

**Lincoln School of Fine and Performing Arts**  
**International Playwriting Symposium 2017: Dennis Kelly**  
**Abstracts and Biographies**

**KEYNOTE:****Clare Finburgh, Goldsmiths**

Clare Finburgh is a Reader in European Theatre at Goldsmiths University of London. Clare has published widely on modern and contemporary European theatre and performance. Co-authored and co-edited volumes include *Jean Genet* (2012), *Contemporary French Theatre and Performance* (2011), and *Jean Genet: Performance and Politics* (2006). More recently her research reflects two of the most pressing political and social issues of the modern world: the ecological crisis, and global conflict. She has co-edited a volume of eco-critical essays, *Rethinking the Theatre of the Absurd: Ecology, the Environment and the Greening of the Modern Stage* (2015) and written a monograph on representations of war in recent British theatre: *Watching War: Spectacles of Conflict on the Twenty-First-Century Stage* (2017).

**“I’m gonna tap you in the face with this hammer”: Torture and the Ethics of  
 Spectatorship in Dennis Kelly’s Works**

Mark in *After the End* (2005); Mark and Louise in *Osama the Hero* (2005); Miss Trunchbull in *Matilda* (2010); Arby and Lee in *Utopia* (2013-14)... Torturers, all.

Torture is both threatened and carried out across Dennis Kelly’s entire oeuvre, from theatre playtexts to children’s musicals and television scripts. Given that all of Kelly’s works have been written during a geopolitical period of global conflict and counterinsurgency in which the use of torture and extrajudicial punishment by all sides has been exposed and debated, my paper will examine human suffering and humiliation, and the ethics of spectatorship. Torture chambers, like bed chambers, are private spaces, as Michel Foucault indicates in *Discipline and Punish*. What, then, happens when this most ‘private’ and secretive of practices is displayed in the form of a public spectacle like theatre? How can torture be staged in ways that avoid making voyeuristic, simplistic spectacles of the sufferer’s degradation, and the torturer’s power and authority? The bodies of those who suffer torture have already been violated once; how can theatre avoid debasing them a second time through spectacles that shock in order to inspire

titillation or else maudlin pity? I address these questions via a range of theories on representations of the tortured body, notably those of Elaine Scarry, Susan Sontag and Judith Butler. I argue that Dennis Kelly's highly singular detached hyperrealism – hyperreal in the Kafkaesque rather than the Baudrillardian sense – performs two functions. Kelly, like Kafka, describes the world in the minutest and most intricate detail, condensing, contracting and concentrating it. First, this form of representation simultaneously testifies to the tortured body in pain, and admits, through stylized means, to the impossibility of that gesture. Second, Kelly's forensic detail produces a kind of detachment that encapsulates the blasé attitude with which we often glance at spectacles of others' suffering as we flick through newspapers or click through websites. Kelly's hyperrealist stylization of violence, I argue, not only exposes how suffering can never fully be represented, but also puts spectators in a position where we cannot but interrogate how we, as consumers of conflict, watch war, turn war over, and turn war off.

#### **SPEAKERS:**

**Sarah Beck, Goldsmiths, University of London**

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Sarah Beck is a playwright and recently completed her PhD at Goldsmiths, investigating the dramaturgy of war in verbatim practice. Writing credits include: *This Much is True* (Theatre 503), *The Kratos Effect* (The Bike Shed Theatre) and the short film *Spoons* (Pangaea Films). She has contributed to *Performing Ethos*, the *International Journal of Scottish Theatre and Screen*, and *Performance in a Militarized Culture*.

#### **'I just want it to be your words': Deconstructing and Reassembling Truth in Dennis Kelly's *Taking Care of Baby*.**

During the noughties verbatim plays such as David Hare's *The Permanent Way* (2004), Robin Soans' *Talking to Terrorists* (2005) and Alecky Blythe's *Cruising* (2006) integrated spoken accounts from real people in favor of fiction, indicating a renewed interest in documentary techniques. In the special issue on documentary theatre in *The Drama Review*, Stephen Bottoms (2006) interrogates the uncritical eagerness of artists' use of the verbatim 'word-for-word' seal in an effort to present a 'transparent' (p 59), and somehow more 'truthful' rendering of lived experiences. A year after Bottoms' critique was published, Dennis Kelly's *Taking Care of Baby* opened at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre in spring 2007. The fake verbatim play,

interventionist in approach, follows the untrue story of Donna McAuliffe, a mother convicted of killing her two children whose conviction was eventually overturned. Challenging the audience's perception of truth, the play employed popular documentary techniques such as direct address, expert opinions, declarations of transparency, and the 'erms', 'ticks' and hesitations as veracity signatures. Kelly brings these elements together in an effort to reveal the often taken-for-granted and ethically questionable aspects of verbatim theatre-making. Ten years after *Taking Care of Baby* premiered, this presentation considers Kelly's contribution to verbatim practice, particularly about the questions his play raises about the ethical role of the playwright and the critical dialogue that representing 'real' stories invites.

### **Charlotte Bell**

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I completed my PhD in 2014 at Queen Mary University of London, exploring the cultural economics of site-specific art and performance on/about council estates in south east London. My research has been published in publications including *Wasafiri*, *Contemporary Theatre Review*, *New Theatre Quarterly* and *Studies in Theatre and Performance*. In 2016 I graduated from the Teach First programme and I currently lead on GCSE English Literature and Media Studies at a state-secondary school in Birmingham. I am current chair of the West Midlands Action Network for Teach First and contribute to the training of new teachers at the charity's Summer Institute. I recently attended Teach First's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary reception at Buckingham Palace.

### **Dennis Kelly's DNA in the classroom: theatre, performance, and exam text**

*DNA* became a set text on the English Literature GCSE syllabus in 2010. Since then, compulsory education has undergone significant changes: it is complex and shifting. My writing is greatly influenced by my current position as a secondary school teacher in a state-comprehensive school in a deprived area of Birmingham. I reflect on the tensions that arise from framing texts as examination foci, in particular the demands of new specifications at GCSE level to scrutinise and analyse within examination contexts, a discourse fraught with the colloquialisms and linguistic shorthand of contemporary youth culture whilst this language and the themes that arise from this text are incredibly pertinent and 'real' to the young people I teach. Incumbent to spending cuts, budget restrictions and the culling of the arts across sectors, the capacities in which I'm

able to construct an alternative discourse whilst ensuring that the young people I work with get the best start in life feels crushingly limited. And yet, drama has provided a key method through which we have negotiated this terrain. I view my teaching practice as an aesthetic and politically motivated practice, one that inevitably negotiates the instrumentalist desires of the government in power whilst seeking to support and effect social change with the young people I work with.

### **Basil Chiasson, University of Leeds**

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Basil Chiasson has lectured on the history of theatre, modern drama and post-war and contemporary British drama and performance; has published reviews, book chapters, journal articles and a recent book on Harold Pinter; and has research interests in British drama and neoliberalism and austerity. He is currently a research fellow at the University of Leeds, working on the AHRC-funded project *Pinter Histories and Legacies: The Impact of Harold Pinter's Work on the Development of British Stage and Screen*.

#### **'The debt was crushing us, it was...': Reforming Debt Culture, Reforming Subjectivity in *Love and Money***

In recent decades, there has been a growing interest in how capitalism in its 'neoliberal' mode seeks to access and exploit the deepest regions of subjectivity in order to extend, diversify and persist as the dominant system. This arrangement is not without consequence, however, as it so often entails crises and breakdown—of body, mind, interpersonal relations and spirit. Since the advent of neoliberalisation, the theatre's time-worn capacity for demonstration over explanation and for stimulating the imagination has enabled the medium to vivify this manifold problem of extension, penetration and crises. This presentation considers Dennis Kelly's play *Love and Money* (2006) as a particularly notable example. Several of the play's scenes and formal features are considered for the unique aesthetic means they employ to probe and expose capitalism's reformation of debt culture as a process which hinges upon the reformation of subjectivity and interpersonal relations. As the presentation reflects upon how *Love and Money* mediates neoliberalism's framing of money and debt as immanent to subjectivity and conducive to freedom, it ultimately offers some remarks and invites further discussion about what kinds of political theatre might be appropriate for an era of ongoing neoliberalisation in Britain.

**Catriona Fallow, University of Birmingham**

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Catriona Fallow is a Research Fellow based at the University of Birmingham working on the *Harold Pinter: Histories and Legacies* project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Broadly, her research specialises in contemporary British and European playwriting, theatre history and historiography, and contemporary Shakespearean performance. Catriona's work has been published in *Studies in Theatre and Performance* and has been presented internationally at Harvard's Mellon School for Theatre and Performance Research, Performance Studies International, and the International Federation for Theatre Research.

**'Could all of that have happened outside of a subsidised organisation?': Dennis Kelly and New Writing at the Royal Shakespeare Company**

First staged at the Royal Shakespeare Company's (RSC) temporary Courtyard Theatre in November 2010, *Matilda the Musical* is now a permanent fixture in London's West End and continues to tour internationally to great critical acclaim. Reflecting on his experiences as the playwright for *Matilda* in February 2014, Dennis Kelly asks 'could all of that have happened outside of a subsidised organisation? The answer is simple: no. It really couldn't' (*Guardian*, 2014).

Earlier in 2010, Kelly's *The Gods Weep* premiered at the Hampstead Theatre in London as part of the RSC's season of work there between 2010-11. In part a response to Shakespeare's *King Lear* refracted through the context of multinational commerce, *Guardian* critic Michael Billington remarked, 'Kelly's apocalyptic vision of Britain is Shakespeare's legacy rather than something forged from his own experience' (2010).

From mega-musical success to inviting direct comparisons to the Shakespearean canon, this paper examines Kelly's work with the RSC as a way into asking broader questions about the RSC's place within the UK's new writing ecology. At the same time, it explores what roles new writing and contemporary playwrights occupy within one of the country's most heavily subsidised organisations committed, first and foremost, to the work of Shakespeare.

**Marissia Fragkou, Canterbury Christ Church**

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Marissia Fragkou is senior lecturer in Performing Arts at Canterbury Christ Church University. Her research focuses on the politics of representation, feminist theatre, affect, ethics and precarity. Her essays have appeared in *Performing Ethos*, *Contemporary Theatre Review* and volumes on British and European theatre. She is currently preparing her first monograph *Ecologies of Precarity in Twenty-First Century Theatre: Politics, Affect, Responsibility* (Bloomsbury Methuen; Drama Engage) and is co-editing a special issue on contemporary Greek theatre for the *Journal of Greek Media and Culture* (2017).

**'Feeling Normal: Children, Precarity and Risk in Dennis Kelly's Drama'**

During the first two decades of new millennium, British theatre has been littered by representations of children and teenagers at risk. This paper will specifically focus on how Dennis Kelly's theatre becomes preoccupied with the figure of the precarious child as a trope which produces and challenges fantasies about normality and happiness. I am particularly interested in the ways in which Kelly's staging of children and young people 'in crisis' addresses the failure of achieving 'normality' and the promise of a 'democratic access to the good life' (Berlant 2011: 3). With reference to his plays *Debris*, *Osama the Hero* and *Orphans* I wish to examine Kelly's representational and dramaturgical frames and their connection to pervasive uncertainties and escalating precarity in the contemporary world. The paper will explore such concerns against feminist considerations of the 'normal' (Berlant 2011), affect and happiness (Ahmed 2000; 2004) and precarity (Butler 2009); it will also situate Kelly's body of work against other comparable examples such as Philip Ridley's *Mercury Fur* whilst also looking at British and Greek productions of his plays.

**Sam Haddow, University of St Andrews**

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Sam Haddow is a lecturer in modern and contemporary drama at the University of St Andrews. I've published on the apocalypse and end-narratives in British theatre, the plays of Howard Barker and Edward Bond, and the 2011 England Riots. I'm currently working on a monograph on spectatorship in an age of emergencies, and I occasionally perform clowning and acrobatics for children.

### **Beautiful doom: the political aesthetic of *Utopia***

The plot of Dennis Kelly's television drama *Utopia* pits utilitarian against humanist arguments in the crisis constituted by the global population explosion. One of the more fascinating treatments of this crisis, however, occurs at the level of the programme's aesthetic. In the scenography, for instance, abandoned spaces such as car parks, shops, offices, warehouses, wastegrounds and suburban streets are depicted through the feverish, radiant beauty of the *end of things*. The viewer is left uncertain as to whether they are witnessing the gorgeous desolation of a world already destroyed, or the hallucinatory desperation of a world trying to avert its destruction.

The chief point of interest for this paper, therefore, is to consider the political import of *Utopia* as a direct function of its aesthetic. Much of the ruined landscapes are mirrored in the destructive artworks of the characters (tattoos carved into bare skin, graphic novels combining biological warfare with wrecked psychologies) and the summative trope of these ruined forms is *excitement*. In seeking a visual language of (or beyond) catastrophe, Kelly's drama flirts with a forbidden honesty, rarely seen in popular culture, which finds beauty in chaotic destruction. This paper is directed towards that beauty, and its cultivation in the aporia of *Utopia's* horrifying subject matter. Rather than condemn this beauty outright as what Paul Virilio calls a 'terrorist art', I will explore the ways in which it may offer a valuable contribution to our understanding of our contemporary situation.

**Janine Hauthal, Vrije Universiteit Brussel**

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Janine Hauthal studied English and drama/theatre in Giessen and Bristol. She is postdoctoral fellow of the Research Foundation – Flanders at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (2014-21) and substitute professor of English at the University of Wuppertal (winter 2016/17, 2017/18). Her dissertation on "Metadrama and Theatricality" received the bi-annual award of the *German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English* (CDE) in 2008. Her research and publications focus on metareference across media and genres, contemporary (Black) British writing, postdramatic theatre (texts), transgeneric/-medial narratology, and "imaginary Europes" in British as well as Anglophone settler literatures.

## Performing Stories, Engaging Audiences: Dennis Kelly's Narrative Aesthetic

Dennis Kelly's work for the stage has repeatedly confronted spectators with what this paper proposes to call a 'narrative aesthetic'. Already in his debut play *Debris* (2003) storytelling predominates and breaks with conventions of dramatic realism. Figural speech is narrativized in a majority of scenes. With its concentration on 'performing stories', Kelly's play resembles the postdramatic theatre practices recently scrutinized by Nina Tecklenburg (2014). Similar to those practices, the stories Kelly's characters present are no 'master narratives'; they are neither 'closed' and 'fixed' nor 'authorial'. Instead, subjectivity and unreliability as well as the importance of storytelling for defining and shaping identities are emphasized. Kelly's play also shares with postdramatic theatre practices that the characters continuously and directly address the audience, which intensifies the illusion of immediacy, i.e. the 'here and now' of the narrating/performing act. By casting actors in the role of narrators, reducing their acting to storytelling and making it their task to authenticate narrative acts in performance, Kelly instigates in the field of 'dramatic theatre' a development parallel to the rise of 'performing stories' in postdramatic theatre practices.

The proposed paper has a three-fold focus: To begin with, it will study and compare how Kelly stages narration in his plays from a transgeneric/-medial narratological point of view. Next to *Debris*, works discussed will include *Osama the Hero* (2005), *Love and Money* (2006), *Taking Care of Baby* (2007), and *The Ritual Slaughter of Gorge Mastromas* (2012). Secondly, the analysis will investigate connections between Kelly's 'narrative aesthetic' and the 'postdramatic' dimension in his writings for the stage. Thirdly, the paper will examine how the concentration on 'performing stories' shapes the ethics of Kelly's writing and helps to engage and confront audiences imaginatively. In this context, the frequently disturbing content of Kelly's "dark comic vision" (Gardner 2004) and the "gothic accounts of brutality" (Rebellato 2007: 606) will be considered that has prompted critics to compare his writing to that of Philip Ridley. In concluding, the paper will address the theatricality of storytelling in Kelly's plays and how it stimulates a rethinking of the long-lived opposition of narrative and drama/performance.

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Chris Megson is Reader in Drama and Theatre at Royal Holloway, University of London. His research focuses on documentary and verbatim theatre, post-war British theatre, and contemporary playwriting. His publications include *Get Real: Documentary Theatre Past and Present* (with Alison Forsyth; Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), *Decades of Modern British Playwriting: the 1970s* (Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2012) and numerous journal articles and chapters in edited collections including, most recently, *British Theatre Companies: From Fringe to Mainstream, Volume One - 1965-1970* (ed. John Bull, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2016) and *Performing the Secular: Religion, Representation, and Politics* (eds. Milija Gluhovic and Jisha Menon, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

**‘What if the enemy is right?’:**

***Utopia* and the drama of sublime paranoia**

The television conspiracy thriller *Utopia* (Kudos/Endemol Shine), created and written by Dennis Kelly, was broadcast on Channel 4 in 2013-14 and won the International Emmy for Best Drama Series in 2014. *Utopia* speaks directly to widespread anxieties about global corporations, corrupt elites, escalating surveillance, big pharma, bio-pandemics, overpopulation, and eco-catastrophe. Aside from its dizzying dramatic scope and ambition, the series is also renowned for its extraordinary – almost hallucinogenic – cinematography, its iconic visual design suffused with ‘irradiated’ primary colours, its disorientating soundscapes at once eclectic and unforgettable, its omnipresent violence, unexpected humour and unsettling moral ambiguity. Despite the series’ unfortunate cancellation after just two seasons, *Utopia* attracted, and continues to attract, a voracious ‘underground’ fan following around the world. This paper explores the dramatic and aesthetic valences of *Utopia*, bringing the series into dialogue with Kelly’s writing for theatre and with a broader selection of contemporary dystopic-themed theatre, film and television. In so doing, I argue that *Utopia* is a *samizdat* drama of ‘sublime paranoia’ in the vanguard of recent cultural production across media that compels audiences to question the truth-claims that suture contemporary socio-political reality.

**Déborah Prudhon, Paris-Sorbonne University**

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Déborah Prudhon is a PhD student and teacher of translation and English and American literature at Paris-Sorbonne University. Her thesis, supervised by Pr. Elisabeth Angel-Perez, explores the redefinition of the relationship between fiction and reality in the work of contemporary playwrights such as Tim Crouch, Dennis Kelly and Debbie Tucker Green, as well as in Punchdrunk's immersive theatre.

**Dennis Kelly's *Taking Care of Baby*:  
"Playing [...] with the public perception of the truth"**

This paper addresses Dennis Kelly's *Taking Care of Baby* (2007). The play, based on the (fictional) case of Donna McAuliffe, presents itself as a piece of verbatim theatre, ostensibly adopting the codes of the genre: "The following has been taken word for word from interviews and correspondence. Nothing has been added and everything is in the subjects' own words, though some editing has taken place. Names have not been changed." However, this opening declaration, echoed throughout the play, is gradually modified to finally become an incomprehensible sentence in which all the letters have been inverted. The spectators progressively realise that what was presented to them as real facts turns out to be complete fiction. This fake verbatim play thus criticises its own ontological status and plays with the audience's expectations, inviting the spectators to question their own position during the performance.

This study will be the opportunity to look afresh at the relationship between reality and fiction in Dennis Kelly's play, at a time when the term "post-truth" pervades the media. My analysis will draw on Jean-Marie Schaeffer's theory of fiction (*Pourquoi la fiction ?* 1999), and in particular on his concept of deceit (*leurre*) which he distinguishes from the notion of fiction, itself defined as a playful and shared delusion (*feintise ludique partagée*).

**Donald Pulford, University of Lincoln**

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Donald Pulford holds a PhD from Australia's Monash University. In the UK over the last decade, his work as a theatre director has been to over thirty venues in the UK, Italy, Dublin and

New York. At the University of Lincoln, he teaches Directing, Solo Performance, and British Theatre as Industry. His research interests include the US avant-garde and postcolonial theatre. His articles have been published in Australia, the US, the UK, France and Germany. The *New York Times* thought his theatre lighting 'nifty'.

### **Sorting out *Debris***

*Debris* concerns young siblings, Michelle and Michael (no surname), two ferals who, free of parental control and without any emotional connection or substantial narrative (grand or otherwise) with which to anchor their lives, are flotsam and jetsam bobbing about on a sea of floating signifiers.

As the play progresses, the two protagonists' lives take on an increasing meaning for them while the audience is more and more at sea. Narratives presented to it to explain Michael and Michelle's situation are all implausible. Similarly, the performance encourages the audience to view the action in particular ways, only to disrupt them with a contradictory one. Familiar interpretive tools are made useless and the play becomes a phantasmagoria'.

The business of this paper is how the audience might be drawn into much the same position as Michelle and Michael in not being able to make sense.

### **Dan Rebellato, Royal Holloway, University of London**

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Dan Rebellato is Professor of Contemporary Theatre at Royal Holloway University of London and has published widely on contemporary British theatre and his books include *1956 and All That, Theatre & Globalization, Contemporary European Theatre Directors, The Suspect Culture Book*, and *Modern British Playwriting 2000-2009*. He is currently writing *Naturalist Theatre: A New Cultural History*. He is co-editor, with Jen Harvie, of the Theatre & series for Palgrave Macmillan. He is also a playwright and his plays for stage and radio include *Here's What I Did With My Body One Day, Static, Chekhov in Hell, Cavalry, Emily Rising* and *My Life Is A Series of People Saying Goodbye* which have been performed internationally. He recently completed an award-winning 27-episode adaptation of Zola's huge Rougon-Macquart novel sequence for Radio 4 under the title *Emile Zola: Blood, Sex & Money*.

## **On Radical Naivety: Dennis Kelly and Verbal Style**

Dennis Kelly's work has a complex relationship with irony and sincerity. Some of his plays are framed in bottomless layers of irony. Others deploy what I have elsewhere called 'radical naivety': an apparently artless deployment of pure sincerity of a kind that can seem anaesthetically naïve. The latter is a style of writing that can be seen elsewhere in the work of Mike Bartlett, Duncan Macmillan, Simon Stephens, Alistair McDowall, and others. In this paper I think further about how 'radical naivety' works and how it relates to our culture's recent struggles with irony and sincerity.

**Trish Reid, Kingston University**

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Trish Reid is Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Kingston University, London. She has published extensively in contemporary Scottish theatre and performance and in particular on the National Theatre of Scotland. Her books include *The Theatre of Anthony Neilson* (2017) and *Theatre & Scotland* (2013). She is currently working on a longer monograph for Palgrave on contemporary Scottish theatre and performance and on a couple of pieces of writing on Debbie Tucker Green. Trish is from Glasgow.

### **'Was it goodness or Cowardice?': Tragic Bewilderment in Dennis Kelly's *The Ritual Slaughter of Gorge Mastromas***

Responding to Dennis Kelly's *The Ritual Slaughter of Gorge Mastromas* (2012), which premiered in the UK in a production directed for the Royal Court by Vicki Featherstone, UK theatre critics tended to compare it to a medieval morality play, to suggest that its theme was rather too obvious, and to complain that it was overly long. In this paper, I want to utilize the concept of 'tragic bewilderment' – as developed by the Russian Jewish philosopher/critic Matvei Kagan in his writing on Aleksander Pushkin – to read beyond the clichés and too certain convictions that marked initial responses to Kelly's play. I want to understand the play not primarily as a rather ponderous 'allegory' about the seductive power of Capitalism, but as a more nuanced philosophical exploration of the life of the individual in relation to history in the neoliberal moment, and especially in relation to the possibility (or impossibility) of creating alternative

histor(ies). In Kelly's play, what bewilders is not Gorge's inability to bridge the gap between conflicting ethical positions, although he is repeatedly presented with choices in this regard. The main bewilderment generated by the play is bewilderment at our shared inability to find a solution to the problem of how to live well under late-capitalism, a period during which, as we are repeatedly reminded, history has come to an end. To put it another way, our tragic bewilderment at *The Ritual Slaughter of Gorge Mastromas* is at the fact that we seem no longer able to create a culture and justify it, so that the culture will benefit from this rhetorical act, and emerge richer and more robust.

### **Aloysia Rousseau, Paris-Sorbonne University**

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Aloysia Rousseau is a senior Lecturer at the University of Paris-Sorbonne where she teaches British and American Literature and specializes in contemporary British theatre. She has authored several articles on the plays of Tom Stoppard, Martin Crimp, Tim Crouch and Denis Kelly and published a book on Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia* (Paris: Atlande, 2011). Her current research includes exploring how British contemporary playwrights subvert and reinvigorate Mainstream theatre, with a specific focus on the musical and the whodunit.

### ***Matilda* as "integrating" musical: a collaborative experience**

In a 2014 *Guardian* article, Dennis Kelly wrote that "the old labels like 'arty' and 'populist' just don't work anymore. It's much more subtle now; we can enjoy a range and blend of things without our sense of who we are imploding." In this paper, I would like to throw light on *Matilda the Musical* as a perfect example of the "blend" Kelly refers to here. *Matilda* can indeed be considered as an integrating rather than integrated musical in the sense that it brings together apparently antithetical elements, be it onstage or offstage. Not only does *Matilda* bridge the gap between highbrow and lowbrow but it can be considered as a profoundly collaborative experience, "a process of bringing people together", which is, as we are reminded by Jim Davis in *Theatre and Entertainment* (2016), the very definition of entertainment.

I will first focus on the hybrid creative team behind *Matilda* bridging the gap between mainstream and elitist theatre before showing how the musical addresses both children and

adults in the audience. I will finally consider the musical as a post-structuralist show blurring the boundary between playwright, character and audience through the notion of story-telling.

### **Lucy Tyler, University of Reading**

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Lucy Tyler's work attends to the politics of contemporary British dramaturgies. Currently a lecturer in Performance Practices at The University of Reading and a Ph.D candidate at Royal Central School of Speech & Drama, her research centres around curatorial and developmental dramaturgy in practice. Her work explores the labour of playmaking and the radical political frameworks in which theatrical processes operate.

### **Radical Mobility in the works of Dennis Kelly**

The Spirit is not subdued, it has only sunk into itself in order soon to reveal itself again as an affirmative, creative principle, and right now it is burrowing—if I may avail myself of this expression of Hegel's—like a mole under the earth.

(Bakunin, 1980: 56)

In his 2014 work, *Underground Passages: Anarchist Resistance Culture 1848-2011*, Jesse Cohn describes a network of metaphorical tunnels that have been dug by anarchists. He contends that these tunnels constitute an anarchist culture of resistance. Cohn uses the idea of the tunnel and its radical mobility to describe an anarchist practice of ideas, texts, and visual media, burrowing underneath society.

This paper considers whether a similar analysis can be applied to Dennis Kelly's *Osama the Hero* (2005) and *Orphans* (2009). Although neither text addresses anarchist or leftist politics, both texts examine the (presumption of) underground tunnels and the radical mobility of Jihadi ideas. Both texts explore the fear that jihadi ideas run underneath British society and may, as Bakunin said of 19<sup>th</sup>-century anarchist cells, reveal themselves like a mole from under the earth.

I will explore Kelly's representation of radical mobility in relation to Jihadi terror, but I will also look at the ways in which contemporary theatre might broaden the representation of radical mobility beyond fundamentalist terror and towards a leftist creative practice described by Cohn and Bakunin.

## Alexander Watson

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Alex is currently a theatre practitioner scraping a living through bartending jobs in west London. He most recently completed an MA in Theatre and Performance Studies at King's College London, writing his dissertation on violence, performativity, and perception. He is currently preparing to continue this work at PhD level under Dan Rebellato at Royal Holloway, and at the time of writing is directing Simon Stephens' *Pornography*. He completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Lincoln in 2013 with an award for Outstanding Achievement in Drama and is therefore thrilled to return to this fantastic institution.

### **The Panopticon of Janus:**

#### **Surveillance, Seduction, and Images of Violence in Dennis Kelly's *Utopia***

Foremost, this essay contends that the use of images of violence in contemporary Western media can be better understood through the social theory of Panopticism. This theory is informed not only by its originator Michel Foucault as a reference to the disciplinary society of surveillance, but by Zygmunt Bauman's contention that behavioural modification in society is now enacted by a post-Panopticism of seduction. Both of these viewpoints are applied to the example of Dennis Kelly's *Utopia* (2013-14), a British television series that is concerned with contemporary media, images of violence, and Panopticism. The first contention of the essay is argued through illustratively using this series as a touchstone.

The second argument, following from the first, is that images of violence are a media-circulated means of seduction and discipline. Through the continued use of *Utopia* as an example, the seduction of images of violence is shown to be because of their link to the sublime and their high distribution. The inherent discipline in images of violence is informed by the writings of Paul Virilio, as they utilise the conditioning power of fear.

The final contention of the essay is that alongside Foucault's theory of surveillance and Bauman's theory of seduction there is a third method of Panopticism. This is the use of exposure, which is most visible in the high circulation of images of violence in the media. This is posed to be because of society's obsession with what Virilio calls the "cult of speed" which prioritises quicker information and communication. The conclusion asks through the thematic message of *Utopia* if this newer method of state behavioural modification informed by the cult of speed is detrimental to societal behaviour as a whole because of its very enabling of images of violence.