

Affective Encounter: Repetition and Immersive Practices in *Man of Valour*

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Abstract: Drawing upon Deleuzian theory, this article examines the role of repetition and affect in theatre design and the immersive qualities these devices promote. Focusing on Corn Exchange's show Man of Valour, I suggest that the repetition employed by the postdigital design and dramaturgy of the piece—voice and sound effects, stage and movement, makeup, the use of time and space—transform the performer and spectators into 'bodies without organs' (BwO). These BwOs, removed from their systems of organisation that order social space, such as language, time, and space, instead communicate through embodied, affective means. In the course of this article, I will demonstrate how this affective encounter, brought about by repetition, generates an immersive experience of the performance.

Man of Valour is a one-man show that follows the character Farrell Blinks as he deals with the death of his father and job uncertainty. The show combines the use of mask, stock characters, precise gestures, and physical comedy with grotesque undertones, all drawn from *commedia dell'arte*. These aspects appear alongside projected film, sound effects, and music which help to materialise Farrell's real world and his fantasies. The play presents events from Farrell's point of view, with insights into his psychological breakdown leading to episodes of delusion and fantasy. Corn Exchange's intention in *Man of Valour* is not to chart Farrell's story in a linear fashion; rather, they invite the spectator to experience Farrell's perception of the world and to be immersed in his real and fantasy worlds through affective means. *Man of Valour* uses affect to appeal to the bodily knowledge of the spectator in excess of a linear, narrative understanding of the story. Exploring this approach, this paper will unpack the immersive strategies and techniques deployed, such as repetition and affect, by considering the key design and dramaturgical choices. I will examine what transpires when a performance such as *Man of Valour* makes use of difference and repetition, particularly repetition's ability to immerse the spectator in a different space, state, and duration through largely affective means. By applying Deleuze's notion of difference and repetition and his development of the concept of a 'body without organs', this paper will consider the design and dramaturgical strategies used by Corn Exchange to establish an affective encounter—a primarily bodily understanding—and immersive experience of the performance.

In 1968, Gilles Deleuze published *Difference and Repetition*, which set forth one of his most revolutionary proposals—repetition, rather than an act that is identical in manner, is a generative, creative, and forward-looking process. Deleuze argues that repetition creates through difference rather than stabilises through replication, as it is often conceived. As a result, he pursues the notion that difference and repetition have the potential to be both destructive and constructive. Through each repetition, new aspects, characteristics, and qualities are observed and then responded to. Repetition generates a difference and has the potential to transform both the subject and object. Transformation of performer and spectator, precipitated through difference and repetition, is the focus of this paper. I propose that the recurrent design and dramaturgy of *Man of Valour* produce a transformation in both the performer and spectator resulting in an affective and immersive experience of the piece.

Man of Valour was first staged by Corn Exchange theatre company in 2011 at The Everyman Theatre as part of the Cork Midsummer Festival and toured for the following two years. Since its inception, Corn Exchange has

experimented with physicality, movement, and techniques drawn from *commedia dell'arte*. In *Man of Valour*, they drive these strategies to their full potential to deliver a play that resembles a fast-paced action film and mirrors a video game aesthetic. Rather than design an elaborate set and use a large cast of actors to deliver the epic, experience-driven performance that these types of action sequences construct, the company instead employ visual and aural communication in repeated sequence to impact the spectator's body in an affective manner. Affect, understood as an extra-discursive, intensive, and visceral force, is used to deepen the immersive experience.

I will argue that through a disruption of the shared spatio-temporal register of the auditorium, *Man of Valour* enacts a deterritorialisation of both Farrell, the protagonist of the play, and the spectator. As a result both bodies transform into the Deleuzian idea of bodies without organs. I propose that by means of the coinciding transformation, both Farrell and the spectator engage in an immersive transformation achieved through affective encounter. By affect, I mean communication that speaks to and directly impacts the body in excess of a cognitive reflection or contemplation. In other words, affect is felt in excess of being known or identified. We recognise the affect and seek out conceptual significance or meaning from the resonance left by the affect subsequent to the event.

Time and space, in their many manifestations, is a recurring thread throughout this article; they affect and influence the considerations of difference and repetition, body without organs and immersive experience. This enquiry will demonstrate how difference and repetition deployed through the postdigital design and dramaturgy of *Man of Valour* attempts to create an immersive and transformative experience for each spectator.

Man of Valour

Corn Exchange is a Dublin-based theatre company established by Annie Ryan in 1995. The company's signature style is highly physical, impeccably-timed, high-energy, and often playful delivery paired with minimalistic, refined design and distinctive mask-like, expressionist make-up. In reference to Corn Exchange's acting style, Brian Singleton notes, "As in *commedia*, the actors speak directly to the audience while the non-speaking actors look to their speaking counterpart. This shifting focus, especially in narrative theatre, creates a constantly evolving focus and energy for the stage picture that has filmic connotations to its practice." (Singleton 2016, 568) Indeed, Corn Exchange's style could be considered a palimpsest of *commedia dell'arte*, techniques drawn from Jacques Lecoq and Ariane Mnouchkine, filmic framing, and improvisation. Chicago-born Ryan studied a mix of *commedia*, improvisation, and theatre games while attending The Piven Workshop as a teenager and later while working with John Cusack's company New Crime before moving to Ireland to study Drama at Trinity College Dublin. Throughout Corn Exchange's history, Ryan has collaborated with writer Michael West.

Written by West and directed by Ryan, *Man of Valour* follows central character Farrell Blinks as he encounters life on an epic scale. Farrell is presented as 'an office drone with an overactive fantasy gland' who has been absorbed into an existence of mediocrity. After receiving the unexpected news that his office is relocating to a different area while also dealing with the grief of his father's recent death, Farrell finds escape in his 'fantasy world' which increasingly takes over his mundane and seemingly unbearable life. *Man of Valour* asks the audience to join Farrell on his adventure into a fantasy world or, viewed from a different angle, to join his breakdown. The performance contains minimal dialogue; the majority of the language and sounds is presented as snippets of conversation, vocal tics, noises, and sound effects. The sounds are coupled with the virtuosic physicality of Paul Reid who embodies Farrell and all other characters and objects he encounters.

Man of Valour begins by showing Farrell in his 'real life' settings of the office, the daily commute, and at home. The story then transforms to show us his fantasy world where Farrell is involved in high-speed chases and action-packed sequences. The play opens with Farrell standing on the side of a bridge as a train passes behind him; he runs and jumps down from a height to enter the train for his daily commute in to work. Through this opening sequence we are introduced to Farrell's transitions between his real life and his fantasy world. The transitions become more frequent as the play progresses symbolising his failing mental state. Over time and through frequency, the audience notice the repeated indications the scene will change suddenly, for example, a dip in the

lights or music suggestive of action and impending doom.



Figure 1. *Man of Valour*. Photo credit: Fiona Morgan.

Like all effective action films and high-impact video games, the soundtrack to Farrell's epic adventures provides impetus and intensity when needed and drab monotony as a stark contrast where applicable. On a practical level, it helps to initially delineate between the two 'worlds' effectively. Equally, the lighting, designed by Aedin Cosgrove, the high-energy music interludes composed by Denis Clohessy, and the projected film, created by Jack Phelan, completely transform the bare stage into fully-formed surroundings and locations and ensure that the expertly constructed movement of Reid is carefully supported to fabricate complex scenes inside Farrell's office, inside his apartment, depicting his train journeys, and also war sequences, underwater pursuits, and the expanse of a dystopian

Dublin. *Man of Valour* draws on action film and video game motifs to deliver the spectacular elements of the show using only the body of the performer, sound effects, light, projection and makeup to depict Farrell's world. More importantly, these devices and motifs appeal to a certain type of learned perception, one that has formed as a result of exposure to mediated environments, digital interactions, and a particular familiarity with the structures of video games and action sequences. In other words, the audience can recognise the mimed scenarios and the implied settings by accessing embodied knowledge of the motifs embedded in postdigital culture.

Postdigital culture is conceived here as an indistinction between the virtual and the real. Due to embedded technologies, applications, and reliant behaviours on computers, we can no longer extricate man from machine. Postdigital refers not to a time after the digital but rather a cultural shift in which we were able to separate and acknowledge the effects of the digital to the present context of being so deeply embedded in an information-intensive world in which we 'think digitally' (Causey 2016, 432), create digitally, behave and relate digitally. In response to this paradigm shift, aesthetic creations and appetites are changing in line with the postdigital culture into what has been termed by some as 'postdigital aesthetics.' These aesthetic responses range from asynchronicity and multidimensionality, bugs and glitches, replication and simulation, and copy and paste. (Ibid.)

In this regard, *Man of Valour* demonstrates a key aspect of postdigital aesthetics through Farrell's transitions, that of the 'networked interconnectivity and the transmedial.' Matthew Causey outlines the various forms of postdigital aesthetics that are now ubiquitous in contemporary performance, networked interconnectivity and the transmedial prime among them:

It is the data structures of networks that define so much of the relations of power and communication in contemporary postdigital cultures. The *digital* may be the means and the *network* is the system. It is the phenomenon of radical interconnectivity that acts as the substructure of network and postdigital cultures. Transmedial artworks, video games, political and advertising campaigns that operate across multiple media, and live and mediated communication platforms exemplify this modality. (Ibid., 434)

The aesthetic device of networked interconnectivity and the transmedial is distinctly presented in the structure of *Man of Valour* and works to draw the spectator into Farrell's world through an embodied identification. The character of Farrell shifts between his real world and fantasy world, between boredom and invention, and between a low-level attention and hyper-attention that demands multiple streams of information. With these sudden and repeated shifts, *Man of Valour* implores the spectator to follow Farrell and to make these transitions with him, thereby suffering the same effects as Farrell: disruption, deterritorialisation, and transformation into a BwO—a body that is removed from the organising structures of stable identity, that is, a body engaged in the transformative process of 'becoming' rather than 'being'.

Deterritorialisation and Body without Organs

Territory is essentially a system of organisation. We encounter a situation, a body, an object and recognise through experience the rules and conventions that govern it. These rules, that is the system of organisation, indicate the correct way to respond and relate. Deterritorialisation occurs through a rejection, dismantling, or disruption of organising frameworks. A BwO is a body from which structure and the organising frameworks of psychology, politics, ideology, and/or biology have been removed. Deleuze suggests a body encapsulates many other forms outside of the human: a biological, social, political, linguistic, animal, or artwork body, for instance. With this in mind, rather than signifying a literal human body that has no organs, the proposal of a BwO instead puts forward an idea of a body which is 'non-formed, non-organised, non-stratified' (Message 2010, 37). It can be understood as a body in transition, divorced, and devolved from its organic and social confines. Francis Bacon's paintings are widely considered to be exemplary illustrations of BwOs due to the perceived deformed or non-formed nature of the painting's figures in motion. Bacon depicts bodies that are removed from the organising principles of a static, fixed identity of *being* and are instead presented in the transformative process of *becoming*. By doing so, Bacon's paintings of BwOs encourage an affective encounter, that is, a primarily bodied response as there can be no direct conceptual meaning assigned to the painting or, if there is one assigned, it comes subsequent to the bodily encounter.

Every encounter between bodies, and I mean bodies in the Deleuzian sense, constitutes a process of difference and multiplicity. In other words, each encounter with another body is the potential for transformation, whether visible or invisible in kind. In *Man of Valour*, Farrell is lost in the machine of production. He works in an office and has become absorbed by the monotony of everyday life. However, when Farrell begins to fall into moments of fantasy he disrupts the repetitive machine of domesticity and differentiates himself from it. Or rather he becomes deterritorialised and transforms into a BwO. In one of the first scenes of *Man of Valour*, Farrell hurriedly enters his office. He is late for work, again. He tries to dodge several people on his way into the office, including the coquettish secretary who insists on saying, 'Oh, hi Farrell!' in an excited manner every time he passes her desk and his pompous co-worker who speaks in an overpowering County Cork accent (a highly identifiable accent for an Irish audience) and brags about his work. In this scene, the co-worker approaches Farrell's desk and says:

Late again? Don't worry, I covered for you. I told Mr. Goodman you had a bowel problem. Listen, did you finish your report?
'Cause I finished mine. I spent the whole weekend on it and I handed it to Goodman this morning. Corky, Cork, Cork, Cork, Corky, Cork...^[1]

While Reid continues to perform his co-worker's voice in the background, 'Corky, Cork, Cork, Cork...', Reid also embodies Farrell who searches in a desk drawer, takes out a pencil, sharpens it, and then launches it in a slow-motion, 'boomerang' style. Farrell motions the pencil flying through the air with his hand, eventually piercing his co-worker's jugular resulting in blood spurting from his neck in a slapstick fashion. The fantasy is broken by a jerk in Farrell's body, a moment of 'waking up,' and Farrell's co-worker saying, 'See you later!' This scene is an early example of the transitions between Farrell's real life to fantasy world and back. The repeated transitions between his real and fantasy worlds inevitably lead to a disruption and thus to deterritorialisation.

Farrell's motions, gestures, sounds, and movements change to suit the world he is inhabiting. His movements are muted, domestic, restrained in his real life and more dramatic and extroverted in his fantasy world. With each transformation, there is a disruption. In addition to Farrell becoming deterritorialised through the transitions, the spectator also enters into a coinciding and co-extensive deterritorialisation. So, there are two stages to the deterritorialisation process in *Man of Valour* which I will unpack in relation to the postdigital design and cyclical dramaturgy. The first concerns Farrell's deterritorialisation through his transition between his real life and his fantasy world concentrating specifically on voice and sound effects, stage and movement, and makeup. The second stage of deterritorialisation in *Man of Valour* involves the audience's relationship with time and space. After a period of time whereby Farrell's transitions are repeated and the spectator engages in a process of identification with Farrell, the spectator is also invited to enter the deterritorialisation process. The result is that both Farrell and the spectator are transformed into BwOs, as I will explore in the following sections.

Farrell's Deterritorialisation: Transitions, Repetitions, and Design

Farrell's switching between worlds in *Man of Valour* is initially a lone endeavour. The spectator observes that with each repeated change of frame from Farrell's real life into his fantasy world, he begins to transform into a BwO. In the following, I would like to explore three aspects of the production's design that lead to Farrell's deterritorialisation and transformation into a BwO: voice and sound effects, stage and movement, and makeup. How do each of these details presented in repetitive sequences lead to the disruption and a transformation of Farrell? How does Farrell's transformation impact upon the spectator's immersive experience and coinciding transformation?

Deterritorialisation is first set in motion in *Man of Valour* through Farrell's use of vocal tics—sound effects made through humming, using 'pop' noises, intonations of accents, and snippets of dialogue to communicate language. These various uses of sounds are crucial for the construction of the stage world. Reid is the sole performer and embodies all of the characters in the performance: Farrell, the office secretary, his co-worker, his boss, his neighbour, and various passers-by. Reid also performs most of the sound effects: doors, a printer, a computer, a television, and so on. There is no section of sustained dialogue in the play, just extracts of conversation and sound effects. As a consequence of the repeated use of vocal tics alongside moments of high intensity music which introduce the fantasy world, a linear narrative structure is undercut. Following a straightforward story no longer becomes the aim. Rather, *Man of Valour* treats the spectator as a fully engaged player in a high-impact video game or an action film. This serves to not only disrupt the body of Farrell as he embodies all characters and majority of the sounds in the piece, but also draws the audience into his world as co-creators of the sounds through the act of identification. In a review of the performance, Fintan Walsh observes,

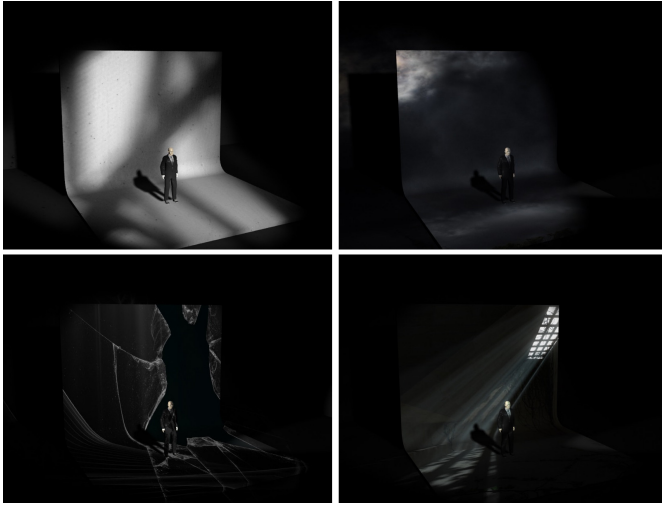
Although few words are spoken in the piece, Reid evokes the character's world through a rich symphony of vocal ticks, click and hisses, and the finely tuned movement of his body. Despite being the only person on stage, he conjures three-dimensional scenes with quick gestures and sounds, even creating physical perspective with the effect of receding noise. One moment he skips like a nimble dancer, the next he cranks into position like a machine. Dennis Clohessy supplies a wonderfully cinematic score to accompany Farrell's life. However, while filmic music typically functions to signal and solicit specific emotions from the audience, this music belongs to Farrell, providing a rich dramatic backdrop to fire his hero complex. Sometimes the music supports Reid's voice to amplify an effect; that we cannot tell where the man ends and the backing track begins is a tribute to both parties. (Walsh 2011)

By using a disrupted language to communicate, *Man of Valour* not only deterritorialises the body of Farrell, it also asks for an embodied, affective reception of the piece. The performance communicates through the sounds and movement of Farrell's body and invites the audience to interpret in the same fashion. Through the amputation of a logical language, as Deleuze calls it, the affect and intensive language is set free. This amputation marks the first of many removals of structure that govern the organised body so that Farrell may transform into a BwO.

The second removal of structure occurs in the stage area of *Man of Valour*. The entire performance takes place on a bare stage with no physical set or props. The architecture and design of the stage is constructed and moulded with light, shadow, and projected film in addition to the implied presence of surroundings and objects rendered present through Farrell's movement. In a flash, Farrell is situated in a station as trains speed by, a claustrophobic partitioned office, a lift, an apartment, underwater, and even the more obscure scenarios of a warzone in a video game or a 'broken reality'.^[2]

Frequently, the projection transforms the stage into a tiled floor and back wall, indicative of the recognisable aesthetic of early tile-based video games such as the first instalments of *The Legend of Zelda* (Nintendo) series in the 1980s and 1990s. It is also strongly associated with the 1982 science fiction film *Tron* (Steven Lisberger, 1982). Like these game and film references, the tiles in *Man of Valour* represent an infinite grid of possibility.

Likewise, the bare set and the projected tiles imply versatility and adaptivity; it is a canvas for the changing environment that *Man of Valour* presents. The set, and separately but just as significantly, Reid's body and movements while embodying Farrell, therefore invite the process of deterritorialisation to occur with ease. The set,



Figures 2,3,4,5. Pre-visualisation images for *Man of Valour* created by designer Jack Phelan. Image credit: Jack Phelan.



Figure 6. Pre-visualisation images for *Man of Valour* created by designer Jack Phelan. Image credit: Jack Phelan.

then, is a disruptive and transformative area, or contour, as I will now outline. It changes setting and form frequently. With each change, Farrell is transported to a different scenario, either ‘real’ or ‘fantasy.’ In one scene, Farrell is in his apartment, turns on the television, prepares a meal, and then begins to play a first-person shooter video game. While he is playing the game, a stark lighting change occurs and tense action music resounds in the space. Farrell jumps up, miming the stance of a soldier holding a gun. He throws an imaginary grenade and shouts, ‘What’s the mission?!’ The audience immediately recognises that in his fantasy world, Farrell has been absorbed into his video game. Then the music cuts, the lights change, and Farrell’s stance and movement become more muted; Farrell is now back in his real world, his apartment. The stage provides a focus toward the figure of Farrell, but it also exerts a force which contracts, disrupts, and deforms his body. Farrell escapes through the contours which are established through film, projection, and sound, but with each escape and return he engages in, a process of deterritorialisation, affective encounter, and an immersive force is released.

In Deleuze’s examination of BwOs in Bacon’s paintings, he maintains that it is through the Figure—the central body in Bacon’s paintings—and the Figure’s engagement with the contour—the ring or circle that surrounds the Figure—that the process of deterritorialisation is activated. The contour is the

means and force of contraction, disruption, and deformation. The Figure, according to Deleuze, is contracted and dilated in order to pass through the contour—for example, the sink, the umbrella, the mirror—into infinity. Through the observation of the deterritorialised Figure, the observer becomes deterritorialised. In other words, the invitation is opened to observers that they too may transform into BwOs through a primarily bodily response and affective engagement with Bacon’s BwO Figure. For example, in *Figure at a Washbasin* (Bacon, 1976), the Figure wishes to escape through the sinkhole that appears within the central contour of the painting. The observer sees this action, Deleuze says, and by way of an affective association with the Figure, through a certain phenomenal mode of identification, the observer of the painting also transforms into a BwO and proceeds to also reach towards the sinkhole in the picture. He writes:

The contour, as a ‘place,’ is in fact the place of an exchange in two directions: between the material structure and the Figure, and between the Figure and the field. The contour is like a membrane through which this double exchange flows. Something happens in both directions. If painting has nothing to narrate and no story to tell, something is happening all the same, something which defines the functioning of the painting. Within the round area, the Figure is sitting on the chair, lying on the bed, and sometimes it even seems to be waiting for what is about to happen. But what is happening, or is about to happen, or has already happened, is not a spectacle or a representation [...] the Figure becomes a Figure only through this movement which confines it and in which it confines itself. (Deleuze 2003, 12-3, 14)

The contour does something to the Figure and the Figure does something to it. The contour distorts and

transforms the Figure and also distorts and transforms the spectator watching the action. If we apply the idea of the Figure and the contour to the character of Farrell (the Figure) and the design of the stage area (conceived as the contour) in *Man of Valour*, we can understand the exchange in both directions that occurs. With each change of design and location, the body of Farrell is also transformed. It is repeatedly removed from a system of organisation leading him to become a BwO.



Figure 7. *Man of Valour*. Photo credit: Fiona Morgan.

The third removal of structure involves Reid's *commedia*-inspired makeup. A type of mask is constructed through the immutable expression drawn on to Farrell's face—an apprehensive brow, white face, and a downcast mouth. We could again connect this design choice with a postdigital aesthetic, that of the bug and the glitch:

The bug as a technical error and the glitch as a momentary fault in the system operate as ghosts in the machine that allow chance computational and electronic phenomena to appear and participate in structure of the work. What is at play is an aesthetic of failure, disruption, noise, and interference that promotes spontaneity and randomness (Causey, 434).

The postdigital aesthetic of the glitch is exhibited in Farrell's fixed appearance; his expression is 'on repeat,' circulating on a loop. Regardless of the situation that the character of Farrell enters, this expression remains unchanged. Corn Exchange disrupt the range of emotion communication of the face that usually occurs through changing expression by introducing a glitch. Farrell is, like Bacon's Figures, caught in a moment of static violent response and thus, his body moves from a signifying register to an asignifying register that transmits affect in excess of any narrative detail.

Again, we can draw a comparison to Deleuze's study of Bacon's artwork. In reference to the painting *Untitled (Pope)* (1954), Deleuze explores the 'insupportable smile' that violently radiates from the papal Figure. Beneath the smudges and rubbing techniques that distort the BwO Figure, the smile remains. However, the smile is not a representation of hope or even a sinister delight. The smile, the mouth of the pope, speaks in an intensive language. It stands for both the entirety of the body and also the void of distinction between the Figure and what surrounds him (Deleuze 2003, 29). This one expression exceeds the representation. It holds a powerful affective force. The painting intends its observer to have a physical response that is over and above any meaning that may be assigned.

Masks frequently hold a subversive quality, so if we are to speak about amputation in the Deleuzian sense, the removal of expression, or as Deleuze would say the removal of the face from the head, disrupts a straightforward representation. By wearing the same masked expression throughout, Farrell is marked as a deterritorialised Figure. But the amputation of the face by the wearing of a mask is not only pertinent for Farrell's deterritorialisation and transformation into a BwO. By relinquishing the organisation of the face, Farrell invites the act of coinciding deterritorialisation in the spectator. Farrell, like his stunted language and the contour of the bare stage, is a blank canvas upon which identification is promoted. The amputation of the face through the wearing of a mask in *Man of Valour* is pertinent not only for Farrell's deterritorialisation and transformation into a BwO but also the spectator's

transition too, which I will explore in the next section.

Given Farrell's fixed appearance, which is similar to earlier video game avatars, we might say that the audience members are made to be the players. Or more accurately, they are both players. The audience are transmuted into Farrell's fantasy world of possibilities in which learned perception allows us to accept the possibilities posed in the performance. Farrell is the spectator's physical body double, similar to the role of an avatar in a video game. The idea that Farrell acts as an appointed affective body double is underlined by Farrell's fixed expression of unease painted on with *commedia*-inspired makeup. The use of this mask hints not only at the similarity to an avatar in a 1990s or early 2000s video game, whose expression remains unchanged regardless of the action they undertake, but also at the transformation of Farrell's body as it undergoes deterritorialisation into a BwO.

In sum, we can see that Farrell's deterritorialisation into a BwO follows a distinct path, deeply implicated by Corn Exchange's cyclical design choices and Farrell's repeated transitions between worlds. *Man of Valour's* repetitive use of vocal tics, the transitioning stage, and the use of *commedia* makeup, contrive to deterritorialise the Figure of Farrell into a BwO. Next, I will focus on how Farrell's deterritorialisation and subsequent transformation into a BwO invites the spectator to perform a coinciding motion. At this point, both transform into BwOs and enter into an affective, immersive experience.

Audience Transformation: Time and Space as Deterritorialising Forces

Time and space are crucial to every detailed consideration of performance and every close examination of culture. With that being said, postdigital culture has undoubtedly made the analysis of time and space in performance and everyday life more complex. Arnold Aronson suggests that if a performance establishes a significantly alternate spatio-temporal register than that which the audience experience while in the shared space of the theatre, the equilibrium between the two zones will become destabilised. To remedy this, Aronson advises that either the performance will regulate itself to the audience's register or alternatively, the audience need to enter the performance's time and space for the sake of restoring equilibrium:

In order for the spectators, who occupy one segment of the shared space, to read or to comprehend the alternate organization of the stage—to know what time it is as well as what place it is—a clear and commonly held set of rules (vocabulary) is required. The spectators must be able to integrate the two spatio-temporal structures into a unified system. Moreover, these guidelines must be firmly rooted within contemporary cultural and aesthetic parameters (Aronson 2013, 85).

If the audience enter the performance's register in order to restore equilibrium, the effect is that the audience are immersed in an alternative register for the duration of the show. They become part of the performance world, not as a participant but rather as a phenomenal immersant. The disruption in the shared time and space encourages the spectator to enter into a process of deterritorialisation and transform into a BwO alongside Farrell. In short, Farrell's transitions and habitation of two worlds amounts to a significantly different world to that of the auditorium. For this reason, the audience are encouraged to enter into the performance's alternate register to restore equilibrium.

In *Man of Valour*, Farrell's transitions between his real world and his fantasy world create a disruption in the auditorium, thus displacing the shared register. As discussed above, Farrell's transitions from his real world to his fantasy world are the first, more identifiable, part of the deterritorialisation process in this performance. But while Farrell is deterritorialised as a result of his repeated transitions and the design choices of the piece, with each transition the spectator also becomes deterritorialised. As the transitions are repeated and become more frequent, the audience begin to integrate the two disrupted time and space registers, that of the stage and that of the audience space, into a unified system, as Aronson predicts is likely to happen in such a performance. This unification draws the spectator further into the performance and invites an association, a phenomenal identification with Farrell. Furthermore, this invitation is aided due to the fact that it is 'firmly rooted within contemporary cultural and aesthetic parameters,' as suggested by Aronson.

The internet alone has disrupted any previously held theories about time and about space. A person, in one of their many digital forms, can be in multiple places, in multiple time zones simultaneously. We are nearly always contactable. We are nearly always 'on', performing in some way even when we are asleep through digital avatars or personal data, which leads us once again to postdigital design. In mapping out the aesthetic devices that are deployed in postdigital design, Causey writes that,

The structures of asynchronous time registers and multidimensionality are models almost commonplace in modernist aesthetics, with obvious examples being cubism and futurism. Modernist notions of representation and subjectivity were directly influenced as a result of the shifts in the perception of time and space created through technologies such as the camera or the car. What digital technologies afford is a flexibility and usability that allows users the ability to reorder various virtual models and inhabit and perform their identities and 'lived experiences' within those spaces (Causey 2016, 434).

In order to reflect the various time registers and multidimensional manner of everyday life, postdigital art embraces and reflects this new facet of experience. Social media, text message, email, and video-calling are examples of asynchronous and multidimensional performance that one may encounter and interact with frequently. *Man of Valour* illustrates this aesthetic device in the many transitions between Farrell's real life and fantasy world as well as the video game appearance of Farrell's fantasies. Corn Exchange also exploits the familiarity with asynchronous timeframes in order to immerse the spectator in the alternate time and space of the performance.

Aronson and Causey are not the only theorists to comment on the effects of different experiences of time and space. In a review of Deleuze's interpretation of time, Keith Faulkner offers a similar account to Aronson. Faulkner analyses Deleuze's notion of 'passive synthesis,' an idea indebted to the work of Henri Bergson, which is the subconscious or perhaps preconscious notion of duration. Faulkner suggests that the body seeks to maintain unity in time by engaging in a transformative encounter with the various speeds surrounding it, 'The simple organism senses a changing environment and, because it appears discontinuous, the sense *must synthesize it into a durational schema* to stabilize the object' (Faulkner 2006, 61. Emphasis in original). Again, we notice a strikingly similar suggestion that a disruption in the spatio-temporal register causes a disruption in unity and thereafter an active response will take place in order to restore unity. Elsewhere, Deleuze underlines the same theory. By invoking Bergson's metaphor of a dissolving sugar cube, he attempts to illustrate the effect of alternate durations on the encountering bodies:

"I must wait until the sugar dissolves" has a still broader meaning than is given to it by its context. It signifies that my own duration, such as I live it in the impatience of waiting, for example, serves to reveal other durations that beat to other rhythms, that differ in kind from mine. Duration is always the location and the environment of differences in kind; it is even their totality and multiplicity (Deleuze 1991, 32).

In other words, through a passive synthesis of affective encounter, a body can sense a disruption in the unity of time, 'other rhythms, that differ in kind from mine,' as Deleuze puts it. But it is through an engagement with this disruption and an openness to the alternate durations that the audience can be deterritorialized and immersed in the performance. In summary, it is the repetition of Farrell's passage between his world of the real and fantasy that causes a shift in durations. Consequently, this causes a deterritorialisation to occur, first to Farrell and then to the spectator through the repetition of transitions and change of frames, thereby enacting an affective encounter and deepening of the immersive potential of the piece. The spectator is deterritorialized through a disruption in the shared spatio-temporal measure of the shared auditorium. As we have seen, both Aronson and Deleuze propose that in order to restore equilibrium, one of the bodies involved in the encounter must enter the alternate register thereby restoring unity. I suggest that in *Man of Valour* the spectator is invited to enter the other register of the performance through Farrell's repeated transitions between his real life and fantasy world. Thus, the spectator is deterritorialized and transformed alongside Farrell into a BwO.

Conclusion

Deleuze asserts that repetition generates difference and, in turn, transforms the bodies involved in the repetition. Drawing upon this idea, I have demonstrated how strategies of difference and repetition are employed in the postdigital design and dramaturgy of Corn Exchange's *Man of Valour* to create an affective, immersive experience. These repetitive designs, I have argued, cause a deterritorialisation—a disruption to the systems of organisation that order social order, such as language, time, and space. Removed from these organising principles, the body of the performer and the spectator transform into BwOs, bodies that are no longer bound by the stagnant identity of 'being' but caught in a process of 'becoming' something else—a player, a video game avatar, a figure in a dream, a participant, and so on.

Recurrent transitions between Farrell's real world and fantasy world alongside the various other deterritorialisation techniques that are deployed throughout the performance ensure that an affective, immersive potential is always present. Deterritorialisation techniques can be seen most prominently in *Man of Valour* in the use of voice and sound effects, stage design, makeup, and the disruption of time and space. Each of these production choices contributes to a deterritorialisation. They further promote the figure of Farrell into a BwO and, duplicitously, engage the audience to transform into BwOs. This article considers how difference and repetition, deployed through the postdigital design and dramaturgy of *Man of Valour*, work to create an immersive and transformative experience for the spectator.

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Notes

1. I have transcribed this section from a filmed performance Corn Exchange shared with me.
2. For more images and mock-up prototypes of *Man of Valour*'s design, see <https://jackphelan.xyz/Man-of-Valour>

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