapter.

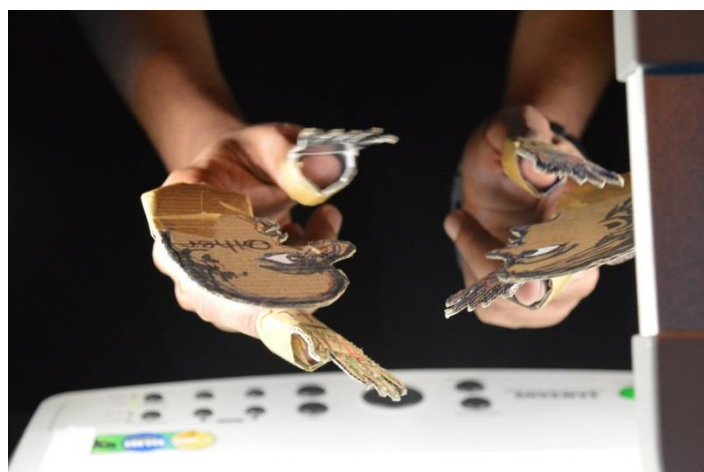


Figure 19. Cardboard finger puppets demonstrating otherness in lecture performance. Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled.

## The Puppet Workshop Borders

At the border of the puppet workshop, when the participant and artist meet for the first time, the event is one that involves uncertain intersubjective relations, power and a negotiation of ethics. The biopower in this situation at the border of the workshop practice is complicated by the use of puppets. In the specific context of HMP Haslar IRC, this biopower was pronounced because of the status of the men as 'marginal others' in UK society. In this liminal space at the workshop border, the acts of hospitality that are usually a necessity for the workshop to proceed were part of the early stages. The intended hospitality of the puppet workshop was intended as resistant to the in-hospitable spaces of HMP Haslar IRC. This intersubjective border demarcated the beginning of the workshop at HMP Haslar IRC. This was a fluid border — a blurred space that was often hard to distinguish. Viewed in this way, the relatively open space of the puppet workshops at HMP Haslar IRC were uncertain. It was apparent through critical reflection that this space encompassed problems of power and ethics between the space, the objects and the personalities involved. The practitioner at the beginning stages of applied puppet workshops can either acknowledge or ignore this powerful haptic information.

Through this practice of breaching the workshop borders in the education department, I chose to reflect on this exchange and moment at the beginning of the workshop. I hung a sheet from the ceiling and projected puppet images onto a screen with an overhead projector borrowed from the education department. This activity drew the men into the space, as the door was left open. Then they discussed with me what was occurring, and often we shook hands as part of the introduction. Sometimes these conversations were difficult because of language

barriers. At other points, the men were more engaged as the invitation to 'join in' was understood and appreciated. Often the men saw how the puppets related to their own cultural heritage and made comments about the practice of puppetry. Some would say that the shadow puppetry reminded them of what they had seen in villages back home. As I witnessed, for some men at this stage it was enough for them to just watch the play of puppets on the screen. In smaller groups, the men would become more involved and agree to participate in the workshop further after discussion. As practitioner, I was, at these initial stages, trying to respect the autonomy of the potential participant, as the men were relatively free in the education department to come and join in the workshop or leave at any point. I spent a lot of time waiting for the men to become interested and trust my presence. Once these initial borders between the immigrant detainees and myself were crossed in the practice and space of the workshop, the possibilities for creativity opened up and often allowed a dynamic space for expression. In practice, this shift in the intersubjective border space beyond the state of unfamiliar strangers was often expressed through the hand in gestures and handshakes because spoken language was not always effective.

As a change-making space, sociologist Richard Sennett presents the workshop as a laboratory in which the individual expresses his or her tacit knowledge through the hands. Sennett emphasises the importance of the hands in the social space of the workshop. For him, the hands develop a 'repertoire of learned gestures' through experimentation that are 'full of ethical implications' (2008: 178). Literary scholar Kenneth Gross, through his view of the puppeteers' hands, suggests that 'hands are a language and a voice, they are

also a body, a face; they provide a passageway for an entire world of relation to be made visible, put in motion, organized, and shaped, means for touching and grasping that world, inviting and doing violence to it' (2011: 52). This view of the hand demonstrates how the puppeteer's hands and hands in general function in the world of workshop and puppets and how the hand engages in an ethical space. The puppeteer's hands can manipulate the appearance of objects, but the same hands in applied puppetry touch participants' hands directly. The power of the puppeteer's hands manipulating the hand of the other through practice viewed in this way would appear immoral. This touch in practice can be resisted. I found that an awareness of the power of the puppeteer's hands in workshop practice does provoke questions about autonomy and the ethics of this touch. The importance of the hand in creative practice as embodied knowledge is promoted by architect Juhani Pallasmaa in his monograph *The Thinking Hand*. Pallasmaa presents the hand as having a multitude of roles both creative and cultural in arts practice (2009: 25-29). This view of the hand in practice is also evoked by puppeteer Martha Aebes describing her work delivering AIDS awareness programmes in which she describes her practice in *Puppets With a Purpose* as, 'my hands want to tell my people some stories' (1998: 19). All of these sources encourage the practitioner to consider the significance of the haptic knowledge of the hand in practice.

The temporal boundaries to the workshop space in the HMP Haslar IRC were fluid and took the form of a 'drop in' session. The sessions were not presented as lessons, and the shape of the workshops were framed by the discipline, timing and daily regime of the prison environment. The micro boundary to the workshop was the moment of the welcome and the initial face-



to-face introductions and explanations. The workshop space after became a ludic space to inhabit, potentially without imposed rules, filled with the possibility to create and play. During one of the week-long residencies I conducted, two men from Nepal became engaged in the process, and one became puppeteer and the other musician. As well as playing with puppets, we played guitars, and the two activities complemented each other. One of the men described the shadow puppet form as reminiscent of stories from the *Ramayana* and *Arabian Nights*. Reflecting back towards this residency, it felt that the most inspired moment in this workshop was when one of the men took over the control of the puppets and devised a story with the shadow figures. He seemed lost in his concentrated devising of the narrative of a king and kidnapped queen. He improvised scenes while I improvised guitar sounds to support his playing. Later, he wrote down the narrative to remember the story. As workshop 'leader', I was encouraged by this moment, as I was able to step back and let the participant take control of the form and the artistic process. This approach to workshop practice was one of facilitation more than workshop 'leading' and demanded a flexible and sensitive approach. This involved listening to the participants and knowing when to step in and out of the creative space. Within this strange temporality of the prison workshop space, it was impossible to develop any process with the men without this flexible 'listener-centred' approach inspired by Gablik (1991: 112). The ethical as well as the practical demands of the social space of the workshop meant that this flexible approach was appropriate for the men at HMP Haslar IRC torn away from their everyday social relations outside the prison.

The aim for this practice was to offer temporary creative spaces within the context of incarceration and security. This practice attempted to break down the pressure of the biopolitical situation and offer alternative social networks that temporarily repositioned the relations between participants. To facilitate these changes, the initial issue of the welcome was one of the first hurdles in the workshop space. This welcome was often strange, as the act of hospitality offered was complex in the prison environment due to the detainee's status and circumstances. In the space I usually worked in, I was also a relative stranger in the space. For example, two spaces used were the music room in the education block and, during a summer residency, the prison yard. The music room was used twice a week for music activities and the surrounding rooms were used for other learning activities managed through private contract with a company that delivered education activities.<sup>29</sup> My activity was not part of the contracted work of the education department, and I had to negotiate respectfully my space around other scheduled activities. The hospitality offered me was usually warm and supportive, but I was in no way 'master of this house' when I was working in the education department. I had to be careful not to disturb this hospitality by disturbing the usual running of the education block. I felt in relation to this hospitality a vulnerable guest at points at HMP Haslar IRC.

<sup>29</sup> This company had recently taken over from Highbury College in the delivery of the education work. In the education department named Dolphin College the classrooms delivered English, Art, music and IT training and skills courses.



Figure 20. Goat marionette constructed for residency and workshops in prison yard. Photograph. 2014. Matt Smith.

In the prison yard, my vulnerability as a stranger was incredibly pronounced. During a week-long residency during one of the hottest weeks of the year, I made puppets and performed at the end of the week with support from the men and from staff. The men would laze in the sun or shade and come over and play. They would help make or just watch the marionettes built in a style approximating that of Punjabi marionettes inspired by photographs in *Indian Puppets* by Sampa Ghosh and Utpal Kumar Banerjee Utpal (2006). The experience of the prison yard was an embodiment of estrangement. I felt viscerally uncomfortable and fearful of this environment when I first began the workshop in the yard. I felt no direct hostility from the men, but the emotional weight of the surveyed prison space initiated feelings of worry and uncertainty within me. The bizarre nature of the puppets brought into this space (especially the goat marionette puppet made as a reaction to the goats of HMP Haslar IRC,

Figure 20) helped to break down my embodied fears and uncertainties.<sup>30</sup> Once I saw the men laughing and joking about the puppets, my worries lessened and I grew in confidence. In this experience, I felt hostility not from the immigrant detainees, but instead as an experience of the power of the space. The act of creativity offered through the puppet workshop in the prison yard was complicated by this enveloping biopower. The puppets enabled an unusual dialogue through making and performance within this very specific space of the yard. At the end of the week, after overcoming my feelings of estrangement, I performed with the puppets in the yard for the men, and this proved very popular. This experience of creating a temporary workshop space and performance was certainly one of the strangest in my career in the way I dealt with the issue of hostility and welcome in the space of the yard and the welcome I offered through the puppet workshop. Next, I will explore this conception of hospitality and welcome in relation to my practice.

### Hospitality and the Welcome in the Workshops.

A method through which to conceptualise the welcoming of the other is through the way philosopher Jacques Derrida explores the idea of hospitality. Derrida's concept of the welcome is considered in relation to how the stranger is welcomed into the home. The word and act of hospitality for Derrida in his article *Hostipitality* also inhabits 'hostility' for the other (2000: 3). In this sense, the ideal of hospitality is not a contradiction, but, for Derrida, impossible. In the act of the welcome towards the other, the host must behave in excess of

<sup>30</sup> In the grounds of Haslar, there are a group of large goats who graze by the perimeter fence. These animals are supposedly retired from being the subjects in military experiments and tests.

hospitality and give up his claims to the space. Hospitality becomes a state of longing for the impossibility of hospitality (14), a state of what is to come between the subject and the other. The search for the impossible means that the search for hospitality and exchange goes beyond the hostility inherent in Derrida's conception of this word. As objective knowledge, hospitality is unknowable as it is only through experience that this concept can be truly understood. It is a performative act (6) that is performed without knowing what the outcome could be for the individuals involved. This concept of hospitality connects to the Derridean idea of community which contains in its etymology its opposite, as he described in an interview in *Deconstruction in a Nutshell* (1997: 106-113). This act of welcoming the other as an aim of the practitioner applied to the workshop must account for the problem of its impossibility and hostility in the event of the workshop when part of practice.

In my practice, bringing a puppet to the workshop situation added another level of complexity to the performative act of welcoming the stranger into the creative space. The puppet as object is strange but not a stranger to the space of the workshop, as it is the focus and one of the reasons for the workshop. As a form of distraction to the pressures of the face-to-face 'nakedness' of the situation of the welcome, the puppet also potentially offers a humorous distraction for the opening stages of the workshop. The experience of the puppet also became a form of creative gift, in relation to the famous anthropologist and sociologist Marcel Mauss' influential ideas about gift exchange and modern society (2004: 83). Through the acts of hospitality and exchange at the beginning of the workshop, the puppet was exchanged between hands. This exchange in relation to applied drama as political gift is a

key element in practice as presented by applied drama authority Helen Nicholson (2014: 160-161), and, in my project, politics of exchange and reciprocity were focused around the puppet. The reciprocity in this exchange was filled with uncertainty because of the potential for deportation or other actions of immigration framing this exchange and events. At HMP Haslar IRC, the puppets opened up possibilities through this exchange of puppet as gift as part of the event of the welcome. The participants were not pressurised or as embarrassed with the puppet as they might be in actor-centred drama activities. The awkwardness of the face-to-face was apparent in these early exchanges, but, with puppets, the point of focus moved away from the face towards the hand-to-hand exchange of the puppet. In this way, the puppet lessened awkwardness in the moment of welcome. The puppets also enticed the participants into the workshop as opposed to directly welcoming them into the space of the creative acts. This enticement was a key factor in the development of an effective practice, as the docility and awkwardness of the men was pronounced and their involvement in activities difficult to enable. The puppets provided through displacement and enticement a form to disrupt issues of awkwardness of the welcome and face-to-face, and this enabled creative exchanges to occur but ultimately did not remove the problems of intersubjective demands.



Figure 21. The ex-detainee's hand projected over the head of puppeteer Matt Smith framed by maps of HMP Haslar IRC as part of lecture performance. Photograph. 2016 Walid Benkhaled.

## From Face to Shoulder to Hand.

Applied theatre scholar Alison Jeffers developed the issue of performance and ethics about asylum identities and bodies in her conclusion to *Refugees, Theatre and Crisis*. In this book, she explores the problem of the nature of the face-to-face with the asylum identity in performances by actors or asylum identities themselves. For Jeffers, the issue of how theatre demands an audience confront the face of the other is unresolved when the play ends (2011: 161). Jeffers ends the conclusion of her book with the ideal of standing not face-to-face but shoulder-to-shoulder through performance with asylum identities. She recognises the problems involved with this but also sees the great potential for this approach in the face of globalisation (162). At HMP Haslar IRC, there was an attempt to stand shoulder-to-shoulder in the workshops, but, through this attempt at solidarity, I recognised the contradictory pressures of powerful forces outside this relation of bodies. The puppets enabled a shift in the

hegemonic processes that separated the men from outsiders like me. The puppets, when compared with other entities in the space, did not conform to the same rules and acted like miniature clowns who provoked participants to break down the social norms between 'us and them'. The clown like status of the puppet in regards to power is described by puppet scholar Eileen Blumenthal as the puppets 'court jester like licence' (2005: 189). This licence in regards to power when performing puppet work with exilic identities meant that power and ethical demands were changed but left unresolved. This uncertainty in relationships between things often made the ideal of standing shoulder-to-shoulder with exiled identities posited by Jeffers difficult to enact between participants. The puppets did not promote equality through shoulder-to-shoulder relations; instead, through hand-to-hand relations new social relations occurred through the welcome when the puppet is exchanged as creative gift.

In relation to the workshop's aim of being ethical and inclusive, there were three recognisable levels of engagement: at the moment of the welcome and initial face-to-face, the performative acts in the workshop and their representation of identities and, finally, after the workshop in the contradictory awkward moment of congratulatory farewell. In this moment of congratulatory farewell, I found this situation difficult as it was important to offer thanks to the men who participated, but also a desire was expressed to never see the immigrant detained again in the context of pain at HMP Haslar IRC. As such, in this farewell, there was both the need to celebrate the relationship formed, as well as to effectively say, 'I hope to never see you again'. After the moment of farewell between the men and me, the identities faded into a shadow and then their visibility provoked questions of uncertainty and doubt. This incomplete



event of farewell produced a sense of grief and frustration towards the men surrounded by biopolitical power. Throughout all of these performative acts, the hands of the participants played a key function in the practice through puppet play, awkward handshakes and everyday gestures. To develop a viewpoint of this space, I next want to apply the philosophy of Levinas.



Figure 22. Missionary meeting the Hand against map of HMP Haslar IRC. Collage sketch for lecture performance Photograph. 2016. Matt Smith.

Within the complex mosaic of the Haslar prison, the artist practitioner negotiates the very difficult, complex and demanding moment of the face-to-face. This happens fleetingly in corridors and more intensely in the space of the workshop. Emmanuel Levinas brought attention to the ethical demand of the face-to-face encounter, and his conception of this way subjectivity operates helps the practitioner to conceptualise these embodied ethical acts in practice. This awareness of the role of ethics provides the practitioner with methods from which to conceive and reflectively account for the ethical encounter with the other. Levinas, in *Entre Nous* (2006), challenges us to feel a profound sense of responsibility towards the other through the face-to-face and, in doing so, we might improve our intersubjective and spiritual life beyond everyday experience

(9). The development of the ethically responsible individual is discovered through these moments of encounter in which the demanding relationship is accounted for by the subject. For Levinas, the relationship between the subject and the other is one in which the 'interhuman is thus an interface: a double axis where what is 'of the world' *qua phenomenological* intelligibility is juxtapose with what is "not of the world" *qua ethical responsibility*' (56). Through the 'interhuman' exchange with the other, the subject can become ethical in responsibility to the other's demand on the subject. The face of the other demands the subject takes ultimate responsibility in an ethics in which the autonomy of the individual subject is brought into question. Levinas emphasises, in the same interview, the primacy of the relationship to the other in the way he shows that 'man's ethical relation to the other is ultimately prior to his ontological relation to himself (egology) or to the totality of things which we call the world (cosmology)' (57). In the temporal moment of the face-to-face, both the love for the other and the context of the world collide into a 'heady mix' of ethical demands for the subject. This relation between self and other also raises questions about the relation and respect for the non-human. Does this ethics relate to the puppet as interface? In the practice of HMP Haslar IRC, the ethical demands of the other were so pronounced that it was often the case that the puppet's ethical role was unrecognised until after the workshops. The puppets as interfaces were a part of this ecology of ethics in the workshops, but the puppet as active object complicated the ethical relations in the space. This disruption was through encouraging an emphasis on the focus away from the human face to the hand and the face of the puppet as artificial life. According to communications scholar Johanna Hartelius the ethical situation of immigration

involves being 'faced' by immigration (2013: 330). The puppet in this context differs this facing and disrupts the ethical encounter.

In the context of Haslar through meetings, greetings, farewells and thanks for positive experiences, the embodiment of this ethical exchange often shifted. This shift was beyond the intersubjective because of the pressure of the contextual position of power and the authority of the state, as well as, the ethical responsibility of the workshop leader. The performing objects and the status of other objects was part of this network, an issue explored in more depth in the next chapter. Often in this context, this ethical exchange between individuals was experienced in the ways our hands touched, used objects and told stories. This grounding of experience in the bodily exchange creates issues when considered in relation to Levinas' ethical philosophy and his spiritual transcendental ideas of the face. This was further developed through the performative acts of workshops and lecture performances conducted during the PaR.

As expressed by performance scholar Nicholas Ridout in *Theatre and Ethics*, Levinas' thought has been used to open up discussions of theatre as ethical practice (2009: 56). Ridout is careful to assert that, though Levinas' ethics is a method through which to perceive the issues in performance acts, the artificial nature of theatre presents a major difficulty (55). Performance does not resolve the problems of the face and relationship with the other. In the work of Julie Salverson, theatre scholar, the way that ideas drawn from Levinas can be applied to working with groups has influenced her view that 'This encounter with the "Other" is a surprise, a deformalisation of what is assured, an infinite of the Other that requires attentiveness to hear beyond one's conceptions' (2008:

248). This 'breaking open' of experience for Salverson means that, when practitioners confront the other, especially when dealing with trauma, they become a form of 'foolish witness' (252). The puppet operated in my practice as co-collaborator but also became a foolish witness.

The performance critic Tom Burvill also explores performance ethics and this witnessing of the other through his writing about theatre and asylum in Australia. Drawing on Levinas to understand the way the asylum seeker is represented in performance, Burvill concludes that 'we are always already "hostage" to the other, for whom we have an infinite and therefore "unassumable" responsibility, which we must nevertheless strive to assume' (2008: 241). The weight of this responsibility and sense of feeling 'hostage' to the other was experienced at HMP Haslar IRC through the practice of workshops. Another point made by Burvill is that the 'Levinasian encounter can only occur fleetingly, in powerfully affecting moments' (241). These encounters were recognisable at Haslar but felt even more ephemeral than performance. Burvill acknowledges the problems associated between Levinas' ethics and performance in regards to the face but also the response needed to the face through the encounter and that performance could 'facilitate' or 'embody' this process. The ephemeral temporality of the ethical moment or event recognised by Burvill was a constant feature of the practice at HMP Haslar IRC.



Figure 23. Shadow puppets made from card and sweet wrappers of lotus flower, faceless woman and birds. 2015. Photograph. Gregg Smith

In the context of the workshop practice at HMP Haslar IRC, two puppets illustrate relevant points about the relation of creativity with the concept of the other through the face-to-face. One such puppet is the faceless shadow of an abstract female figure (See Figure 23). This figure was drawn by one of the men in a workshop and, although it shows the female form using curves, clearly has no facial features. This objectification of the female form in this shadow puppet relates to the fact that, at HMP Haslar IRC, female prison staff and visitors were in a different network of power to the men. Some men expressed frustration at the way they missed the company of women. My experience was that the men in workshops displayed anguish and frustration especially around female puppets. In the performing object that is the faceless female shadow figure, this gender relationship is represented as disturbed and uncertain. The otherness of this faceless puppet was a reminder of the difference of female faces in relation to the men's lives in detention. This mysterious face also indicates the

impossibility of capturing and truly representing the face of the other. According to Levinas' ethics (1990: 202), it is impossible to represent the other's face. The making of the puppets did not reduce the detainee to just a 'countenance' which is seen as an evil act by the moral philosopher Roger Burggraeve through his reading of Levinas (1999: 35). Alternatively in Halsar the puppet became a reminder of the identity of the immigrant detainee and not a simple substitute for the other's face.



Figure 24. Shepherd marionette constructed in HMP Haslar. Photograph. Matt Smith 2014.

The second example of a puppet face that raised issues of representation of faces was one drawn on a simple papier-mâché marionette by one of the detainees during a very hot summer's day in the prison yard (Figure 24). Reflecting about this puppet face, the simple cartoonlike features of the

puppet contained, within their hand drawn lines, a representation of the anguish and trauma of the man who drew them. This puppet was part of a performance of puppets in the yard using an approximation of Punjabi street marionette performances at the end of a week-long residence.<sup>31</sup> This performance was comic in style, but the strange grimace of the face of the puppet drawn by the detainee was in opposition to this humorous mode of performance. When reflecting on and interpreting this puppet, its face is a reminder of the face of the 'other' fixed in puppet form. This puppet face also captured my relationship to the representation of the other towards whom I felt responsibility. Confronting this puppet's face provoked questions about agency. My relation with the other in this process becomes a form of 'disrupted agency' when applying philosopher Benda Hofmeyr (2007: 156) view of Levinas and the face to my practice. My personal intervention into the space of the immigrant detainee's life felt questioned in this puppet's gaze. The disruptive puppet in this specific workshop process did not obscure the appearance of alterity; it actually made the processes of otherness visible. Additionally, this puppet, through the connection of hands, shared the traces of our hands in the space of the strange workshop in the prison yard. The puppet's face inscribed by the detainee was also a trace, a representation of the other, but not the face of the other according to Levinas, as it was an interlocutor and artificial. Reflecting in this way about the possibilities of ethical encounters with puppetry through the practice at HMP Haslar IRC, it appears that the puppets as fellow foolish witnesses enabled me to take ethical risks in the way I related to the men. The

<sup>31</sup> I found some of the images in Baird's book useful to refer to - Baird, Bil, and Arie de Zanger. *The Art of the Puppet*. A Ridge Press book. The Macmillan Company, 1965. Print.

puppets were part of our shift from relative strangers to collaborators in a workshop. This process occurred through the way the puppet drew the focus from the face to the hand, which then could lead into the development of performances.



Figure 25. Female dancer marionette constructed in HMP Haslar. Photograph. Matt Smith 2014.

The puppets in this process of welcome were transgressive objects in the prison, crossing the borders of the prison not directly coerced by the rules of institutional bureaucracy and discipline. The puppets and puppetry in the workshop provided a limited form of creative anarchy in the way the objects operated outside forms of normalised everyday power. This form of anarchism relates to contemporary philosopher Simon Critchley's conception of contemporary ethics and politics in his book *Infinitely Demanding*. In the book, he describes a hopeful view of how to approach the global malaise by



employing ethical approaches. Critchley presents this conception of ethics in action as 'anarchic meta-politics', and he goes on to suggest that 'It is the anarchic moment of democratic dissensus articulated around the experience of the ethical demand, the exorbitant demand at the heart of subjectivity by dividing it and opening it to otherness. This demand is not some theoretical abstraction' (2008: 130). Through actions, Critchley presents the ethical demand as the potential space for philosopher Jacques Ranciere's resistant political and cultural dissensus (2010: 88-89), an alternative political artistic state. The anarchic puppets as performing objects enabled a space to open up between the subjectivities of the participants that contained a limited form of dissensus. The puppets occupied a space between subjectivities and divided the experience of the workshops space into interstitial events. In the workshop, these moments of action were visible, ephemeral and rare in practice. The puppets in these moments did not comment on the situation directly; instead, they provided an entertaining 'gap' or alternative to the trauma. In the case of HMP Haslar, the way these 'alternative relations' operated was present when the workshop leader as outsider crossed the threshold of the prison to meet the exiled individual and work beyond the normal biopolitical situation for social 'cast-offs' in immigrant detention. The puppets in this unique situation as objects playfully divided and re-inscribed the issues of subjectivity between participants. The puppet was a strange representation of otherness that was uncertain, and these puppets encouraged new social spaces to emerge, with the potential for dissensus. The puppet introduced to the workshop space a new imagined world of relations. Unfortunately, this was a temporary change to the institutional space quickly forgotten in the institutional memory.

The demands of the face-to-face in the context of the current contemporary climate of fear are debated and explored by Critchley. His argument in *Infinitely Demanding* is that it is possible to avoid nihilism in relation to the political and social malaise and participate in ethical and political life in a positive and productive way. Influenced by Levinas and contemporary moral philosopher Knud Ejler Løgstrup, Critchley proposes that political commitment cannot be separated from ethical demands. Critchley, in his polemical book, offers an inspiring justification for artistic social practice for engaged art and creative interventions. For Critchley, this 'is the continual questioning from below of any attempt to impose order from above' (2008: 13). Within this demand, the individual feels committed to react towards the experience of the plea of the other. From this demand, the individual subjectivity seeks approval from the other. This concept of ethical experience is circular, and it is not always clear where demand and approval come into the process. Critchley further develops this model towards the situation of how the subject responds to this moral experience. For Critchley, 'The essential feature of the ethical experience is that the subject of the demand — the moral self — affirms that demand, assents to finding it good, binds itself to that good and shapes its subjectivity in relation to that good' (17). This ethical experience can be acknowledged through action or the defeatist nihilism of the current geopolitical context. In the relation to the other, the subject's experience 'is the experience of an exorbitant demand which heteronomously determines the ethical subject' (57). This relation to the other is an infinite responsibility and relates to trauma. Inspired by the infinite demand of the other and the context of the culture of fear, the subject has the opportunity to resist the state from below. The individual has the

opportunity to actively participate and act on the demand from the political situation as opposed to passively 'folding' in relation to the nihilism produced through modernity and post-modernity. Ultimately, in this engaged practice, Critchley demands that 'ethics is the experience of an infinite demand at the heart of my subjectivity, a demand that undoes me and requires me to do more, not in the name of some sovereign authority, but in the namelessness of a powerful exposure, a vulnerability, a responsive responsibility' (132). In the experience at HMP Haslar IRC, I felt throughout the practice the pull of the infinite demand of the other and attempted to enact this responsive responsibility through the creative workshop. This awareness of the infinite was also in relation to an awareness of the biopolitical process involved in my practice. Critchley's approach and reaction to the 'tragic paradigm' in Western thought proposes a committed form of ethical practice and the potential of humour (78). The potential of humour offers an alternative to the melancholia of life, and this humour can be used as a positive practice (85). Also, this use of humour was often employed at HMP Haslar IRC as a positive approach in the practice.

In relation to the ethical demands in art-making processes in an interview with the artist Miguel Angel Hernandez Navarro in *Impossible Objects*, Critchley expands on his idea of art and ethics. He presents the contemporary artist as working within a nexus of morality whether their work is perceived as moral or amoral. Art, whether engaged or cynical, is still ethical, and, for Critchley, art is 'always ethical. It is organised around ethical demands. What that ethical demand might be is up for grabs' (2012: 129). For Critchley, the history of twentieth century art is a history of ethical engagement even in what might

seem immoral acts by controversial artists. In the interview, Critchley goes on to discuss the related issue of visibility in relation to the geo-global state and the issue of invisibility for particular groups and individuals.

Within the state, there can be no interstices. If interstices appear, they have to be controlled, they have to be policed. That's why in the major cities of Europe, we have to know where the immigrants are, the police "have to" be put there; there cannot be interstices. The interstices must be created through an articulation. So, this is something that people often get wrong, and it's not that we can retreat to the interstices, because there are no interstices. The activity, the action, is what creates a momentary interstice; it's what creates a momentary gap. (137)

Looking at the workshop practice at Haslar, I intended to produce with the help of the puppets this form of interstice brought about through action. Viewed in this way drawing on Critchley's thought, this encouragement of momentary gaps was resistant to controlling forces. In the momentary interstices or gaps, an event that can offer a space for the face-to-face or even hand-to-hand to connect in the workshop is a complex space that involves power. Workshops can form these gaps and interstices in the prison environment, but they are temporary and fragile spaces.

### Spontaneity, Control and the Limits of the Puppet Workshop

During the experience of the residencies at HMP Haslar IRC, there was a very exciting but risky moment in the workshop space that was indicative of a type of interstitial space. Relating back to how Critchley explains how there is the possibility for gaps and interstices opposed to the control of the authority, there

were points in the next example where this occurred. This occurred when, for seemingly unknown reasons, spurts of creativity and performance would appear in the space without prompting or structure. These moments of creativity occurred when the situation was out of my creative control. In these moments, I was no longer taking the artistic lead, and the men in the space were 'running the show'. This involved both puppets and music and took the form of improvisations and playing drums in the space. The role of the workshop 'leader' was hard to distinguish in these specific events. The events were ironically (because of the context of the prison setting) autonomous and creatively free in the educational space. This lack of control was a positive state or 'interstice' in the lengthy experience of encouraging creativity in the project. An artistic and social change within the confines of the workshop was encapsulated in these moments of anarchy and relative creative autonomy, as the usual everyday relations were disrupted and blurred through unstructured performances. For example, men would sing in their own first language songs relating to their heritage, play drums and improvise bawdy and silly tales with the puppets without any structure. These moments of anarchic play and creative free expression happened in forms that were recognisable as collective and embodied a sense of what influential anthropologist Victor Turner calls 'communitas' (2008: 96-97). I witnessed that, once the men trusted the space of the workshop and my role as relative stranger combined with this, the puppets could enable spontaneous responses as moments out of the time of the prison system. This included a sense of flow, as presented as joyful aspect of immersion in creative experience by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2002: xi). This created a place of release for the men in which they were

diverted from and actively forgetting, through performance, their predicament. The benefit of humour and stress relief through creativity cannot be underestimated for men traumatised by the uncertainty of their incarceration. The puppets were a point of focus for the acts of forgetting and represented another imagined humorous world beyond the prison. The men were not certain about discussing narratives related to their trauma, as they seemed instead to be seeking relief from the pressure of their daily existence. As practitioner, I was pleased with the apparent lack of control that I encouraged in the workshop space through these moments of laughter and flow. At the end of the week, the workshop material was usually shared in one of the classrooms to small audiences of around ten to fifteen staff and detainees. These performances were positive celebrations of the process, though they did not embody the powerful sense of creative freedom as in the shapeless creative energy of the uncontrolled workshop events. These events in the gap of the workshop were shapeless because there was no explicit form encouraged by me as workshop leader. Instead, the group or individual was lost in the flow of doing, playing and sense of *communitas*. The flexible boundary of the puppet workshop allowed space for this process and performances to emerge, and this was a positive aspect of the workshops and project.

The creative freedoms, flow and *communitas* acknowledged in the workshop setting were limited by the temporality of the relationships found in the carceral context. The otherness of the participants to the workshop leader changes in these moments of relative freedom, but, in Levinas' ethics, the participants and the workshop leader and facilitator do not become equal due to the impossibility of this state of being. Through transgression in relation to the

social norms and the usual rules of the prison, the puppet workshop did shift intersubjective relations through the performance of creative acts, but the alterity of the immigrant detainee was only blurred and deferred. The participants appeared safe in sharing a space and being playful in the act of puppetry against the biopolitical situation. Through the process of the welcome, the face-to-face and the hand-to-hand playful acts of creative freedom in the space or interstices of the workshop temporarily resisted the coercive forces of detention. The practice of ethics in the workshop space encouraged limited autonomy against the controls of the sovereign power. During the 'downtime', when I was conversing with the men in the workshop, the opportunity to express their situation during the sessions emerged. After the creative improvisations and makings, during these conversations towards the end of the residency weeks, I cherished points where the inequalities and social barriers between us shifted. Therefore, through my own embodied tacit knowledge of these workshop spaces at Haslar as an applied theatre maker, I was also changed by these exchanges. This knowledge was experienced through the touch of hands as well as through the demand of the face in this workshop experience.

This knowledge developed through PaR was tempered by frustration and futility in relation to the everyday realities of immigration detention. This PaR was a meek resistance against the controls imposed on the bodies of marginalised men. I was hopeful but also practically humble in my approach to this situation. This experience as tacit knowledge felt like a weight on my shoulders as I cycled through the wind and rain towards the razor wire of HMP Haslar IRC. Before this engagement, the men were a collection of shadow identities at points as explored in chapter three. These identities shifted sharply

into focus as faces and then as personalities through handshakes as the workshops progressed. Therefore, the temporality of the relationships opened up new possibilities for engagement using puppets in the workshops, and these possibilities became one of the most important outcomes of the practice with the men. The experience as artist and researcher in the practice of workshops did often arouse a feeling of personal pain. I share with the poet Andrew Jordan his view of his experience in 2005-2006, as artist in residence at HMP Haslar IRC, when he writes that, in the context of HMP Haslar IRC, 'to create in there is to hurt'.<sup>32</sup> This experience of residual pain is from the pronounced demand of the face-to-face and hand-to-hand exchanges that occur between the practitioner and the men imprisoned in this space. In relation to these challenges of working with traumatised migrant identities applied theatre scholars Michael Balfour et al (2015) advocate the application of resilience in regards to the oppressive context of this type of practice (2015: 18). In my experience the application of resilience in the context of Haslar was vital to success and exhausting.

Through the practice at HMP Haslar IRC, a greater awareness and reflection on the role of practitioners and participants developed with particular regard to hands. This awareness, combined with consideration of the ethical issues of the face in relation to Levinas' philosophy led to the invocation of the phrase 'hand-to-hand'. This phrase relates to both proximity and violence but can be invoked to describe a positive bodily connection between people in the

<sup>32</sup> This line is in Andrew Jordan's poem 'HMP Haslar an Etymology' in his collection *Boneheads Utopia*. Examples of the poems can be found on this webpage: 'Bonehead Utopia' <http://smokestack-books.co.uk/book.php?book=8> (Accessed 7 April 2013).



context of arts practice. The violence of the face-to-face that Levinas explores in *Totality and Infinity* (1990) can also relate to the potential for violence of the hand-to-hand. This conflict can move beyond the associations with the violence of combat to the possibility of communication and responsibility towards the other. This physical connection, though, moves the ethical from the ideal space to the dirty space of the bodily and, with puppets, the uncertainty of objects. In this way, this hand-to-hand interaction complicates the ethics of the face-to-face. For the applied puppeteer, this ethics is an intersubjective problem to address because this practice between objects and bodies emphasises the hand as a key tool in its expression and function. Hands become 'dirty' in puppet workshops through handshakes, making and performing. This relates to the existential playwright and philosopher Jean Paul Sartre's dramatization of the problems of violence, politics and ethics as 'dirty hands' in his 1948 play *Les Mains Sale*.<sup>33</sup> This issue of dirty hands is a point further developed by the political and applied philosopher Cecil Anthony John Coady (1996: 423) to describe the issues of ethics and politics when engaging directly with life. In the applied puppetry workshop, the shifting of the ethical from the face to the hand makes the practice both dirty and political. In applied puppetry practice, it is usual to engage with the other with hands when making and performing with puppets. The applied puppeteer has to get his/her hands dirty, and this means he/she is engaged in ethical and political problems between and beyond bodies and objects. This physical interaction when hands touch disrupts the ideal status implied by Levinas for the other through the face-to-face and

<sup>33</sup> Sartre, Jean-Paul. *No Exit and Three Other Plays*. New York: Vintage, 1989. Print.

transcendental thought. Responsibility and sensitivity for the other are felt through the hand-to-hand, but the applied puppeteer who uses his/her hands irresponsibly could manipulate and coerce if not careful or aware of the power he/she has in practice.

In relation to hands as powerful aspects of practice, the logo for Haslar symbolises a relevant narrative. Hands of different skin colour joined under the crown represented the logo for HMP Haslar IRC. One meaning connoted by this image is hands shaking in some form of mutual equality, though when compared to the everyday realities of HMP Haslar IRC, this logo symbolises other relations. The hands in the logo are locked perpetually together under the symbol of the sovereign instead of being free to let go. Under the crown and associated with this prison, the hands are not equal in this image. This logo and the handshakes that I experienced through the moment of touch and release at HMP Haslar IRC had different meanings. The release from the handshake in the workshop was as important as the connection made between bodies. Hands also connected with objects and enabled the opening of alternative spaces between participants. This unusual space and way of relating between objects and others can develop for the subjectivities consciousness through what Levinas describes as the 'powers of welcome, of gift, of full hands, of hospitality' (1990: 205). The political force of the hand is balanced by the ethical responsibility to the other through the face. In the workshop space, this physical and political interaction is a complex mix of allowing space and crossing boundaries between the people and objects involved. Reflection about this important dynamic for the practitioner does involve a greater degree of understanding of the biopolitical context of actions and intersubjective relations.

This reflection is especially important when using artificial others like puppets. The applied puppeteer gets his/her hands dirty and must acknowledge this in his/her practice.

This chapter has argued that the philosophical problems of ethics can be practiced in the laboratory of the workshop. This practice is through the way the welcome, the face-to-face and, particularly with puppets, the hand-to-hand are engaged. This practice is even possible within traumatic geographies, as the workshops at Haslar evidenced. The process of puppetry can further develop creative ways to negotiate the ethical demand of the other in workshop space and temporarily change the relationship between entities. Unfortunately, these possibilities are provisional and often lost under the waves of institutional memories and forgetting, sovereign power and national border forces in Haslar.

The radical aspect of the applied puppet workshop explored in this chapter argues that this was a space for playing with intersubjective positions. This potential is what makes puppet workshops exciting as political theatre and ludic engaged practice. The workshop's boundaries are closer to the everyday in terms of face-to-face and hand-to-hand than the divided act of audience and spectacle. This potential for participation in workshops indicates the applied puppetry's radical potential. The flexible puppet workshop at Haslar valorised spontaneous improvisations where divisions between participants were an issue. This meant that the workshop contained resistant acts through dissensus. This idealist conception of the workshop space was tested through the project at HMP Haslar. The radical potential for the workshop was discovered when I challenged the physical boundaries of subject and other both inside and outside the domain of the creative space using puppets. By

encouraging this creative process, I encouraged a temporary interstices or gap within the frame of fear of the other. Puppets as transgressive performing objects in this project were employed in this process as uncanny and radical others that opened up possibilities in breaking down estrangement through hand-to-hand relations. In the next chapter, I explore how these puppets built at Haslar became fellow witnesses to these events in the workshop.

## Chapter 5: The Puppet as Witness

---



Figure 26. Marionette constructed in HMP Haslar. Photograph. Matt Smith 2014.

### *HMP Haslar Puppet Litany*

*A flat piece of card cut and made into shadow, representing a woman with no face who stands next to a lotus flower, cut by a man who never explained why.*

*A shadow bird, with large body and baby birds following. They hatch from an egg that cracks on the screen. Born and re-born in a shadow show.*

*A shadow prince, who saves the day in an adventure with villains and monsters. He comes back with a rose after saving the day, after rescuing the baby and heir to the throne.*

*A marionette dancer, who has no legs, but twists and turns on the string above. She pushes her hand in the air and pulses to the beat performed by the men who pick up drums.*

*The marionette shepherd, who has lost his goat and needs to go home.*

*The shadow puppet migrant flies to a new city lost and homesick.*

*Shadow, a temporary blockage of light that moves on the screen made from part of an old tent, inside the prison. This shadow puppet reveals no truth but instead the image of a vague narrative, that passes time. A change in the way the light passes from the redundant piece of technology, the overhead projector.*

*The rods of these puppets bear witness to the hands of men lost in immigration detention and desperately in need of a distraction from the daily routine of incarceration.*

As the above text illustrates, the puppets represent witnesses to the spaces of detention. This materiality is explored in this chapter. This conception of the puppet as witness is also illustrated in the script and lecture performance video in the appendix. In this chapter, I argue that the puppets built inside or in reaction to the spaces of immigration detention at HMP Haslar IRC embodied the knowledge of the PaR. This realisation took place because the puppets in the process of the practice, left as traces after the work at HMP Haslar IRC, became more important as the PaR developed. In this chapter, I will explore the

puppets and objects built in this context, using as my theoretical frame the 'object turn' formed by contemporary thinking found in new materialism and Object Orientated Ontology (OOO). Initially, I would like to introduce two events that had an important impact on my PaR and form the backdrop for the argument in this section.

During the 2014 Brighton Festival, I attended an immigration debate<sup>34</sup> with a panel of guests and public audience who discussed in a general manner immigration issues in the UK. At the end of the debate, questions were solicited from the public audience, and I took the opportunity to ask whether any of the panel had direct experience of immigration detention. The panel seemed a bit distracted from answering my simple question until the chair asked the journalist David Aaronovich to respond to the problem of immigration detention I had posed.<sup>35</sup> His first response was that his lack of experience of immigration detention was a 'journalistic lacuna'. These gaps or lacunae in knowledge about immigration detention were an area of concern in the way the practice I was developing shifted in the later stages of the PaR. I realised that my practice was operating in this gap and should take account of this.

In 2015, Haslar IRC was closed as an immigration removal centre and, quickly and effectively, my work with detained men in this prison ended.<sup>36</sup>

During a presentation of a lecture demonstration at the University of Portsmouth

<sup>34</sup> Details of the immigration debate 'The Immigration Debate'

[http://brightonfestival.org/event/2371/the\\_immigration\\_debate](http://brightonfestival.org/event/2371/the_immigration_debate) (Accessed 7 June 2015).

<sup>35</sup> A video document of the debate is found here: 'Immigration Debate – Livestream'

<http://livestream.com/brightondome/events/2997003/videos/51239407> (Accessed 7 June 2015).

<sup>36</sup> 'Concern for Jobs as Gosport Immigration Centre to Turn Into Prison'

<http://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/business/local-business/concern-for-jobs-as-gosport-immigration-centre-to-turn-into-prison-1-6655160> (Accessed 12 December 2015).

in 2015, I was sent an email from one of the prison officers that the decision had been made to close Haslar as an immigrant detention facility. I was both shocked and elated, as I had wished for an end to the trauma inflicted on the bodies of the men I had met there, but I was also concerned for the fate of these men. I had experienced a great deal during my project delivering workshops and performances but still felt gaps in my knowledge. After the closure, I visited the prison again to document the environment photographically, and the presence of absences was clear when I returned. This presence of absence was found, for example, in the missing detainees' bodies and shapes left on walls by institutional notices. Reacting to this closure, the aims of the PaR shifted to include methods with which to acknowledge and deal with these absences and lacunae. The performance of material and puppets became one method in dealing with these lacunae relating to both the materiality and representations of immigration detention. Although the bodies of the men previously detained at HMP Haslar IRC now were removed from the prison, the objects of their incarceration were still present in the photographs of the decommissioned prison (See Figures 1-8), as were the puppets constructed in the environment of the prison.

My own use of performing objects in relation to this closure and these lacunae was to create a resistant set of actions about the prison using puppetry. These actions appeared on the outside of the jail as part of descriptions and interpretations in performed lectures. In relation to these practice events, the closure of the prison marked an unexpected and new phase to the PaR. The results of this closure were not an ending but instead an alteration of mode and function for the development of the PaR project and embodied knowledge. The



prison no longer physically functioned as part of the biopolitical process of border control, and the demand to relate the experiences of my practice and communicate memories of this institution were a new intention. A process of interpreting and documenting of the objects involved in this network of objects and things was necessary in this stage of the process. A reason for this was to develop and creatively enhance the practice-based knowledge. I also recognised through this process that, after the closure, I was performing absence with these puppets.

### Absence and the Puppets' Presence

In relation to the issue of absences in social space, sociologists Lars Frers Meier and Erika Sigvardsdotter present the feelings of absences as part of a 'corporeal embeddedness' within culture. Meier and Sigvardsdotter state that, 'The absence of people that have been, of things that have been but are not anymore, can hurt deeply' (2013: 431-432). In relation to loss, Meier and Sigvardsdotter draw on Levinas' ideas of the traces of the other and they posit, 'When the absence of someone or something becomes present, we feel it in our corporality, but we fail to grasp it' (441). How I accounted for these corporeal effects was one of the problems with the practices undertaken after the closure of HMP Haslar IRC. The emotional pain was difficult to account for in the realm of ideas separated from memories of practices. The findings and knowledge often appeared to be present in objects and memories located in puppets and photographs, and these objects took on a new 'life' in the project. The way the practice developed after the closure of the prison involved partial acts of remembrance and haunting memories partly discovered in the traces left in the

puppets, documented photographs and performance actions. I was presenting the corporality of the absence in both my body but also through the bodies of the puppets. One such puppet was the hybrid form of the puppet goat used in the lecture performances.

Some of these corporal memories left as traces in objects I presented during a lecture performance as part of a symposium about puppets and politics at the Copenhagen puppet festival in 2015. These traces I performed through a puppet goat, in a video document.<sup>37</sup> This goat represented a real goat from the grounds of HMP Haslar IRC, and he confronts the audience with the text, 'Do I look like a fucking terrorist?'<sup>38</sup> This puppet had performed in the prison (quite awkwardly) for a community event, before this video version at the festival.<sup>39</sup> The video in Copenhagen was a reworking of the performance in prison. I gave this puppet a voice, attempted to anthropomorphise the goat and then imagined a human-like consciousness for the goat. I presented this performance as comic and, through this humour, attempted to make a series of points about the pain of the institution, the cruel absurdity of aspects of border control and the immigrant detainees' comparison with animals by guards. This was in reaction to the news story that, in February 2015, there had been a TV exposé by Channel 4 of Yarl's Wood IRC during which the detainees were described as

<sup>37</sup> Information about Copenhagen puppet festival events - <http://puppetfestival.dk/?lang=en> (Accessed 5 January 2016).

<sup>38</sup> Staff at HMP Haslar told stories of the goats and their situation was a source of humour and mythologizing. The goats were looked after by the grounds keeper and he took me to visit the goats on the perimeter. The stories in the goat video were based on these stories and events.

<sup>39</sup> The first version of the goat video can be viewed at

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLy9sG\\_7Lpo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLy9sG_7Lpo) (Accessed 12 December 2015).

The second version for the Critical Exchange event at University of Connecticut can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ew1e8ZdxQGA> (Accessed 12 December 2015).

animals.<sup>40</sup> I had heard staff making similar abusive comments that described the detainees as animals at points when I was at HMP Haslar IRC. The goat as animal and human hybrid playfully made a biopolitical reference to the way detainees were treated no better than animals. After the closure, I was told these goats had been moved to an animal sanctuary. Thus, the goats were no longer part of the network of human border enforcement, but their absences were relevant in the PaR. The text from the performance illustrates how I attempted to use the goat to describe the experience of HMP Haslar IRC through this puppet-human hybrid puppet type.

This puppet goat became a new object imbued with mystery and wonder within the network of the immigration border because it carried the traces of the carceral environment on its surface. This new object represented a powerful new aspect to the litany of objects in the prison context. I had introduced this new entity into the prison environment, and this puppet spoke directly about the political situation involved in immigration detention when it delivered its monologue. With this intention and spoken through this goat as performing object, I attempted to understand and imaginatively develop a response to the situation in the prison. What I did not manage to do and what was impossible to achieve was to understand the alien experiences of the real goats at HMP Haslar IRC.

In the video of the puppet goat speaking this monologue, the camera zooms out to reveal the puppeteer and puppet's coexistence from an extreme

<sup>40</sup> Details of this TV programme 'Yarl's Wood: Undercover in the Secretive Immigration Centre - Channel 4' <http://www.channel4.com/news/yarls-wood-immigration-removal-detention-centre-investigation> (Accessed 12 December 2015).

close-up of the goat to reveal me as the source of the manipulation and delivery of the voice of the puppet. Even after this revealing of the puppeteer's presence and the mechanics of the operation, the puppet goat as performing object still retains a mystery and wonder within this performance for camera. The interplay of performer, the goat as puppet and the allusion to the real goats all provide a viewpoint of the men incarcerated. This viewpoint created what political philosopher Jane Bennett in *Vibrant Matter* describes as a powerful 'assemblage of things' (2009: 23-24) related to the politics of the situation. Considered from Bennett's perspective, each aspect in this assemblage was of equal importance, with my human perspective not privileged over and above the performance of and connection to animals, puppets or objects. Analysing puppets as objects perceived with more agency relates to Bennett and what she calls the 'vibrant matter' of objects. Speculating about what is represented within the puppet through this method is one way to attempt to make sense of the way being is expressed in these objects within a unique space like the prison.

The relations of objects within networks is considered by Bennett through her concept of 'thing power' (2004: 348) , which operates in the networks of vibrant matter, a viewpoint developed in her article 'The Force of Things' from 2007 that pre-dates her influential book *Vibrant Matter*. In this important article, she suggests a shift from body materialism towards 'thing power materialism' and a naive speculation and horizontal picture of the network of objects as a way to approach a new ecology of matter. In this new perspective, the 'ontological imaginary of things and their powers' (349) can be appreciated in a new form of realism. As well as acknowledging the body as a site of resistance,

Bennett suggests that 'cultural forms are themselves material assemblages that resist' (348). The possibility of the resistant object was an aspect explored particularly after the closure of Haslar in the PaR. Bennett's description of thing power appears clearly analogous to the life of the puppet when she writes 'Thing Power: the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle' (351). Through this shifting in perspective in a kinship between things, objects and people can flatten the usual hierarchical system of thinking about relations. As well as valorising the object, Bennett warns against the problem of reducing subjects to 'mere objects' and the dead object to the live human subject. For Bennett 'Thing power materialism, in contrast, figures things as being more than mere objects, emphasising their powers of life, resistance, and even a kind of will; these are powers that, in a tightly knit world, we ignore at our peril' (360). This materialist conception of politics can be applied to practice that uses objects as part of its networks in workshops and performances, and this was a method applied to the lecture performances.

For the practitioner, materialism that considers the object as vibrant focuses not just on the bodily materialism of events like performances and workshops but on the significance of objects in time and space. Bennett's ecology is a paradigm through which to conceive of the vagaries of these experiences in social spaces amongst objects and bodies. Within this network of bodies and objects, 'for a thing-power materialist, humans are always in composition with nonhumanity, never outside of the sticky web of connections or an ecology' (365). In this new paradigm of thing-power, the project of the critical discourse of biopower is extended beyond its body materialism by

Bennett. This awareness of the way bodies affect and produce effects on objects I found to be a key speculation of the puppeteer as researcher in my PaR project. The puppet is part of these networks and is an object that becomes a form of interstitial fissure in the sticky web of this form of materialism when applied to social practice.

The aim of the representation and performance of the puppet goat was to provoke questions about the status of objects and subjects within the network of border enforcement and the way sovereign states value entities both human and non-human in disproportionate ways. The monologue of the goat presents the immigrant 'alien' life of the detainee shared with the space of the imagined 'alien' consciousness of the goat. Through this method, I considered the assemblage of things together in this context even though they are not often represented as equal in value. Through representing the puppet goat in this way, I anthropomorphised the animal object through its vertical body form, use of the English language and human gestures. In this process, the intention was not to privilege the human in an anthropocentric way, but instead, through this practice, I developed knowledge about the objects and subjects involved in the traumatic space of border detention. I will next explore strategies of how I explored this conception of objects in networks based on an application of Object Oriented Ontology (OOO).

### The Alien Experience of the Puppet

In relation to the practice of puppetry and OOO, Ian Bogost, philosopher and video games specialist, presents an engaging heuristic with which to interpret the power of performing objects as a practice (2012). This is particularly the

case when the artist is exploiting the potential of the object and presenting it with increased agency. In addition, Bogost's method opens up a new way to view experiences of the 'otherness' of objects when they are performed and brought into particular networks. The metaphorical and phenomenological practice that Bogost suggests has also influenced the way that I reflected on and subsequently related to the objects involved within the geography of the prison. In relation to the puppet's agency, my viewpoint about the status of the puppet through my own practice has altered. The puppet's experience of the PaR project became an important aspect and 'alien' viewpoint to consider and to explore from both inside and outside the prison space. The alien experience of the puppet when brought into immigration detention highlights perspectives about the concept of what it is to be both 'alien' and 'other'. In this way, the puppet was both at home and out of place in the networks and units of objects in the IRC. When considered from this viewpoint, all objects on the immigration border are potentially startling and represent narratives about the environment of Haslar. An example of this was the child's t-shirt discarded or washed up against the concrete of the perimeter of Haslar with the words 'passport control' printed within its design (Figure 27). These border narratives uttered or invoked through the puppet with a voice — for example, Humphrey's text below or silently inscribed on the object like the child's t-shirt — contain important knowledge about the experiences I felt in this border space when rearticulated through practice.



Figure 27. A child's clothes at the perimeter wall of HMP Haslar IRC. Photograph. Matt Smith.

Looking at the PaR project in this way in an immigration removal centre in the UK, I experienced the limits of applied puppetry in a politically and morally charged environment, and the puppet enabled this exploration of the immigration border. This practice provoked renewed consideration of the puppeteers and puppet's intentionality and function in relation to bodies and agency. Employing the imagined voice of the puppet, I considered how my practice, articulated through workshop practices, performances and performed lectures, explored concerns about how to develop applied puppetry and how I considered the agency of the puppet. To interpret the experience of practice at HMP Haslar IRC, I used puppets to describe and provide a form through which the complex space of immigrant detention, puppets and the researcher articulated this knowledge beyond the prison walls. This method used the puppet as a form through which to develop knowledge through performative acts, performance texts and photographed images and through this process in the performed lectures. I speculated beyond my body through the material of the puppet, and the puppet became an extension of my physical presence and



a co-presence between the performing object and puppet. Through this puppet as 'organic prosthesis', a description of the puppet presented by scholar of aesthetics Chiara Cappelletto (2011: 325), I also speculated about what the puppet might feel and then expressed these imagined thoughts through performance and performance texts. The puppet in these performances was presented paradoxically both as a separate character and an extension of my performance identity. The puppet was also a powerful witness to the experiences I shared in practice, and, in the context of performed lectures, I felt that the puppet had more ability to challenge the audience than I did without a puppet. The puppet challenged the audience to reflect on their processes of participating with their performance 'gaze' and through the uncanny way the puppet returned this look as expressed in Humphrey's text in the lecture performance. The puppet perceived in this way, as active witness, has the traces of immigration detention on its body, as it was constructed in the prison (for example, Figure 26) and through this (dis)embodiment of trauma in performance represents these experiences without appropriating the trauma. Art theorist Jill Bennett also explores the way that 'witness puppets' can be effective in addressing trauma in her view of the important production of *Ubu* and the Truth Commission by Handspring and William Kentridge (2005: 119). In relation to the trauma of Haslar the puppets produced after the practice took on this role of 'witness puppets'.



Figure 28. Footballer puppet constructed in prison yard and later painted by detainee. 2015. Photograph. Matt Smith.

Applying this idea of increased agency towards performing objects involves a method by which I started to look at the puppets themselves. For example, the shadow puppets cut by an immigrant detainee (see Figure 29) are imbued with a deeper meaning when viewed as artefacts and objects constructed in the prison environment and considered in relation to the context within which they were constructed. As performing objects, they are powerful in that their design and material form comes from the prison environment, and their shadows or presence trace memories of the institutional space when shown outside of the prison. I found that I could not separate the archetypal characters shaped out of card from the exilic identity and carceral environment. Even though I cannot discuss the names of the men I work with for ethical and security reasons, the puppets represent, to some extent, the identity of the men who created them. This identity left as trace is part of the image represented as

a shadow puppet. Presenting these shadows to an audience outside of the prison means that I introduce connections between these two networks: the body of the incarcerated and the body of the relatively free. These shadows do not represent a fixed identity but characters lost within detention, and they challenge the audience to think beyond the image and towards the biopolitical traces. For audiences outside detention, the shadow puppets made at HMP Haslar IRC do not need to perform in the screen to project the power of the context that surrounded their creation. The puppets created in a traumatic space represent a trace and symbol of that trauma. When I displayed these puppets, I refused to re-enact the performances that occurred in the prison, as this felt like an appropriation of the events in the prison. Framing puppet figures this way imbricates them within their original context, even when they do not perform. The puppets then, to some extent, become a performance document of lives caught inside immigration detention represented as traces and witnesses.



Figure 29. Cardboard princess and hero puppets constructed in education block of HMP Haslar IRC. 2015. Photograph. Gregg Smith.

As well as shadow puppets, (Figure 29), rough marionettes constructed by the men and painted or drawn onto with simple faces (Figure 26) were what performance scholar Rebecca Schneider describes as 'remains' in this process (2001: 103). Schneider argues how performance, instead of disappearing through materiality, contains remains of the live event. The remains found in the faces on the marionettes built in these environments have an engaging stare (Figure 28). This is the gaze of the uncanny puppet described by Gross (2011: 23), but there is also something incommensurable about this stare. It is as if the frustration of the prisoner puppeteer was translated through the puppet's gaze. The puppet's face provokes the viewer to speculate about freedom and national cosmopolitan identity in the form of this object's demand as other. These puppets live beyond the sovereign borders and systems of control imposed on human bodies, but the puppet's existence is nevertheless inseparable from human networks of incarceration and metaphors of control in this project. The puppet made by the immigrant detainee does not merely represent the metaphor of control and manipulation ever popular in evocations of the puppet; the puppet is also a material trace of trauma constructed within and in relation to the prison system. The uncanny stare of these puppets in photographs and their physical presence provokes me back towards a memory of the ethics of the demand in the workshop practice. At the later stage of the PaR, giving these puppets, as objects that embody this knowledge, the chance to speak outside and represent border enforcement was an important development.

When the puppet is a witness to human trauma, the practice of attempting to think through the puppet heightens the puppet's power. The tension and dynamic between the power of the puppet's inner life and the

biopolitical context meant that the puppets were entangled within a web of knowledge and discourses about bodies, objects and power. This practice valorises both the object and the subject in practice through which the potential equilibrium between bodies and objects is oscillating and in flux. In the flow and flux of workshop-based practice, this oscillation between the statuses of entities was mixed up and explored and then this was reframed in the lecture performances. This ludic and speculative space offers an exciting potential for puppetry and performing objects in practice in the social space of the workshop, devising and performing. This awareness of the puppet's vibrancy and connection to networks was a key finding after the closure of Haslar in the journey of my research.



Figure 30. Humphrey. A puppet built in 1994 for Pickleherring Theatre. Photograph. Personal collection.

These speculations about the inner life of the puppet in practice turn the puppet partly into knowledge within my PaR. Theories and ideas about how the body and the puppet can relate in social and ethical practice through speculations, co-presence and co-existence with the puppet emerged, beyond

what I was able to think and feel without the puppet. In this way, my co-presence with the puppet enabled me to speak and discover new knowledge. I am thinking in particular about one of my puppets, Humphrey, who I have worked with for about twenty years now (See Figure 30). Often when speaking with and through Humphrey the puppet, I allowed myself to utter what seems unspeakable without this puppet's co-presence. This puppet was both a character and an extension of me as performer and researcher. This puppet has also been a powerful witness to my practice and so forms an important articulation of my experience, knowledge and thesis. By poetically inhabiting the internal world of the object, I was able in this way to express parts of my practice through a series of monologues like the examples in the lecture performance (Appendix Two). Next, I will introduce another key theory that influenced this consideration of the puppet's agency in my practice.

Many of the puppet monologues were inspired by engaging with the theories associated with new theories of materialism developed by the philosopher Graham Harman. The implications of his thought and the movement in contemporary critical thinking that is Object Orientated Ontology (OOO) offers potential insights into the world of objecthood but also challenges the practitioner of object and puppet theatre to reconsider their practices. Harman, through his controversial reading of Heidegger's tool theory and French philosopher Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory (1993), adopts a position in which the post-human subject is considered within an 'equality' of forms (2010: 24-36). Humanity is not a special category for Harman, as they are presented in Heidegger's schema for objects and people. The internal hum of the object is as relevant and important to contemporary questions of ontology

as the notion of human-centred connections for Harman. At the end of one of his early essays about *Zuhendenheit*, Harman asks the question, 'Is there any possibility of a fresh and concrete research into the secret contours of objects?' (66). Through my practice of applied puppetry, this question was one I, as puppeteer and researcher, contemplated in relation to the use of objects in the workshop and performances. The puppetry workshop was the laboratory for exploring the contours of objects in my practice. This notion was developed through Harman's conceptual frame of the object displaying a great deal more about itself and also human participants as agents. The puppet is often described as a tool in the process of drama and relates to the presence of hand of the tool for Heidegger and Harman. The relationship of the puppet to the puppeteer relates to the way Heidegger in *Being and Time* presents the craftsman and his hammer and the concept of present-at-hand and ready-to-hand (1995: 103-105). In this relationship between object and the human hand, awareness of the subject and object are merged. This merging of object and subject is often the process of the skilled puppeteer when performing or manipulating. The puppet, though, is often performed with as though its appearance is autonomous in this process and is imbued by the puppeteer with a sense of consciousness. Harman presents the other through the metaphor of the puppet when he presents the other as 'reversed from a natural object, a sort of puppet under unceasing causal coercion, into a vulnerable actor in the world' (2010: 16). This use of the puppet metaphor presented by Harman relates to previous explorations in Chapter 3 of the other as a marionette within the forces of global migration. The puppet is an 'other', and the other can be presented as such, but what can this tell us about the shadowy life of the thing or object

following Harman's ontology? Using the speculative approach, I projected myself into the imagined consciousness of the object and speculated about what was there. This was both a humbling and stimulating activity in the way to conceptualise relations between objects and states of being. In the experience of practice, ways to understand this dynamic was through appreciation of the way objects, space and time interact. Speculating about what is left within the vibrant matter of these puppets was a method in which to make sense of the way networks of objects or things exist and are expressed in unique spaces like the prison. Next I want to explore the status of objects in the border zone.

### Border Theatre and Vibrant Objects.

In the space of sovereign borders and border control, objects take on a strange and ethical potential in the 'everyday life' of detention and in the work of artists who operate in this context. Objects are neither neutral nor benign in the liminal zone of the border, and this is both a challenge and an opportunity for the artist. These objects become part of the theatre of the border that produces biopolitical power amongst the exilic identities and the agents of the state. The performing objects that I brought into the realm of the border played a role of creating a new potential performance space within the border zone. In the field of political geography, Louise Amoore and Alexander Hall have explored the potential of the art object in the contested space of the border as a global practice as well as how artists' interventions transform objects in relation to the humanitarian issues of border controls. The Janus-faced Trojan horse of artist Marcos Ramirez on the US Mexican border in 1997 has, for Amoore and Hall,



the potential to 'make strange' the experience of the 'scopic regimes' of the border (2010: 300). Through interventions by artists using powerful strange objects, the regime of the border is interrupted, according to Amoore and Hall. In the space occupied by art objects made in the border zone, these objects have the potential of 'enchancing' (306) the audience into reconsidering the problems around migration, surveillance and detention. The Trojan horse on the border, as well as drawing from the Brechtian praxis of *verfremdungseffekt*, (Brecht, 1990: 94-96) inhabits a unique space according to Amoore and Hall (301). This space produces an act of 'defacement' in which the process of the object is transformative (like a joke in relation to language), and something inherent is revealed (305). This act of defacement in relation to the object opens up the potential of the drama of revelation by artists working in the border zone. For Amoore and Hall, 'The affective and emotional experience of the object interrupts these sovereign domains, revealing the rights of passage on which they are so very dependent' (308). The rights of passage of border control and the processing and surveillance of the body in the liminal space, betwixt and between states, is disrupted by the art object and offers a resistance. Amoore and Hall draw from Jane Bennett's spatial political philosophy in which there is a potential for 'enchantment' and 'joy' propelling ethics towards a new space amongst the everyday. This arts practice of making enchanted objects opens up this new potential for socially engaged practice and, using 'magical objects, there emerges a sense of *possibility*' for artists engaged at the border and 'securitized spaces' (313). In their review of the potential of border art and theatre, Amoore and Hall present this context of border art as performative with the potential to 'act not so much to open a particular public space for defined

bearers of rights, as to cultivate a mode of public engagement among persons whose ideas about rights are held in check' (313). In this shadowy context that includes immigration detention, through the use of 'peculiar and unexpected objects, the possibilities of public engagement are also made new' (315).

Operating in the border zone is for geographers Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr is a 'vibrant space of engagement and intercontamination' (2004: 34). This contamination of immigration detention did not just affect my body but the body of the puppets. This conception of the object as contaminated in relation to social practices around the body reflects the experience of bringing the performing object into the immigration setting at HMP Haslar IRC and then devising lecture performances based on this experience. The puppets and objects developed there were not stable entities inside the prison, and their instability crossed over into the outside when I presented the puppets as part of the lecture performances. This use of objects as part of border art practices opened up a new artistic space in which to consider the usually invisible identities of the detainees. These practices are part of the border and its power systems, and this new biopower leaves traces on material, for example, the shadow puppet built by a detainee.

The inner language of the puppet ultimately remained a mystery and an absence or lacuna in my practice, but speculations about this space offered potential creative sources. In this space, I actively and theatrically imagined consciousness and voices, and this speculation about materiality was a route and journey for the PaR. These contemplations about the inner life of objects as participants was one potential method in this type of practice to appreciate the autonomy of an object as vibrant matter. As puppeteer and researcher in this

speculative and embodied practice, I attempted to navigate into the inner poetry of objects and the puppets' imagined thoughts. The puppeteer Eric Bass emphasises this approach by the puppeteer to enter this imaginative space and appreciate the inner poetry of the puppet:

As puppeteers, it is, surprisingly, not our job to impose our intent on the puppet. It is our job to discover what the puppet can do and what it seems to want to do. It has propensities. We want to find out what they are, and support them. We are, in this sense, less like tyrants, and more like nurses to these objects. How can we help them? They are built for a purpose. They seem to have destinies. We want to help them arrive at those destinies. (n.d:1)

The issue of how the puppeteer coexists presented by Bass emphasises the puppeteer as 'nursemaid' in the landscape of performance meaning. These problems of co-presence extend beyond the relationship between the object and the performer and into the relationships of other objects and bodies present in the space. The 'propensities' of the performing object as described by Bass as part of the inner language of the object is what the puppeteer often seeks in his/her craft. Through a practical workshop in 2015, *Living in the Puppet's World* with Eric Bass and Ines Zeller Bass, I experienced this development of an awareness of the object, and, during this workshop, this notion of feeling through the puppet was central to the approach to practice described and enacted.<sup>41</sup> In applied puppetry, the facilitator is attempting to understand the propensities of all participants, whether they are objects or people.

<sup>41</sup> This workshop was at the Little Angel Theatre, London, UK. 8<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2015.

## Puppet Witnesses

The puppet as witness might be one of its 'destinies' as a material and cultural form, and this possibility is an ethical problem in practice with groups of people. The problem of the otherness of the puppet and the human participant are problems within the context of the workshop, especially at Haslar. The destinies of the puppets and those of the people in the workshop are both at play and in flux in the space of the workshop. The puppets role, from this viewpoint, is more than just a mute witness to human contradictions. At times, I discovered this potential for puppetry to represent a witness in the context of immigration detention especially within the lecture performances. One aspect of the puppet in this practice was that the puppet was already 'other' in this environment. This status for the puppet meant that it was suited to this context in which identities were unstable and otherness proliferated around immigrants' identities, a point explored in chapter three. Next, I will explore how this concept of the puppet as other can be understood.

The director and scholar of puppetry Paul Piri discusses the issues around other/ness and the puppet, and he describes the coexistence of the puppet and performer as 'co-presence' by drawing on the existential problem of the other in Jean Paul Sartre's philosophy. Piri states that the potential of contemporary puppetry and material performance explores and exaggerates the ontological problems provoked by the puppet and object in performance. At the outset for Piri, the problem the puppet poses is that the relationship is between subject and object with the second category being the 'other'. This contradiction around categories presents a dynamic problem for the audience of puppetry,

and the body of the puppet becomes an 'apparent body' in the space of performance (2014: 31). Both Levinas and Sartre deny the possibility of the object to occupy the space of the other in regards to ethics and consciousness, but this ontological condition is able to shift in regards to the ontological ambiguity of the puppet for Piris (38). This ambiguity forms a space for the audience to imagine a subjectivity for the puppet through character, and Piris concludes that the puppet is an apparent other due to its distinction from the mode of existence of the human.

This blurring between the puppet and the puppeteer creates a problem in the space of performance for Piris, and, as I have observed in the workshops in different community contexts, this is even more unclear. When the effects of the puppet's ontology move individuals in this way, unusual imaginative networks are developed, such as when the distinction of where the puppet and person are indistinct. When the distinction of subject and object is brought into question by puppets, a new approach to the ethics of intersubjective relations is troubled and complicated. In the context of HMP Haslar IRC, the ontological ambiguity and otherness of the puppets echoed the crisis of subject-hood and selfhood experienced by the immigrant detainees. This ability to partly represent the status of other I exploited as part of the lecture performances developed outside of the prison.

I positioned the audience in the lecture performances with the intention for them to consider their ethical relation to the puppet as other, through the effect of the puppet's presence. A recurring motif in these lecture performances was for my puppet Humphrey to speak to the audience before I addressed them. In the text spoken by Humphrey, he asks the audience to appreciate both

his materiality and the effect their gaze has on his form (see monologue at the beginning of the script in Appendix Two). The puppet Humphrey also challenged the audience to consider what they could not understand because of the puppet's 'ambiguous ontology'. Through anthropomorphising the puppet, the audience could, through appreciation of the puppet's status as performing object, form knowledge about their own status as entities in networks of objects and bodies. For example, when the puppet says, "I was a witness to their suffering and I feel I can say a great deal even though I don't own my own voice", the puppet is performing a meta-performance around its own ontological position with the audience. At one of the performance lectures at the University of Portsmouth, an audience member remarked about the sense of sympathy and empathy invoked by the presence of the puppet Humphrey. The comment brought attention to the affective quality of the puppet discussing the experience of the puppeteer manipulating inside the puppet's body. This moment moves the audience beyond the artificial surface representation of the puppet towards a different awareness of the puppet's form in this performance. Overall, the puppet in this presentation offers itself as a wonderful problem that defies the audience's knowledge of the material world towards a new conception beyond 'everyday' notions of materiality.

This use of the puppet in this context was also effective at presenting a polemic about the politics of performing objects and their position within the biopolitical network of detention. It also provided reminders of the trauma of detention spaces. In relation to art as a gesture of recollection historian Richard Candida Smith suggests that 'the magic of the artist is an ability to reproduce a sense of shared space outside of immediate face-to-face encounters'(4) Using

puppets in Halsar as a recollection I created this shared space for encounters. This style of political puppetry draws attention to the materialism of the border through the performance lecture because the puppet represents a material witness of the suffering of men in detention as well as what was experienced by the researcher and their puppet as knowledge. The late puppeteer and artist Dennis Silk poetically discussed the powerful status of the object and puppet as a witness and as part of culture in his provocative texts about puppetry. In the following extract, Silk provokes the reader to give time to appreciate the agency of objects:

We say *animism*. Then we put it back on the shelf with the other relegated religions. Maybe our flight from animism is our flight from madness. We're afraid of the life we're meagre enough to term inanimate. Meagre because we can't cope with those witnesses. (1999: 75)

The fear of the inner life of objects expressed here by Silk became a dynamic realm for new knowledge in PaR. As well as the puppet's speculative internal vibrant potential and its role as witness, the puppet also represents characters, categories, stereotypes and identities, and this potential was exploited in my practice. One method I used in an early lecture performance *Open and Closed Hands: The Applied Puppeteer as Meek Hero* (2014) was through exploring the way performing objects relate to biopolitical networks. To do this, I created an imaginary dialogue between the famous twentieth century American puppeteer and author of the important text *The Art of the Puppet* (1965), Bil Baird, and myself as meek puppeteer defining applied puppetry. I represented Baird as a heroic character helping the world and in relation to this character, and I represented myself as meek hero within the malaise of contemporary

performance. In this dialogue, I drew on the source of Baird's programme for his play *Small Family Happy Family* (1972: 11-28) and its population control agendas, which I had explored in my article 'The Practice of Applied Puppetry: Antecedents and Tropes'. Initially, the intention was to present Baird as a glove puppet once the dialogue was written. In this appropriation of Baird's character, I drew on the use of dialogues to develop new knowledge about applied theatre and, at the same time, referenced the use of dialogue as a form that is entrenched in Western traditions of philosophy. A tangible puppet representation of Baird I considered too satirical and cruel to adopt, so I played with using a Dictaphone with cassette and distorted playback amplification to represent Baird's character. The Dictaphone recorded my voice masquerading as Baird's voice. This use of the voice was drawing on the tradition of heteroglossia in puppet traditions, as commented upon by anthropologist Joan Gross in her study of Walloon puppets (2001: 280). I adapted a version of an American accent in the recording. The Dictaphone I placed within a small cardboard box full of cut-up text from Baird's play and programme, and this box and Dictaphone represented Baird within the performance lecture. I struggled with the ethical dilemma of this representation of the deceased puppeteer Baird, and my invocation of Baird through the objects was, in reflection, personally troubling. This representation of Baird did prove effective in some aspects; for example, the absence of any tangible figure and the disembodied voice were effective in presenting the issue of absence in relation to the historical Baird. This use of the voice in performance explored the unfamiliarity of recorded voices commented upon by Steven Connor in his history of ventriloquism (2000: 7). Through this imagined dialogue, I dealt with a ghost representation and the



spectre of Baird in my practice. This dismemberment of the voice haunted the practice in the way I invoked the dead puppeteer partially through the recording and the impression of Baird. As well as a theatrically novel way of quoting Baird, the Dictaphone in the performance became, to an extent, an effective puppet of Baird and part of the knowledge-based practice. This performed version of Baird presented my struggles to understand the problem of puppetry affecting lives through both the use of absence and the inauthentic puppet voice. This use of performing objects to represent knowledge and identities was also explored in much simpler actions in the lecture performance and through objects not representing a human identity, like a piece of string (Appendix Two).

The string monologue was written as a reaction and creative speculation in relation to the string used to suspend the shadow screen in both the prison and the performed lecture. The potential of the piece of string in the performance lecture was commented upon by the small audience at an evening of discussions about practice at RHUL, and this inspired my written response.<sup>42</sup> The monologue I delivered at that event was a speculation about the internal world of this object, and the string's presence and movement across the space created tension and anticipation as I animated it through the simple act of tying it to the wall. This piece of string did not perform the appearance of life like a puppet; instead, it began to radiate its significance through the performance space because of its potential disposition as object as other, witness and bearer of knowledge. The string in the lecture performance space became so much more than a mere sign within the network of performance signifiers. Its inner life

<sup>42</sup> *Open and Closed Hands: The Applied Puppeteer as Meek Hero*. Date: 11th December 2014 AHRC event 'Creativity and Cultural Participation' RHUL.

was exaggerated through performance, and this humble piece of string carried powerful traces of the prison within its cotton form. In this performance, the string described the power that had been present in previous spaces and experiences. This consideration of objects and puppets meant they became participants in my practice. These participants performed the knowledge of my practice.

The journey of the PaR led towards the unplanned notion to consider the puppet in more detail as active participant in practice. During the early stages, the puppet in this practice was initially considered secondary to the human participants in the project developed at HMP Haslar. Later in the PaR, the prison was no longer operational as an IRC, and the puppets became even more important as objects of knowledge within the PaR project and, in particular, the lecture performances. They represented in the practice fellow witnesses to the trauma and injustice of immigration detention and the contradictions of the way power is enacted at the border in the UK. The puppets stare back from their apparently fixed forms and remind us of the harsh context of a nation that categorises the foreigner outside of the normal laws and codes of what Agamben calls the 'state of exception' (2005: 2-3). In the performance work conducted as part of the last stage of the project, the puppets functioned as powerful reminders of this Kafkaesque world of detention within which people have become invisible.<sup>43</sup> The puppet inhabited and performed within the lacunae of immigrant detention in UK culture by representing the trauma of detention and memory of the practice at Haslar through performances inside and outside of the prison. The puppets were effective at speaking towards the

<sup>43</sup> Kafka, Franz. *The Trial*. London: Penguin, 2014. Print.

power of the state about issues like immigration detention, for example, through the goat puppet and Humphrey. In this political performance mode, the comic and absurd puppet goat hybrid spoke truth to power when he asked the audience, 'Do I look like a fucking terrorist to you?' This puppet confronted the audience as a powerful uncanny presence full of wonder, and, by giving this object agency, it was able to comment on detention.

Relating this experience of practice to new materialism and OOO drawn into this chapter suggests a flattening out of the relationship of humans to things in this PaR project. This horizontal relation between objects and subjects was controversial because this flattening out of material and bodies also happens as part of the dehumanising of the immigrant detainee in the process of border security and enforcement. This process is through the way the detainee's body is administered, and I witnessed traces of this procedure through the objects and architecture of HMP Haslar IRC. This flattening also occurred in the imaginative space of the practice in the way I employed the puppet to speak within and outside of the prison. These performing 'border objects' became part of the 'theatre of the border' that enmeshes with biopolitical power. The puppets as witnesses in the realm of detention played a role in creating this new potential space within the border zone in this project. The puppets also enabled me to express how I felt in relation to my affective response and the ethical demand of the other at Haslar. This experience related to the perceived anarchic and comic absurdity of taking the puppet across the borders of immigration detention.

## Conclusion

---

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that the puppet should be considered in relation to the limitless unique qualities of people as participants. My own experience of practice at Haslar indicates how important developing this complex view of the participant is so important. This knowledge can then be combined with puppetry in the workshop space. The group of participants influence the form and content of the subsequent performances and workshop events, and the puppet has the ability to affect these relations and intentions as co-collaborator. This process was demonstrated in the practical application through workshops and performances at Haslar through the way that members of the group were ethically engaged as relatively autonomous collaborators. As indicated in chapter two, this was a very time consuming and frustrating way to run workshops. Additionally, this process was often both fluid and unpredictable, especially in the traumatic space of the IRC prison.

Through adopting, in the workshop practices, Gablik's listener-centred approach to art-making processes (112), I discovered a number of important points about applied puppetry. I recognised that negotiating a space surrounded by sovereign power and including surveyed participants meant that I needed to create an imaginative space. This imaginative space was somewhere to *forget*, as opposed to describe, stories of exile and trauma. This process of escapism was in the form of invented myths in the prison workshops. Escapism is generally seen as pejorative, but, as geographer Yi Fan Tuan states, there is nothing necessarily wrong with escapism in human culture (1998: xvi). This

activity of escapism and forgetting did not directly resist the authority and power imposed on the participants but did transgress the space of the prison, a point explored in chapter three.

I recognised after the closure of Haslar that an important development of the practice was to represent and interpret the stories of what had occurred in the IRC beyond the material borders of the prison. This work was for audiences outside the prison, including academics, students and the wider public. These performances were explicit about the context of immigration detention in the way they represented this experience. Descriptions of these findings discovered through the experience of the workshops and the environment of the IRC were articulated further through these representations in lecture performances. Additionally, in this performance mode, I was meditating about puppetry in practice. I was also thinking through this practice and thinking through the body of the puppet. Thus, based on the findings of the lecture performances, the puppets were both a reminder and a form through which to 'escape'.

Using the concept of biopower informed aspects of the PaR, including a framework within which to conceive of the participant's position, understand the networks of power in detention and appreciate the way puppets affect life. This biopower changed when the problems of puppetry practice and ethics combined in the workshop context. The puppet complicates and changes the biopower in spaces like workshops, and so the practice of ethics between practitioner and participants shifts from the face to the hand, a key point in chapter four. This complex interplay is further developed by the consideration of the puppet's agency as vibrant material participant in spaces. The puppet subsequently becomes loaded with biopolitical significance after the experience of this type of

practice. The significance of puppetry in lecture performances is its ability to provoke ontological questions in regards to others and create hybrid forms like the puppet goat that spoke explicitly in the lecture performances about traumatic events. This practice increases the awareness of biopower by representing the political issues around both human, animal and object. Issues of biopower were expressed in the lecture performance when the puppets that were presented in the performance were literally imbricated with the discourse and geography of detention. In representing carceral spaces like immigration jails, the issues of biopower also informed the approach to workshops.

My model of practice undertook a position in opposition to more direct puppetry for education and protest. The didactic approach to applied puppetry involving the puppet used like a weapon to impress a dogmatic message about a social issue was rejected at the outset of the project. Instead, I adopted a dialogic form of applied puppetry that aimed to put the means of production — of the puppets and narratives, for example — in the hands of the specific group. This activity then opened up discussions and celebrated stories developed by and with that group of individuals. This process evidenced in the residencies was conducted in the prison documented in chapter two. To present applied practice as dialogical and as a practice delivered in a socially responsible manner, I have argued that the puppet's agency should be considered in relation to human agency in applied practice. This relationship of performing objects to agency was a major part of the negotiations throughout the PaR both inside and outside of the prison.

Throughout the practice, a careful and at times fraught negotiation with a combination of institutions was necessary for anything to be achieved with

participants. This included the academy, the Home Office and the Prison Service. I researched and performed within these institutions, producing effectively new biopower. I acknowledge that I was not separate or neutral in regards to this power network, and, as well as workshops benefitting the participants, my project benefitted the institutions allowing this practice to occur. I undertook negotiation and induction to be able to begin working with the men in the IRC, as described in chapter two. Understandably, there was some scepticism and suspicion from the staff at the IRC and UKBA in the beginning until the workshops slowly produced positive results. The suspicion was because my role as relative stranger bringing puppetry to the prison appeared a strange intention in this context. This experience suggests that applied puppetry of this form cannot circumvent biopower and must work with this network of forces. Reflecting on experiences of this practice in prison and then in the IRC environment, it was noticeable that the power of the institution and its everyday disciplines far outweigh the significance of the practice. This context also erases creative theatre experiences.

The recurrent themes of power, ethics and creative resistance were aspects throughout the practice, both inside and outside the prison. This triadic relationship of ethics, power and creativity are leitmotifs with which to contemplate and frame applied puppetry engagements. I discovered that considering these themes and adopting an informed and reflective methodology in practice is potentially beneficial to the researcher and artist engaging in this field. The problem that was difficult to consider in relation to the above triad of themes was to what degree my practice was complicit in the traumatic environment of detention. In this environment and through the experience of

practice, it was discovered that only by developing trust with first the authority and then the detainee was it possible to be considered as partially independent from the oppressive power of the state.

In the theatre work experienced in the IRC, the situation was often fragile and the population so transitory, I was usually unaware of the future of the men I worked with and so could not discover the after effects of my practice from this perspective. There was one notable exception, and I was fortunate to stay in contact with this man after release from Haslar IRC and discuss what the positive aspects of the project were, for him. I stayed in contact with Hary Praveen and developed the lecture performances with him after his release. I acknowledge that my acceptance and friendship towards this man was important and an unexpected result of the PaR. I was careful in the way that I discussed his inclusion in the lecture performances and whether he was sure this was beneficial and not a problem after the trauma of Haslar. My hope was that his collaboration would not create false hope but instead offer him a genuine opportunity for expression. The beauty of his performance in the lecture performance was an unforeseen positive outcome.

Overall, in regards to the knowledge developed, I discovered that applied puppetry is an unusual creative process in applied theatre that emphasises the importance of objects in social practice. These objects are important as they can communicate unexpected narratives and ideas. This practice can open up unexpected creative dialogues in community settings through the use of symbolism and metaphor as opposed to testimony. Applied puppetry considered this way as a process of developing dialogue has a great deal to offer to the field of applied theatre as a performance mode. The puppet has the



potential to open up dialogues that are sometimes difficult to express in the pressurised form of actor-centred drama and in regards particularly to the demands of the 'face-to-face' encounter, a point developed in chapter four. In the practice at Haslar, this ability of the puppet to elicit dialogue was apparent. As a part of this development of dialogues, at rare points in practice, the usually unspeakable was expressed through language voiced through the puppet. For example, in the performance of the goat, this puppet could evoke the pain of immigration detention through its irreverent language. More commonly, I find in practice that the unspeakable is expressed through the actions of the puppet as visual animated figure representing a relevant narrative or invented myth. Puppets prompt ideas that can be expressed as a metaphor of displacement as in the lecture performances. An example of this was seen in the multiple puppets projecting the image of the processing of bodies in the lecture performance. The displaced voice of the puppet and its ambiguous ontology does not reduce this effect of the puppet's ability to speak about difficult human issues in specific contexts; actually, this quality enables this articulation to occur. This can happen directly through action and spoken language or through metaphor. In the case of the lecture performances, the puppet enabled my PaR to speak beyond the temporal borders of absent practices and institutions.

Once the participants, through the workshop space I developed, were free to develop their own narratives and play with the form, then the workshops and practice significantly appeared to provide an alternative to the everyday space of detention. The subject that concerned the participants in these puppet workshops was not the desire to retell the narrative of their trauma, but, instead, to experience play and entertainment inside the space of trauma. The problems

in traumatic narratives in relation to the detainees' daily struggles were all consuming in the space of the IRC, and so the men expressed that they wanted some form of solace and a chance to forget their woes through the creative workshops and performances. Negatively, these performances and processes could be seen as just a cultural 'safety valve', a negative point about resistance by anthropologist Max Gluckman (1956: 109). This deleterious view of cultural resistance as preserving social order does not lessen the impact the puppets had at Haslar in encouraging alternative dialogues beyond imposed social borders.

The intensive PaR in the IRC prison environment as a specific context demonstrated that it is possible through persistent and committed application for puppetry to cross imposed and enforced borders, both physical and social. These borders include the intersubjective space of the 'face-to-face' and the geographical space between the outside and inside of detention. Shadow puppetry, for example, can explore invented myths and narratives devised by participants and then performed within institutional spaces that then become part of what Cox describes as a 'mythopoetics' of migration (2014: 10). These puppets in this type of practice connected to the cosmopolitan populations found inside detention and exploited these cosmopolitan identities' connections to global traditions of puppetry. These traditions — for example, Punjabi street puppetry — were appropriated in a contemporary crafted form, in making and devising workshops and then connected through play and performances with diverse cultures at HMP Haslar IRC. I further explored the issues around immigration detention through the puppet form in the style of lip sync puppets like the goat puppet, described in chapter five, and this style of puppet

verbalised and provided a unique viewpoint of the cruel hypocrisy of the IRC system. These performances on the outside of the jail in the context of the performed lecture demonstrate the possibility of expressing the biopolitical issues of crimmigration in the UK through lecture performances.

The puppets in the practice described in this thesis became a material trace of experience, as explored in chapter five. This function for the performing object was a key finding in the practice. The puppet, after the experience of being brought into the space of incarceration, performed with and then discarded, becomes a powerful witness and 'ethical object' in the way it represents a trace of human trauma and suffering. This process of objects becoming ethical is described in relation to the genocide in Cambodia by business and political scholars Pina e Cunha, Miguel, Stewart Clegg and Arménio Rego, and they conclude, in their study of material culture and genocide, that ethics can speak through objects (2014: 35). Similarly, the puppets remaining as object witnesses and ethical objects after the practice were part of the litany of objects involved in immigration detention and highlighted the experience of this contemporary space in the UK to a wider audience.

The paradoxes involved within puppetry also open up the possibility for new creative engagements that can be unexpected interstices lacking contextual boundaries. For example, in the workshops in the prison, men would interact freely with the puppets and unpredictable events would happen. Men would play drums and sing as the puppets danced in the space, for example. As inanimate objects brought to life, the puppets encouraged this form of participation with reduced social boundaries, and the performing objects'

strange ontology did not distance nor alienate the audience and participants in this creative anarchic event.

The practice demonstrated that puppets may be used as creative agents in applied theatre as long as sensitivity and proper respect is afforded the group and individual participants. If artists adopt this sensitive and respectful approach, then puppets can provoke unusual and unexpected creative outcomes in practice, and this I facilitated and witnessed in the IRC. After the long waiting periods, the puppets enabled pleasurable aesthetic experiences for participants both as active makers of the performances and as audiences.

In regards to summarising the findings as part of the PaR, I found puppets in the workshops at HMP Haslar IRC fit the following definitions:

1. Performing objects enabling dialogues between strangers.
2. Attractive objects that communicate without the need for spoken language.
3. An art form that appeals to many cultures within a cosmopolitan context.
4. A form through which to displace the stressful pressures involved in the performance mode in workshops.
5. Forms of displacement that often allow individuals to feel more confident and less embarrassed.
6. Collaborators that encourage an alternative playful space in which performance can resist traumatic space.

In the format of the lecture performances I recognised the following:

7. Puppets are powerful metaphors and symbols co-opted by individuals to make statements about the human condition.

8. Vibrant artefacts and objects have the potential to become witnesses to power and trauma within social spaces. These objects are what performance scholar Joseph Roach calls a 'surrogate' (1996: 2), through which these memories can be expressed and represented.

It was inappropriate for security and ethical reasons to do in-depth interviews with the participants in the prison. The usefulness of this form of interview was also questionable given the situation of the potential subject in the carceral space. It was doubtful whether useful findings gained from this method were appropriate. It also seemed that to conduct an interview method would lack benefits for the men detained. Instead, the focus was on the practice as a way to impart pleasure, open dialogues and develop knowledge. Therefore, I relied primarily on practitioner reflection and the iteration of the practice outside the prison setting as performed knowledge through lecture performances to communicate my findings. It is acknowledged that this was an unusual approach to research but not unusual in comparison to other PaR methods, such as the way PaR is conducted, documented and contested by Nelson (2013: 71). This practical work in the prison developed knowledge and findings for the researcher, but also provided benefits for the participants, as explored in chapter two.

The benefits were difficult to assess in the project at the IRC because of the context of detention, sporadic groups and the way individuals attended the sessions. There were further problems around language and the diversity of languages in the prison. Some simple questionnaires did provide positive accounts of the activities and the use of puppets, (Appendix One), but it is

important to understand this response in relation to the specific context. Staff in the prison, especially in the education department, were positive in their feedback, but, due to the sudden nature of the closure of the prison, this is only anecdotal, apart from email records.

The method through which the evidence was gathered was largely through my own experience as practitioner and, upon critical reflection, this practice was undeniably a difficult and challenging engagement. I had to be very patient and willing to wait for informed engagement from people who learned to trust me. I often experienced self-doubt and had concerns about whether anything was possible in the prison. I do not recommend that practitioners should undertake this type of practice without an advanced level of skill and experience. This context also forced me to consider my whole position as artist and researcher in relation to assumptions about working with groups in specific settings. This led me to conclude that respecting the multiplicity of the other in this context and workshop practices was one of the important methods. I also observed how performing objects and puppets enabled this social process of engaging participation.

A negative criticism of this approach to PaR is that the practice served my research agenda, and the benefits were unbalanced. In relation to this concern, it was originally an intention to work beyond the scope of the PhD and continue to develop arts practice at HMP Haslar IRC, but the prison suddenly closed as an IRC. After this closure, an additional legacy of the project developed through my engagement in events outside of the jail, through lecture performances. This engagement was also part of collaborations with Hary Praveen, one of the ex-detainees who I have already mentioned, after he

agreed that this would benefit him after his incarceration. As far as possible, I attempted to positively affect the lives of the participants as part of this project.

To conclude the exploration of applied puppetry through practice presented here, the following list summarises the salient points:

1. Puppets are not benign passive objects in cultural contexts.
2. Puppetry can be developed in controversial spaces like prisons.
3. Puppeteers can use PaR as a way to develop new knowledge represented in and through the puppet or object.
4. Applied puppetry is distinctive and a unique field and discipline.
5. The complex statuses of objects and subjects in practice through applied puppetry explore questions about materiality, and this is of relevance to the wider fields of applied theatre and puppetry.
6. The potential effect of puppets on biopower is a necessary consideration in working ethically with applied puppetry.
7. The 'hand-to-hand' approach is a conceptual method through which to develop applied puppetry workshop practices in regards to the postmodern ethics of the demand of the other as expressed by Levinas.
8. The applied puppeteer should be both a skilled facilitator and able to manipulate objects responsibly.
9. At rare moments in community contexts, puppets speak truth to power, not necessarily through spoken words but as objects that transgress spatial networks and systems of power.

## Wider Implications

It is indicated from events like the Hands On symposiums and conferences I have attended, convened and contributed to that there is a great deal of applied puppetry globally. There are also developments of new international research networks for applied puppetry by scholars Alissa Mello, David Grant and Laura Purcell-Gates.<sup>44</sup> This is also reflected with the important work of UNIMA educational and therapy commission.<sup>45</sup>

Since the first half of the twentieth century, puppetry has been used for 'social care' as described by Jurkowski (1998: 125). What is less clear, in the literature and the contemporary debates, is a comprehensible and pragmatic view of what constitutes good practice and ethical approaches to applied puppetry. For the future development of the field of applied puppetry, I suggest expanding a framework for working effectively and ethically with this art form. This framework could take as its starting point contemporary debates about identities, communities and practice discovered in the critically expanding field of applied theatre, found in academic journals like *RIDE* and *Applied Theatre Researcher*. Some critical rigour with which to frame applied puppetry would help to develop practices and new thinking further.

<sup>44</sup> Laura Purcell Gates roundtable chairs 'Puppetry for Social Change' ATHE conference in Chicago, 2016. Alissa Mello convenes 'Puppets in Public: Social and Political Critique, Inciting Action and Change' at Theatre as Critique. Congress of the Society for Theatre Studies, Frankfurt & Gießen, 2016. David Grant is developing AHRC international network 'Objects with Objectives' for 2017 in South Africa.

<sup>45</sup> 'Education, Development and Therapy Commission – UNIMA'  
<http://www.unima.org/en/commissions/education-development-and-therapy/#.V7bDatQrLs0>  
(Accessed 20 July 2016)



A suggestion for further practice beyond the scope of this thesis would be to explore and evaluate community and educational based applied puppetry through a survey. A valid subject for this project could be conducted by researchers observing practice or through development of tools and formats through which practitioners could self-evaluate. Practice in less traumatic spaces compared to HMP Haslar IRC is also deserving of critical rigour, and a development in this direction across the applied puppetry field is encouraged. In addition, the wider philosophical implications of new materialism and OOO used to analyse my project are beginning to have an impact, as evidenced in the publication of Bell et al, *Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance* (2014). I encourage further use of this critical and theoretical discourse to develop knowledge about the power of puppets and performing arts practice, especially in regards to socially engaged practices. Through my own experience with public engagement through talks, conferences, festivals and meetings, there was the desire from both practitioners and academics to embrace new ideas and develop better practices in applied puppetry. One method employed in this thesis to explore the world of objects in practice, using the ideas of OOO, was through the poetic process of speculating about the inner reality of objects. I will end with an image relating to one of these texts in the lecture performance: a photograph of the HMP Haslar perimeter fence (Figure 31) and its related text.



Figure 31. Performance of plastic bag with image of perimeter fence with plastic bag caught within fence. Photograph. Walid Benkhaled. 2016

*Black plastic bin bag caught within the cold steel of the perimeter fence. Shredded and torn and intermittently flapping against the fence. Looking like a dead bird. The blue sky. The razor wire. They have all gone, the lost ones. All that is left is some of the uniforms, looking for things to do. Redundant guards of the vulnerable and disenfranchised. Want to stop witnessing but see so much from up here. Wait for the rain and wind to break down my form.*

# Appendix 1: Feedback from Four Detainee Respondents after a Week Long Residency. June 2013.

## **What did you like about the theatre workshop?**

*I liked this theatre workshop and this is good cultural activities.*

*I liked this activity. This is good for my entertainment in this centre and Matt a good man who was play this activities.*

*Wonderful experience. I like puppet show.*

*I like so many things in the theatre workshop. It is very passionate, cultural and traditional. I worked on this workshop and it made me happy and stress-free. It about mind activities*

## **What did you not like about the theatre workshop?**

*No any kind of this.*

*Nothing like that.*

*I like to add more music and sound effects.*

*There is nothing about I don't like. It is very nice activity for free time.*

## **What activities with artists coming from the outside would you like?**

*I liked drunk mechanic men activities. [Reference to the plot of the puppet show.]*

*A man who buy the fish his wife. [Reference to the plot of the puppet show.] That was a good entertaining moments.*

*Different activities I prefer. Which are not performed in this centre. Music dance cartoonist etc.*

*A man to go buy a fish for his wife. He get an accident on the road. [Reference to the plot of the puppet show.]*

**What did you feel about the puppets?**

*I saw first time this puppets. So then I liked puppets.*

*I feel puppets is like us. Like us lazy who we spend in life and with puppets you can explain your idea and experience.*

*Very good. This was my first puppet show. Very short and cute.*

*I think it is an interesting things for entertainment and it's enjoyable as well.*

**Note:** The collecting of this form of feedback after this residency did not appear appropriate given the language issues, time of the form filling and limited responses. Feedback was given and discussed but often in verbal forms found in chapter two. The men in detention were often asked to provide information in forms as part of their imprisonment and I did not want to add another level of bureaucracy to the experiences. Also often the men were not interested once the activity of performing with puppets was over.

## Appendix 2: Script for Lecture Performance

# How to Explain Immigration Detention to a Puppet Goat

By Matt Smith

Devised with HaryGanesh Praveen, Paul Rogers and Matt Smith.



Figure 32. Projections of long string of humanity on backcloth. Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled.

*[Note: this is not a transcript of the video document. This script represents the texts as used for the performance with additional descriptions of actions. Please watch video in appendix three before reading the script.]*

*[The audience enter into the performance space with the map of Haslar from 1850 and 2016 spliced together and projected onto a white sheet hung against one wall. Over this is projected a slide show of images of HMP Haslar and a litany of words written in Tamil prefixed either by HMS or HMP. The audience is sat in traverse on either side of the screen. On the opposite side of the screen a set of tables are covered with a suitcase, with a live feed camera filming live the contents of the inside of the suitcase, a video mixer, a laptop controlling the slide show, a lecture visualiser, an overhead projector and video projector.]*

*[Paul is manipulating the recorded sound-scape of Matt's voice repeating a litany of prison hulk ships, names for old rooms in Haslar when it was a military hospital and invented names for objects in these spaces.]*

#### MATT'S RECORDED VOICE

HMS Defiant...HMS Dead House...HMP Itch Ward...HMS Fortitude...HMS Ablution Room...HMS Panic Button...HMS Coercion...HMS Absence...HMP UKBA IRC NOMS...HMS Missionary...HMP Straitjacket...HMS Cholera...HMP Hammer...HMS Water Plugs...HMS Daedalus...HMP Weapon...HMS Fort Blockhouse...HMP Armadillo...HMS Shadow...HMP Cereal Packet Skin...HMS Split Pin Joints...HMP Contradiction...HMS Dirty Hands... HMP Witness...HMS Metal Conduit Pipes...HMP Security Gates...HMP Goat...HMS Man Who Flies...HMP Dancer Who Has No Legs...HMS Bird With Fat Body...HMP Woman With No Face...HMP Villains And Monsters...HMS Light Passes...HMP Hand-to- Hand...HMS Alternative Pleasurable Experiences...HMS Engage...



Figure 33. Matt performing with Humphrey the puppet in front of projected maps of Haslar.

Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled.

*[Matt and Hary enter the stage and walk across the space with suitcases that they set up. Humphrey the puppet appears from inside a suitcase on Matt's lap and delivers the following text]*

### **1. HUMPHREY'S MONOLOGUE.**

HUMPHREY

I resist your attempts to define me. I contradict knowledge formed about me. I stare blankly back at you, knowing you do not fully understand me. I am material, I am metaphor. I am Humphrey. I confound your attempts to rationalise my existence. I laugh at your meagre language that confuses the experience of me... I can help you if you like. Looking at me you can begin to understand what it is to be human, though you will never understand how it feels to be a puppet. My otherness is uncanny and playful. Welcome to my world.

I hold out my hands to you. My artificial hands. I feel the hand of the puppeteer inside my body. I feel the puppeteer's hand touch and move my artificial hand. I am animated by the puppeteer and given the appearance of an autonomous

object. Your active gaze animates my presence and I seemingly come to life. Try and make this process work with a human being and not a puppet and it is impossible. I remind you of how complicated it is to relate to each other. I am an enigmatic problem for you to solve. I welcome you through my artificial body tainted by the sweat and skin of my puppeteer's hands and through my body of sponge paper, cloth and polystyrene and two black beads for eyes.

*[Singing in the style of the blues]*

Two black beads for eyes

Two black beads for eyes

I can see you sitting there

With two black beads for eyes

When I first visited the immigration removal centre I sat and stared blankly at the attempts to make theatre where there is so much suffering. I saw men who stared blankly back at me and I saw men who laughed and smiled at my ridiculous presence in the prison. I travelled freely through the security gate and into the heart of the prison. I transgressed and traversed the border with ease. No one searched me or asked questions. There was some jokes and banter with the prison officers at the gate. Sometimes I was held by the immigrant detainees and they would use me to tell jokes in foreign languages and make rude gestures. If there was a female puppet they would make me carouse and rub up against her body. I've been around a while before I visited the IRC but I've never been touched like that before. Those sad men left their traces on my puppet body. I was a witness to their suffering and I feel I can say a great deal even though I don't own my own voice.



*[Humphrey walks across the space to the bicycle wheel singing the song ‘two black beads for eyes’. He stops at the wheel and moves it around and it triggers Matts voice recorded reading a version of the litany of HMS HMP. The wheel changes the speed of the recording and distorts the voice. Paul joins the puppet and takes over the manipulation of the wheel voice and the puppet walks away and climbs into a suitcase.]*

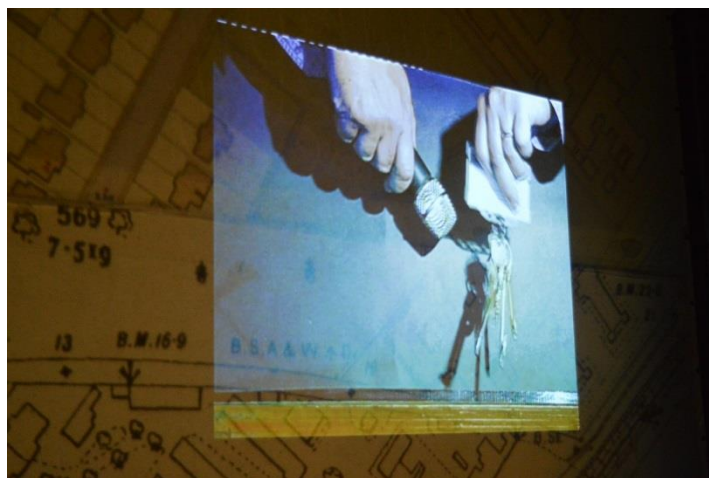


Figure 34. Projection of keys amplified through microphone. Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled.

## **2. KEY STORY**

*[Matt starts to rattle a set of keys and the keys are filmed/projected live in Matt's hands with a hand held microphone producing the sound of the keys and then amplifying Matt's voice.]*

MATT

As a part of my induction into HMP Haslar I was asked whether I would like to have a set of keys with which to access the spaces of Haslar... I was concerned about the issues of how I would be perceived as a part of the prison authority

...I would be one of them...I didn't want the set of keys so I was escorted. [*Matt drops the keys into the suitcase.*]



Figure 35. Projection of riot gear shadow puppet with hammer head puppets. Photograph. 2016.  
Walid Benkhaled.

### 3. TROPES AND SHADOWS

[*Text read by Matt is combined with Hary manipulating puppets representing the 3 tropes, and then a schoolmaster puppet with a puppet of a baby with a pacifying dummy in its mouth is projected.*]

MATT

The practice of puppetry is not politically benign, and this is especially clear when reflecting on puppetry as propaganda, and puppetry within mental health settings and as part of theatre for development campaigns for population control. I identified three tropes in puppetry practice: the puppet as a weapon, the puppet show as a straitjacket and the puppeteer as a form of missionary. In historical accounts and the tropes that they give rise to, puppets can be read as promoting docility, changing attitudes and used for fighting ideological battles. In this way the puppet is deeply involved in the political.

*[While Hary speaks Matt puts the puppet of the scorpion on the screen.]*

HARY

Matt asked me to make some puppets for this show that would represent the immigrant detainee and I made this puppet of a scorpion with a man's head.

*[The following sequence involves puppets moving through the 3 projection sources; Overhead projector, lecture visualiser and live feed camera. The scorpion puppet appears to be caught within a cell like space while the images of hammer puppets and puppets with surveillance camera heads process across the screen pushed by figures with riot shield and helmets. The bodies of these flat puppets are covered with maps of Haslar and texts relating to immigration laws from 1906 and 2015. During this sequence the following text is heard in the soundtrack.]*

MATT'S RECORDED VOICE

Shadow of an immigrant identity. Block the light that shines. Flat surface. Bold form temporarily on the screen. Words difficult to speak. Stand out against the white space of the screen. Trace the edges form was cut. Narratives of the heroic exile always moving. Never still. Removed from the screen. Beauty is somewhat diminished...rest on the floor or the desk. Manoeuvred across the screen... a reminder... a potentiality. Time changes not manipulated. Fecundity... cereal packet skin, split pin joints and stick rods... never usually face you. In profile look to the sides of the screen.



Figure 36. Hand projection with Matt and Paul in performance space. Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled.

#### 4. HAND TO HAND.

*[Text spoken by Matt while Hary first manipulates finger puppets inside the visualiser then freezes visualiser with an image of Hary's hand. Matt's hand appears to touch Hary's hand in the projected image, but is actually physically separate. This action is filmed and projected through camera live feed.]*

MATT

An awareness of my hands.

How many hands of strangers have I shaken over the years?

How do I use my hands in workshops?

I welcome the other with my hand. I bridge the face to face with my hand. I congratulate you with high fives. Slip me some skin, my brother, my sister.

The open hand of the welcome. The closed fist of resistance. The animated hand of the puppeteer.

The noble hand of the hero artist. My palms are soft but my knuckles are hard.

I don't hold my puppet with a clenched fist but with an expressive touch. I try not to hold the puppet as a weapon, nor as a tool but as an independent autonomous object.

Shaking hands with an immigrant detainee about to be deported. Shaking hands with an immigrant detainee after they have played drums to accompany a puppet show. Passing a puppet of a goat around men in the prison yard.

I notice I use my hands much more in the context of the immigration removal centre. Making puppets and making connections. Bridging the gaps between over fifty nationalities.

The hand can help in developing trust and collaborations. The hand can also be forceful and coerce.

The puppeteer understands when they are pushing an object or other. They try to open up space with their hands.

Hand –to-hand. Face-to-face. Shoulder-to-shoulder. Dirty hands. Clean hands.

Invisible hands. Open hands. Closed hands. Fists. I hold your hand. I release your hand. Touch and release.

*[At the end of this Hary starts to clap a rhythm that is echoed by Paul. Matt takes Goat puppet out of suitcase while Hary and Paul then play rhythms on suitcase and bike wheel. The goat puppet signals this sound to stop.]*



Figure 37. Matt performing with goat puppet. . Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled.

## 5. GOAT STORY

### GOAT

So you wanna know how a goat was living in an immigration removal centre?

Do I look like a fucking terrorist to you? Do I look like an immigrant?

I used to work for the military. I used to be a test subject for experiments on the effects of pressure on the brain.

Me ears felt a bit sore after the experiments. But the food was great. Me horns felt a bit weird after the experiments and I could pick up radio signals. I could pick up radio five live. It's not bad. I don't mind the sport but there are some real dickheads on the radio these days.

So they retired me from the military. Then they sent me to her majesties prison Haslar immigration removal centre and me job there was eating the grass...OOO the grass. They say the grass is greener on the other side ... well the grass on the inside of the jail is oh so very sweet.

Well it wasn't that bad you know. There was about eight of us on the perimeter.

We were all alright really and I had a girlfriend called Mary. She kept me warm at night. If I got a bit bored I'd get a hold of my mate Bob and we

would head-but the alarm system. All the prison officers come running...  
All hell breaks loose [*laughs*].

You know some of the men in here look at me a bit funny. I'm looking at them  
and there looking at me and I reckon their thinking; goat curry.

Well I used to watch the detainees playing football and cricket. Some of them  
are really talented. If the match is boring I could always take a shit on the  
pitch and they would have to clean it up. They would get all health and  
safety about the issue – cleaning up the mess.

They treat some of the men in here like animals. Some bloke the other day tried  
to escape- left a bloody mess on the razor wire. This other bloke he  
didn't speak any language you would recognise- it was like he would  
scream all day long to himself.

Well they finally shut us down- the end of her majesties prison Haslar  
immigration removal centre...well... they may put me in that goat curry  
after all.



Figure 38. Scorpion shadow puppet on the overhead projector. Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled.

## 6. BIN BAG

*[After sound effects Matt's voice appears speaking the following text. Hary waves a plastic bag connected to an amplifier during this sound and text. This interrupts the projected image of a photograph of a black bag caught within the fence of HMP Haslar.]*

### MATT'S RECORDED VOICE

Black plastic bin bag caught within the cold steel of the perimeter fence.

Shredded and torn and intermittently flapping against the fence. Looking like a dead bird. The blue sky. The razor wire. They have all gone, the lost ones. All that is left is some of the uniforms, looking for things to do. Redundant guards of the vulnerable and disenfranchised. Want to stop witnessing but see so much from up here. Wait for the rain and wind to breakdown my form.



Figure 39. String of humanity shadow puppet in the visualiser. Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled.

## 7. STRING OF HUMANITY.

*[Out of suitcase paper puppets representing people are passed from Paul to Hary and then to Matt. Inside the suitcase an infra-red sensor detects the movement of the paper puppets and this mutates the sound-scape and following recorded text by Matt. The movement of the paper puppets changes*



*the sound file. The string of puppets starts as representational and then proceeds to change into abstractions of human forms. They are pulled across first the overhead projector, then the visualiser and then the live feed camera. These images are layered onto each other on the screen. The video mixer finally multiplies the image into multiple separate frames.]*

#### MATT'S RECORDED VOICE

Piece of string as witness. Tied to the metal conduit pipe. Institutional wall. Waiting in anticipation. Unravelling and pulled across assembled small audience. Pulled taught onto a flipchart tied to metal frame. Waiting. Tension. Close to breaking point. Weight of the shadow screen cloth. Strength to the limit. Holding on, just. Shapes. Light. Warmth of the projector telling stories. Weight is lifted off. Snapped off. Wound up and put away. His sweat. Bundled away. Other objects snuggling inside the bag.

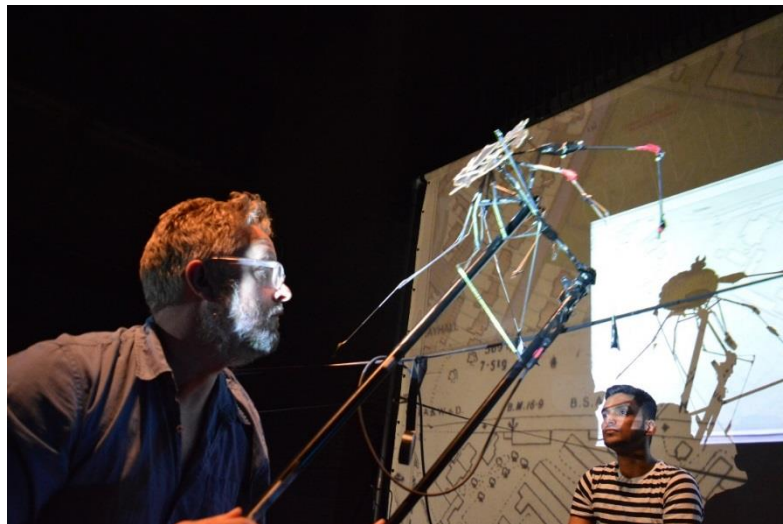


Figure 40. Hary reciting story and Matt animating Spider. Photograph. 2016. Walid Benkhaled.

## **8. SPIDER STORY**

*[Spider story is spoken by Hary, first in Tamil and then in English. While this is spoken a spider puppet made from a broken umbrella moves across the space. It pulls behind it a web made from electrical tape. Once the web is established maps are stuck to the web. The spider is connected to an amplifier and creates sound effects through its movements and contact with surfaces.]*

HARY

I have travelled a long, long way to be here today. Do you know why I came here? To save my life. I was in a forest. A massive one. I was so happy when I was there. In that forest, I have a beautiful family. I am the only one son for my parents. We made our lives full of happiness. We had a great life. Until that day came... one fine morning when I woke up I couldn't see my web, I was on the floor, my web was destroyed. You know what happened next; I saw my parents and the next minute my heart lost a beat. Yes...they are no more. I heard the noise of my enemies. At that moment, I started to run to save my life. My dear friend is that wrong.

Until now, I couldn't find my peace. , because when I came here I thought... yes I can start a new life here...but where am I now? You all can see where I am now. Have I done anything wrong? ...still I am searching for a new life. I couldn't find my route. Friends, please find a new life for me. Then I can be like you. Then I can sing, dance peacefully live my life here.

## **9. ENVOI**

*[The spider puppet is left onstage and then Humphrey appears in the live feed camera and speaks this text.]*

## HUMPHREY

They wished for an end to that institution and their wishes came true. Be careful what you wish for. Those spaces still remain stained with the traces of cigarette smoke, tears, sweat skin and the cries of the departed... The shit of the goats still fertilises that ground.

*[Humphrey climbs inside the suitcase and closes the lid. Hary and Matt pick up the suitcases and walk offstage. Paul plays a recording of the following litany as they leave mixed with sea sounds and sonic effects.]*

## MATT'S RECORDED VOICE

- Flat piece of card made shadow....a woman with no face who stands next to a lotus flower...a man who never explained why
- Bird with fat body baby birds following....hatch from an egg that cracks on the screen....born and re-born in a shadow show.
- A prince who saves the day....villains and monsters....come back with a rose for my love....saving the day rescuing the baby and heir to the throne.
- A dancer who has no legs twists and turns on the string above....Push my hand in the air...pulse to the beat performed by the men who pick up drums.
- The shepherd who has lost his goat and needs to go home.
- The man who flies to a new city lost and homesick.

- A shadow, a blockage of light in front of you inside the prison. no truth... the image of a vague narrative that passes time....no pain...the light passes from this redundant piece of technology.
- Images and narrative...time passes less painfully...getting in the way of moving on?
- Shadow witnesses...moved in front of the faces of men with no certainty of a future.
- Rods of puppets bear witness to the hands of men lost in immigration detention desperately in need of a distraction to the daily routine.

*[Hary, Matt and Paul return to the stage for questions and discussion with the audience.]*

Appendix 3: DVD of Lecture performance May 20<sup>th</sup>  
2pm Caryl Churchill Theatre, RHUL Campus Egham.

The DVD should play on any media player. If there are issues opening this DVD  
you can view the performance on YOUTUBE - <https://youtu.be/l19zwqiW5QQ>

## Works Cited

- Aas, Katja Franko, and Mary Bosworth. *The Borders of Punishment: Migration, Citizenship, and Social Exclusion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Print.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer : Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. CA: Stanford University Press, 1998. Print.
- . *State of Exception*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. Print.
- Allen, Keith, and Phyllida Shaw. *On the Brink of Belonging: A National Enquiry into Puppetry*. London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1992. Print.
- Amoore, Louise, and Alexandra Hall. "Border Theatre: On the Arts of Security and Resistance." *Cultural Geographies* 17.3 (2010): 299-319. Web. 24 Feb. 2014.
- Baird, Bil. "Puppets and Population." *Lit Discuss* 3.1 (1972): 105-9. Print.
- Baird, Bil, and Arie de Zanger. *The Art of the Puppet*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965. Print.
- Baker, Bobby, Dora Whittuck, and Marina Warner. *Diary Drawings: Mental Illness And Me*. London: Profile, 2010. Print.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovich. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. Print.
- Balfour, Michael. *Theatre in Prison: Theory and Practice*. Bristol: Intellect Books, 2004. Print.
- , ed. *Theatre and War, 1933-1945: Performance in Extremis*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001. Print

- Balfour, Michael, Penny Bundy, Bruce Burton, Julie Dunn, and Nina Woodrow. *Applied Theatre: Resettlement: Drama, Refugees and Resilience*. London: Bloomsbury Methuen, 2015. Print.
- Batchelder, Marion. *The Puppet Theatre Handbook*, New York: Harper. 1947, Print.
- Bass, Eric "Myths of the Puppet Theatre." *howlround.com*. howlround.com., n.d. Web. 2 Feb. 2015.
- Bell, John ed. *Puppets, Masks, and Performing Objects at the End of the Century*. London: MIT Press, 2001. Print.
- . *American Puppet Modernism: Essays on the Material World in Performance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Print.
- Bell, John, Claudia Orenstein, and Dassia N. Posner. *Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*. London: Routledge. 2014. Print.
- Bernier, Matthew, and Judith O'Hare, eds. *Puppetry in Education and Therapy: Unlocking Doors to the Mind and Heart*. Indiana: AuthorHouse, 2005. Print.
- Berwinska, Krystyna. "Puppets on the Barricades: Recollections of Performing in the Warsaw Uprising" *Puppet Notebook*.10. (2008): 8-10. London: British UNIMA. Print.
- Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2009. Print.
- . "The Force of Things: Steps toward an Ecology of Matter." *Political Theory* 32.3 (2004): 347-372. Web. 5 Jan. 2015.
- Bennett, Jill. *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005. Print.

- Blumberg, Marcia. "Puppets Doing Time in the Age of AIDS." *Performing Democracy: International Perspectives on Urban Community-Based Performance*. ed. Susan Haedicke and Tobin Nellhaus. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2001. 254-68. Print.
- Blumenthal, Eileen. *Puppetry : A World History*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2005. Print.
- Boal, Augusto. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Worcester: Pluto Press, 1989. Print.
- Bogost, Ian. *Alien Phenomenology or, What it's Like to be a Thing*. London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012. Print.
- Bolton, Gillie. *Reflective Practice: Writing and Professional Development*. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2014. Print.
- Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*. London: Methuen Drama, 1990. Print.
- Burggraeve, Roger. "Violence and the Vulnerable Face of the Other: The Vision of Emmanuel Levinas on Moral Evil and Our Responsibility." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 30.1 (1999): 29-45. Web. 5 Mar. 2014.
- Burvill, Tom. "'Politics Begins as Ethics': Levinasian Ethics and Australian Performance Concerning Refugees." *Research in Drama Education* 13.2 (2008): 233-243. Web 23 Nov. 2013.
- Campbell, Timothy C., and Adam Sitze. *Biopolitics: A Reader*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2013. Print.
- Candlin, Fiona, and Raiford Guins. *The Object Reader*. London: Routledge, 2008. Print.
- Cappelletto, Chiara. "The Puppet's Paradox: An Organic Prosthesis." *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 59.1 (2011): 325-336. Web 4 Jul. 2016.



- Cisney, Vernon W., and Nicolae, Morar. *Biopower: Foucault and Beyond*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016. Print.
- Coady, CAJ. "Dirty Hands". *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*. ed. Robert E. Goodin, and Philip Pettit. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. 422-431. Print.
- Connor, Steven. *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Print.
- Conquergood, Dwight. "Beyond the text: Toward a Performative Cultural Politics." *The Future of Performance Studies: Visions and Revisions*. ed. Dailey, Sheron J. (1998): 25-36. Web. 11 Mar. 2016.
- . "Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research1." *The Drama Review* 46.2 (2002): 145-156. Web. 10 Oct. 2015.
- Cox, Emma. *Theatre and Migration*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014. Print.
- Craig, Edward Gordan. *On the Art of the Theatre*. London: Hienemann, 1962. Print.
- . *The Mask*. 1908. Web. 10 June. 2016.
- Cresswell, Tim. *In Place/Out of Place : Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*. London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. Print.
- Critchley, Simon. *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance*. London: Verso, 2008. Print.
- . *Impossible Objects: Interviews*. Cambridge: Polity Press 2012. Print.
- Crothers, J. Frances. *The Puppeteer's Library Guide: The Bibliographic Index to the Literature of the World Puppet Theatre*. London: Scarecrow, 1983. Print.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Flow: The Classic Work on How to Achieve Happiness*.

London: Rider, 2002. Print.

Derrida, Jacques. *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University

Press, 1999. Print.

---. "The Principle of Hospitality." *Parallax* 11.1 (2005): 6-9. Web. 26 Jan. 2014.

---. "Hospitality." *Angelaki: Journal of Theoretical Humanities* 5.3 (2000): 3-18.

Web. Jan 26. 2014.

---. *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*. New

York: Fordham University Press, 1997. Print.

Donnan, Hastings and Thomas M. Wilson. *Borders : Frontiers of Identity, Nation*

*and State*. Oxford: Berg, 1999. Print.

Dummett, Michael. *On Immigration and Refugees*. London: Routledge, 2001.

Print.

Edkins, Jenny, and Véronique Pin-Fat. "Through the Wire: Relations of Power

and Relations of Violence." *Millennium-Journal of International Studies* 34.1 (2005): 1-24. Web. 14 Sep. 2012.

Ellis, Rachel. *Asylum seekers and Immigration Act Prisoners- The Practice of*

*Detention*. London: Prison Reform Trust, 1998. Print.

EPA. ed. Wall, L. V. *The Puppet Book : A Book on Educational Puppetry*. London

: Faber and Faber, 1953. Print.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish : The Birth of the Prison*. New York:

Vintage Books, 1995. Print.

---. *The History of Sexuality*. London: Penguin, 1998. Print.

---. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New

York: Random House, 1980. Print.

- . *History of Madness*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Frers, Lars. "The Matter of Absence." *Cultural Geographies* (2013) 20 (4) 431-445. Web. 17 Sep. 2014.
- Fox, John. "Welfare State International – Our Puppet Story." *Animated Encounters: A Review of Puppetry and Related Arts*. ed. Prior, Dorothy Max. London: Puppet Centre Trust, 2007. 21-25. Print.
- Gablik, Suzi. *The Reenchantment of Art*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1991. Print.
- GBC. *Gosport Heritage*. Borough Council of Gosport: Lontect publishing, 1991. Print.
- Gee, Tony. *A Movable Feast*. Totnes: Kingfisher Print, 2003. Print.
- Ghosh, Sampa, and Utpal Kumar Banerjee. *Indian Puppets*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 2006. Web. 26 Aug. 2012.
- Gluckman, Max. *Custom and Conflict in Africa*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1956. Print.
- Graves, Robert. *The Greek Myths*. London : Penguin, 1992. Print.
- Gross, Joan. *Speaking in Other Voices: An Ethnography of Walloon Puppet Theaters*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2001. Print.
- Gross, Kenneth. *Puppet: An Essay on Uncanny Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. Print.
- Hall, Stuart, et al. *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2013. Print.
- Harman, Graham. *Towards Speculative Realism: Essays and Lectures*. Winchester: John Hunt Publishing, 2010. Print.

- Hartelius, Johanna. "Face-ing Immigration: Prosopopeia and the 'Muslim-Arab-Middle Eastern Other'." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 43.4 (2013): 311-334. Web. 15 Sep. 2013.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. London: Blackwell. 1995. Print.
- Hickey, Tom. *William Kentridge: Fragile Identities*. Brighton: University of Brighton, 2007. Print.
- Hogg, Alison. *The Potential of Puppetry: A Review of the Sector in Scotland*. 2005. Edinburgh: Scottish Arts Council. Web. 16 Jun 2014.
- Hofmeyr, Benda. "Radical Passivity: Ethical Problem of Solution? A Preliminary Investigation." *South African Journal of Philosophy* 26.2 (2007): 150-162. Web. 12 Dec. 2013.
- Hughes, Jenny, Kidd Jenny and McNamara, Catherine. "The Usefulness of Mess: Artistry, Improvisation and Decomposition in the Practice of Research in Applied Theatre". *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*. ed. Kershaw, Baz, and Helen Nicholson. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011. 186-209. Print.
- James, Adrian L. *Privatising Prisons : Rhetoric and Reality*. London: Sage, 1997. Print.
- Jeffers, Alison. *Refugees, Theatre And Crisis : Performing Global Identities*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.
- . "Dirty truth: Personal Narrative, Victimhood and Participatory Theatre Work with People Seeking Asylum." *Research in Drama Education* 13.2 (2008): 217-221. Web. 12 Jan. 2013.

- Jestrovic, Silvija. "Performing Like an Asylum Seeker: Paradoxes of Hyper-Authenticity." *Research in Drama Education* 13.2 (2008): 159-170. Web. Jun 14. 2012.
- Jordan, Andrew, "Inside the Outside", *Poetry Review*, Winter 2004/5. vol 94:4. Web. 17 April. 2013.
- Jurkowski, Henryk, and Penny Francis. *Aspects of Puppet Theatre*. London: Puppet Centre Trust, 1988. Print.
- Jurkowski, Henryk, and Penny Francis. *A History of European Puppetry*. Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1998. Print.
- Kentridge, William, and Carlos Basualdo. *William Kentridge: Tapestries*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2008. Print.
- KhosraviNik, Majid. "The Representation of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Immigrants in British Newspapers: A Critical Discourse Analysis." *Journal of Language and Politics* 9.1 (2010): 1-28. Web. 10 Sep. 2013.
- Kuspit, Donald. "Joseph Beuys: Between Showman and Shaman." *Joseph Beuys: Diverging Critiques*. ed. David Thistlewood. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press and Tate Gallery Liverpool, 1995. 27-49. Print.
- Kroflin, Livija. *The Power of the Puppet*. Zagreb:UNIMA, 2012. Print.
- Latour, Bruno. *We Have Never Been Modern*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993. Print.
- Levi, Primo. *If This is a Man : The Truce*. London: Vintage, 1996. Print.
- Levinas, Emmanuel, Michael B. Smith, and Barbara Harshav. *Entre Nous : Thinking-of-the-Other*. London: Continuum, 2006. Print.
- . *Totality and Infinity*. Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1990. Print.

- Levinas, Emanuel & Kearney, R. "Ethics of the Infinite" *Critical Theory: A Reader*. Edited by Douglas Tallack. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1995. 434-441. Print.
- Løgstrup, Knud Ejler. *The Ethical Demand*. London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997. Print
- Longhrst, Robyn. "The Body" *Cultural Geography: A Critical Dictionary of Key Ideas*. ed. Atkinson, David. London: IB Tauris, 2005. 91-97. Print.
- Massey, Doreen B. *For Space*. London: SAGE, 2005. Print.
- Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift*. London: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- McAvinchey, Caoimhe. *Theatre & Prison*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.
- McCarthy, James. "Militant Marionettes: Two 'Lost' Puppet Plays of the Spanish Civil War, 1936–39." *Theatre Research International* 23.01 (1998): 44-50. Print.
- McIntyre/UNICEF. *Puppets with a Purpose – Using Puppetry for Social Change*. Penang: Southbound, 1998. Print.
- Meier, Lars Frers and Erika Sigvardsdotter. "The Importance of Absence in the Present: Practices of Remembrance and the Contestation of Absences." *Cultural Geographies* 20.4 (2013): 423-430. Web. 13 Sep. 2014.
- Nelson, Robin, ed. *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Print.
- Nicholson, Helen. *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Print.
- O'Connor, Peter and Michael Anderson. *Applied Theatre Research: Radical Departures*. London: Bloomsbury Methuen. 2015. Print.

- Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The Thinking Hand: Existential and Embodied Wisdom in Architecture*. Chichester: Wiley, 2009. Print.
- Papastergiadis, Nikos. *Cosmopolitanism and Culture*. Cambridge: Polity, 2012. Print.
- Philpott, Alexis Robert. *Puppets and Therapy*. Boston: Plays, 1977. Print.
- Pina e Cunha, Miguel, et al. "The Ethical Speaking of Objects: Ethics and the 'Object-ive' World of Khmer Rouge Young Comrades." *Journal of Political Power* 7.1 (2014): 35-61. Web. 12 Aug. 2015.
- Piris, Paul. "Ontological Ambiguity of the Puppet." *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*, ed. John Bell et al. 2014. 30-42. Print.
- Rajaram, Prem Kumar, and Carl Grundy-Warr. "The Irregular Migrant as Homo Sacer: Migration and Detention in Australia, Malaysia, and Thailand." *International Migration* 42.1 (2004): 33-64. Web. 15 Sep. 2013.
- Rancière, Jacques. *The Politics of Aesthetics*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. Print.
- . *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. London: Continuum, 2010. Print.
- Ridout, Nicholas. *Theatre and Ethics*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Print.
- Rivera-Servera, Ramón, and Harvey Young, eds. *Performance in the Borderlands*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014. Print
- Roach, Joseph. *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996. Print.
- Rosenthal, Mark, et al. *Joseph Beuys: Actions, Vitrines, Environments*. London: Menil Collection in association with Tate Publ., 2004. Print.
- Salverson, Julie. "Taking Liberties: A Theatre Class of Foolish Witnesses." *Research in Drama Education* 13.2 (2008): 245-255. Web. 13 Jun. 2014.

- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *No Exit and Three Other Plays*. New York: Vintage, 1989. Print.
- Schneider, Rebecca. "Performance Remains." *Performance Research* 6.2 (2001): 100-08. Print.
- Sennett, Richard. *The Craftsman*. London: Penguin, 2008. Print.
- Shackman, Jane. *Criminal Treatment : The Imprisonment of Asylum Seekers*. London: Prison Reform Trust, 2002. Print.
- Silk, Dennis. "The Marionette Theatre." *The Contemporary Theatre Review*. 10.1(1999): 73-83. Web. 4 Aug. 2013.
- Smith, Richard Cándida, ed. *Art and the Performance of Memory: Sounds and Gestures of Recollection*. London: Routledge, 2003. Print.
- Smith, Matt. "Puppetry as Community Arts Practice." *Journal of Arts and Communities*, 1.1 (2009): 69-78. Print.
- . "The Practice of Applied Puppetry: Antecedents and Tropes" *Research in Drama Education: (2015)* 531-536. Print.
- Smith, M and Tsitou, F, ed. *Puppet Notebook*, British UNIMA (2011/12): 20. Print.
- Thompson, James, ed. *Prison Theatre: Perspectives and Practices*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1998. Print.
- Thompson, James. *Applied Theatre: Bewilderment and Beyond*. Oxford: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003. Print.
- Travis, Alan. "Prisons and Immigration Inspectors Demand Action on Delayed Deportations" *The Guardian, Manchester*. 12 Dec 2012. *theguardian.com*. Web. 7 Jan. 2013.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Escapism*. London: John Hopkins University Press, 1998. Print.



- Turner, Victor. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure*. London: Aldine Transaction, 2008. Print.
- Walsh, James P. "Border Theatre and Security Spectacles: Surveillance, Mobility and Reality-Based Television." *Crime, Media, Culture* 1.2 (2015): 201-221. Web. 9 Oct. 2015.
- Williams, David, and Carl Lavery. *Lone Twin: Good Luck Everybody: Journeys, Performances, Conversations*. Aberystwyth: Performance Research, 2011. Print.
- Young, Harvey, and Ramon Rivera-Servera. *Performance in the Borderlands..* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 2014. Print.
- Zylinska, Joanna. "The Universal Acts: Judith Butler and the Biopolitics of Immigration." *Cultural Studies* 18.4 (2004): 523-537. Web. 15 Sep. 2013.