DE GRUYTER OPEN

LINGUACULTURE 1, 2014

INCHBALD'S KOTZEBUE: *THE WISE MAN OF THE EAST* (1799) AND SOCIAL ASSEMBLAGE THEORY

DAVID WORRALL
Nottingham Trent University

Abstract

This article argues that Lord Mansfield's judgement in favour of the actor Charles Macklin in 1775 wrought a profound change on noisy and disruptive theatre auditoriums. Mansfield ruled that persons returning to theatres to repeatedly disrupt performances were guilty of conspiracy and performers' lost earning were assessed as felonies in English common law. Those found guilty might have substantial damages awarded against them and might be liable for a prison sentence. The paper traces that Garrick's Drury Lane was repeatedly disrupted but with no action being taken, even though ringleaders had been identified. Macklin's case, arising from his engagement at Covent Garden, suppressed repeatedly rowdy evenings. The paper suggests that Sarah Siddons's rise at Drury Lane from 1782 onwards was linked to these changes in the legal environment for stage performers.

Keywords: *Mrs. Inchbald, social assemblage theory, eighteenth century theatre, performance history*

This article aims to introduce social assemblage theory as a predictive analytical method for studying performance history in general but with particular application to adaptation studies. Perhaps its most significant research innovation is to give some idea of the scale and organizational complexity of London theatre around 1800, describing it as a set of structures which produced and enabled theatrical adaptation as one of its assemblage functions. The background to the new analytical model proposed here derives from assemblage theories originating in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and subsequently adapted by Manuel DeLanda in *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (DeLanda, *New Philosophy*); the essays collected in *Deleuze: History and Science*; and further redefined by him

DOI: 10.1515/lincu -2015-0020

in *Philosophy and Simulation: The Emergence of Synthetic Reason*.[1] Although this essay particularly references British 18th century theatrical adaptation, the methodology is capable of being transposed to other performance periods and to other performance types.

Adaptation, the economy of difference which can be synthesized as a set of features asymmetrically structuring a set of literary components, is almost a classic example of an assemblage function. Adaptations for the stage or screen are particularly common, materializing fictional or non-fictional texts and then connecting them to sets of exterior relations whose attributes can analysed. However, as this article will argue, dramatic meaning is not a feature of the content of literary texts but an outcome of its reception environment. My own foundational formulation about performance meaning, published in the brief conclusion to my monograph, *Harlequin Empire: Race, Ethnicity and the Drama of the Popular Enlightenment* (Worrall), is that the cultural meaning of drama changes with every change in the performance location and that the performance location changes on two axes, one spatial and one temporal. In British Georgian theatre, although it is far from unique, there are no "repeat" performances but only new iterations and reiterations. By contrast, movies or other recordings of performances are much less dynamic because their performance texts remain inert even though spatial and temporal locations change successively.

The spatial and temporal locations of live Georgian theatrical performances are crucial because the venues – which might range from country house private theatricals through to the large public theatres which had evolved in London by the end of the 18th century – are the places where the symbolic registers of texts (the words in plays) are activated, actioned and, of course, acted out by embodied actors. Assemblage theory proposes a relationship between "real" texts (that is, those bordering on the virtual) and "actual" texts (that is, those with a traceable material purchase on specific components of the assemblage population or on the gradients of difference operating within assemblages) where relays and transpositions across both categories produce differences in exterior relations. My modelling of a distinction between real (or virtual) assemblages of reading and actual assemblages of performance (theatrical assemblages), are developments of DeLanda's derivation of Deluezean ontology. DeLanda indirectly initiates this major development for literary studies in conceptualizing assemblages of disaggregated readers of texts

[1] Post-Deleuzean critical discourse is often remorselessly ahistorical, non-materialized and non-specific, see Martin Fuglsang and Bent Meier Sorensen (eds.), *Deleuze and the Social* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006). The collection includes an essay by DeLanda, 'Deleuzian Ontology and Assemblage Theory', pp 250-66.

in contrast to theatrical assemblages where performance texts are materialized at theatrical venues.

According to DeLanda:

> the Deleuzian ontology is flat: the world of actual assemblages forming *a plane of reference*, that is, a world of individual singularities operating at different spatio-temporal scales, to which we can refer by giving them, for example, a proper name; and the world of diagrams defined by universal singularities forming *a plane of immanence*, a plane that does not exist above the other plane (like a genus that is ontologically "above" a species) but is like its reverse side. A single flat ontology with two sides, one side populated by virtual problems and the other by a divergent set of actual solutions to those problems (*Deleuze:History and Science* 104).

It is this idea of a plane of "real" (or virtual) texts connected to an adjacent plane of actuality (the materialized exterior relations of the text), which allows us to model how play texts in performance can be linked to distinctive social assemblages actualized in density and located within knowable populations of an assemblage. Of course, theatre audiences – together with the actors and performers they watch, all sited at specific locations identifiable where their spatial and temporal axes converge – comprise the populations of these assemblages.

Novels and other types of prose fiction, perhaps the most commonplace sources for stage adaptations, have the endemic problem of their near-virtuality. That is, although the symbolic registers of their texts are "real," their predicament of bordering on virtuality through being unread, unshared, un-acted-upon, is attractively overcome by embodiment into stage or screen performance. In other words, it is the transfer of "real"/bordering-on-virtual texts into theatrical performance which permits not only materialization but also the phase spaces of material difference, further assemblages, where adaptations can successively recur as emergent characteristics. To put it as reductively as possible, by contrast, the disaggregated private phase space of a single novel reader reading a novel is re-aggregated into the phase space of an audience population attending a theatre.

Assemblages are best described as collectivities of human and non-human components situated in places determinable by spatial and temporal axes and persisting in variable states of flow.[2] Assemblage theory's most immediately

[2] For the range of recent interest in assemblage theory, see as indicative, Alan Lester, 'Personifying Colonial Governance: George Arthur and the Transition from Humanitarian to Development Discourse,' *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102 (2012) pp 1468-1488; Kim Dovey and Felicity Symons, 'Density without intensity and what to do about it: reassembling public/private interfaces in

noticeable innovation is to prioritize materiality as expressive of identity. Theatre performances are the outcome of assemblages or collectivities of audiences, actors, physical venues (locatable on their spatial/temporal axes) and performance texts. By 'performance texts,' I mean all their human and non-human components, including their symbolic registers, as actualized at the performance venue. However, there here intervenes in the description of this methodology, DeLanda's key theoretical insight that "The identity of an assemblage is not only embodied in its materiality but also expressed by it" (*Philosophy and Simulation* 200). In the case of disaggregated readers of novel, the materiality of the phase spaces of reading is multiple, attenuated and diffuse. In the case of stage performances, the phase spaces of viewing and listening are concentrated, networked by spatially and temporally oriented conversation at the venue and historically recoverable back to precisely identifiable temporal and spatial points across material topographies (country house private theatricals to big public theatres). Crucially, the symbolic registers of the performance texts contribute towards – *but do not on their own determine* – the identity of the theatrical assemblage (which is expressed by its materiality). Most of the transpositions of assemblage theory into theatre history derive from the logic of this single proposition with the profound methodological implications derived from DeLanda's insight.

Once theatrical assemblages have been synthesized into their irreducible and decomposable components, they can be analysed and their capacity for the production of emergent characteristics can be described. Historical specificity is an emphatic feature of DeLanda's development of assemblage theory: "Every assemblage must be treated as a unique historical entity characterized both by a set of emergent properties (making it an individual singularity) as well as by the structure of possibility space defining tendencies and capacities (a structure defined by universal singularities)" (*Philosophy and Simulation* 188). Possibility spaces, or phase spaces, are what particularly confer on theatres their capacity for social emergence although, of course, the flow of emergence may not be progressive but tend towards greater or lesser homogeneity or heterogeneity. In the Georgian period of theatre, the recovery of the evidential bases for performance meaning across its local, national or international reception environment needs to begin with the archival layers left by the twin trails of

---

Melbourne's Southbank hinterland, *Australian Planner* 2013 htt:://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07293682.2013.776975; Tandy Chalmers Thomas, Linda L. Price, Hope Jensen Schau, 'When Differences Unite: Resource Dependence in Heterogeneous Consumption Communities,' *Journal of Consumer Research* 39 (2013) pp 1010-1033; Major Edward P. W. Hayward, *Planning Beyond Tactics: Towards a Military Application of the Philosophy of Design in the Formulation of Strategy*, PhD thesis, 2008, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012).

newspaper advertising and printed playbills. In the British context, these have persisted since the early 1700s. Much like DNA evidence, each performance can be assigned a unique date and place, sequenced according to temporal and spatial location and ascribed to levels of incorporation into the overall theatrical assemblage. Indeed, the theatres' own direct promotion of their programs through these types of printed ephemera has left a compelling empirical basis for studying theatrical production and consumption as an assemblage.

For live performers in live performances, the factors set out above form an absolute limit on the possibility of defining or evaluating theatrical adaptation as if it had a fixed and determinable meaning. A performer or a performance text acts as an individual singularity set within a structure of universal singularities (as part of a cast list, a theatre company, a touring circuit, a generic tradition, a repertoire of plays etc.), which itself forms part of an assemblage comprising the audience and the location (temporal and spatial) of the venue. The cultural meaning of drama is always reterritorialized at the performance location by the audience, a larger component of the assemblage population than the performers. The audience decides meaning and communicate those meanings along their social networks, rematerializing them at the nodes of these networks (perhaps today in Starbucks just as, in the Georgian, at its forerunner London coffee houses).

That meaning is devolved to the reception environment is a particularly urgent consideration for eighteenth-century performance based on the British repertoire since, unlike the British Early Modern, the Georgian is the first period when that repertoire reaches the colonial and post-colonial north of America on any scale. In that example, the re-territorialisation of meaning occurs, quite literally, in a different territory. Not least, because contemporary customs of programming put plays in tandem every night, meaning became compounded. At the semi-legal Exhibition Room theatre, Board Alley, Boston, Mass., on 16 November 1792 they played James Townley's *High Life Below Stairs* (1759) paired with Isaac Bickerstaff's *The Padlock* (1768). Both plays had blackface roles with the *Padlock*'s Mungo famously parodying West Indian patois and Townley's comedy reinforcing ideas of black idleness. On Board Alley (named from Boston's then still swampy landfill), slaves could still be owned – if not bought or sold in this part of the new republic – but the Exhibition Room's pairing powerfully consolidated prevailing racial stereotypes with quite distinctive meanings to how these plays were understood in London, the site of their first performances, which had no slaves on its mainland territories.

There are other compelling reasons why a methodology based on straightforwardly comparing an original performance text with its adaptation is bound to offer limited benefits. The Drury Lane prompter and stage manager, William Hopkins, noted at the end of his seasonal diary for 1770-71 that they staged "61 different Plays / 37 different Farces / 190 Nights in all," that is, 98

different titles, just as for the 1772-3 season he recorded "63 different Plays / 36 different Farces / 188 Nights in all," 99 different works (Hopkins). At this rate of turnover of nearly 100 different plays in a London season of some 40 weeks, there could have been little concept of a directed, unified meaning attributed to individual plays by the performers themselves or even by the prompter, let alone the playhouse management. Actors learned "parts" and were issued with handwritten "part books," booklets produced by the theatre for their company which contained, in full, the speeches of a single character but with only the final three words of the lines preceding their own. In an extant part book made up in September 1795 for the character, Item, in Thomas Holcroft's Covent Garden comedy, *The Deserted Daughter* (1795), a manuscript annotation at the end of his "10 lengths" (a guide to the amount he was required to learn), the actor playing the role is instructed to "Stay on till the End," a reminder of the relative detachment performers must have necessarily experienced, aware as they were that the next night might ask them to perform a completely different play (Holcroft). Studying adaptations, text by text, from one genre to another and plotting textual changes is likely only to re-encounter the problem of their 'real' or virtual status. The actual, materialized, conditions of stage performances, when set out as decomposable and irreducible phase spaces aligned with audience networks, have to form the basis to access meaning.

Being aware of methodological limitations has never been more important. Adaptation is now a particularly visible aspect of theatrical assemblages as a glance at the program for any early 21st century West End London theatrical season will show. The point need not be laboured. Adaptations, including musical adaptations, derived from TV, film, novels and short stories dominate the programs. Of course, adaptation has always been endemic in theatre. Shakespeare, perhaps the most iconic of all playwrights, emerged into his Bardic status largely through adaptation. Nahum Tate's 1681 happy ending for *King Lear* held the stage until the 1840s. Although now little known, Tate's version was resonant with reigning conservative ideologies and the possible inflections of lost Shakespearian originals (Gordon 491-509, Massai 435-50). In other words, mutation is at the origin of Shakespeare's reputation. Rather than his *Winter's Tale*, eighteenth century theatre-goers preferred David Garrick's, *Florizel and Perdita; A Dramatic Pastoral* (1758) which itself derived from McNamara Morgan's Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin, *The Sheep-Sharing; or, Florizel and Perdita* (1750). Much that was commonplace about this repertoire has been forgotten and the genetic structure of the canon has mutated numerous times even though the original genotypes were once widely distributed. Indeed, adaptations, mutations, markets and economies are all particularly good indicators that much of what we know about theatrical material culture is based around decentred entities interacting at multiple levels of scale and complexity in sequences of assemblage.

Recent scholarship has added important strategic insights into the social function of theatrical performance, again emphasizing the cultural meaning is not exclusively a content of the dramatic text. Working independently of Deleuze and Guattari, the theatre historian Joseph Roach has noted how theatrical performances mark processes of "internal cultural self-definition ... [which] these and other performances produced by making visible the play of difference and identity within the larger ensemble of relations" (4). Roach's insights have also recently been influentially expanded by Kathleen Wilson within a critical context cognizant of Deleuze and Guattari's work but made even more specific to eighteenth-century theatre ("Pacific" 62-93).[3] Wilson provides the crucial formulation that "the English stage [w]as the leading site for the enactment of superior national virtue and character," where "theatre was able to transform historical idealizations into historical 'realities' that helped structure and confirm English beliefs about their own distinctiveness and destiny" (*Island* 63, 60). By making fairly minimal claims carefully calibrated against historical records, Roach and Wilson provide some of the best indicators for how a new methodology might develop.

What Roach and Wilson agree on is that it is the repetition of large numbers of plays, all containing similar ideological messages about British exceptionalism and providentiality – rather than any individual play or playwright – which constitutes the culturally transformative power of eighteenth-century theatricals. The research problems to answer are about the degree to which British Georgian theatre comprises a complex assemblage and the role of theatrical adaptation as an integral part of that assemblage with respect to the period around 1800.

A key number is 484,691. This is the number of visits made to the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, in the season of 1813-14. They are the theatre accountant's figures.[4] This was the first season of their new star, Edmund Kean, and the theatre was trying to work out what to pay him next year. Rebuilt after their fire of 1809, Drury Lane held about 3,000 people.[5] The theatre accountant worked out that, on the average night that season, Drury Lane took a box-office of £239.12.6 but the "General Average of Kean's Performances [was] £339.10. –"

---

[3] See also Wilson's article "Rowe's Fair Penitent as Global History: Or, a Diversionary Voyage to New South Wales." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 41 (2008): 231-251.

[4] The figures were assembled by Edward Warren, Assistant Treasurer, and comprised a "Statement of the Number of Persons [who] Paid at the Theater this Season" plus the number of 'Free Persons' admitted, August 1814, Folger Ms. W.a. 12, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C.

[5] Judith Pascoe, *The Sarah Siddons Audio Files: Romanticism and the Lost Voice* (Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan P., 2011) gives Drury Lane's capacity as 3,611 in 1794 but provides no source (57).

(Warren, "General"). In other words, when Kean performed, he was worth about a third of nightly receipts. Before 1812-13, nightly audience attendance figures can be, at least in theory and with difficulty, approximated both for Drury Lane and Covent Garden by making an algorithm approximating a capacity value for each part of the auditorium and dividing that into the nightly box-office receipt totals. After that date, Drury Lane introduced a pre-printed (in red ink) bespoke theatrical account book recording takings from different parts of theatre. Not only could they now enter up the takings laterally, subdividing receipts from the boxes, pit, two and one shilling galleries, but also longitudinally, subdividing receipt locations by denoting them as "P.S." and "O.P." (Prompt Side and Opposite Prompt) (Account-Book).

Across the road, the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, also held about 3,000 people. Of course, with Kean such a big hit at Drury Lane, Covent Garden's box-office count that year would have been down but if we assume they had about 400,000 visitors, then the total number of annual theatre-goers attending just these two London theatres escalates rapidly climbs towards one million. If one adds a conjectural figure for those visiting London's other theatres, then the numbers are eye-watering. The summer-season-only Little Theatre, Haymarket (the original venue for Colman's 1787 abolitionist, *Inkle and Yarico*) held 1,800 people, while the King's Opera House in the Haymarket (the site where *Phantom of the Opera* now runs and runs) held 2,500 to 3,000 people. In addition, there were also other theatres such as Astley's Amphitheatre (2,500 seats) on the south side of Westminster bridge (long committed to theatricalized horse dramas – hippodramas — including spin-offs of Sheridan's *Pizarro* (1799)), Astley's new "Olympick" theatre (1,500 seats) in Wych Street between Covent Garden and Drury Lane, not to mention Sadler's Wells, Islington (2,200) and several others. In short, the total annual number of seats on sale in London's theatres, c.1810, was approximately 1 million.[6] This mirrors quite closely the city's population which stood at 1,096,784 persons at the 1801 Census (Landers).

The Drury Lane visitor figures are important because they represent the population component of its functions as an assemblage. Assemblage populations, together with their density, are key ideas within this theoretical model. Theatrical performances are particularly easy to conceptualize as places (which can be sequenced by their temporal and spatial axes) where people meet together (as performers, audiences, theatre service workers etc.), and whose interactive co-presence provides a capacity (which, again, can be sequenced along temporal and spatial axes) for social emergence. As DeLanda puts it: "At

[6] Theatre capacities derive from James Henry Lawrence, *Dramatic Emancipation, or Strictures on the State of the Theatres* (1813) p. 380 which cites the *Morning Chronicle* 29 Feb. 1812.

any level of scale we are always dealing with *populations* of interacting entities (populations of person, pluralities of communities, multiplicities of organizations, collectivities of urban centres) and it is from the interactions within these populations that large assemblies emerge as a *statistical result*, or as collective unintended consequences of intentional action" (*Deleuze: History and Science*, 12).

These annual figures for London's theatre attendance are not only proxies for organizational complexity (capitalization, programming, employment etc.) but because they accurately represent *visits* (as opposed to visitors), they are also indicators of the intensity and flow of the city's populations associated with theatre-going behaviour. Each visit (not the same thing as each visitor) is a phase space, a spatially and temporally registered feature of the capacity of theatres to create socially emergent possibilities through connections with social networks.

If the number of annual theatre visits in Georgian London is around one million, the practice of running two dramas per evening (the "mainpiece" and the "afterpiece") means that the audience's acts of deterritorialisation and reterritorialization of performance meaning is around two million episodes, immediately locatable at the performance site but with the potential for relaying to outlying social networks via gossip, conversation, newspapers and other systems for retaining and distributing stored reputations. Furthermore, as described above, because successful mainpieces might be run over several weeks, paired with a carousel of afterpieces, cumulative meanings became compounded. The dynamics of change arising from this type of repertoire should not be underestimated.

It was into this hugely dynamic and transatlantic theatrical assemblage that playwrights wrote their plays and did their adaptations. Hopkins' record of nearly one hundred different plays per season, simply for Drury Lane, provides us with some indication of the enormous appetite for dramatic performance material that the London theatres generated. Unlike today, first nights for new writing generally brought good box-office receipts with "The Town," the fashionable set, particularly turning up to see and be seen. To cater for this market, adaptation was endemic and occurred not only with Shakespeare or from French or German originals but also at more fugitive levels. George Colman the Younger almost certainly – without acknowledgement – adapted a manuscript sent to his father's Haymarket Theatre by the young radical trainee barrister, John Thelwall, and made it into the hit abolitionist drama, *Inkle and Yarico* (1787) (Felsenstein and Scrivener).

Again, one returns to the material bases of Georgian theatricality as a complex assemblage of phase spaces organized around a series of ordinal points, concentrated in London but with outlier nodes in the provincial theatres and, increasingly, as further networks spanning transnational boundaries. The final example I want to come to a single theatrical adaptation, situating it within this

particular theatrical assemblage that comprise the complex layers and components described above.

A good example of a theatrical adaptation where the mechanisms of these assemblages can be seen at work is Elizabeth Inchbald's resetting of August von Kotzebue's *Das Schreibepult, oder Die Gefahren der Jugend* (The Writing Desk), staged at Covent Garden as *The Wise Man of the East* (1799) with its first night on 30 November 1799.[7] Jane Moody has commented on the artistic opportunities afforded to Inchbald as she worked through a whole series of translations and adaptations for the stage, but considering theatrical adaptation as a typical structural component of assemblage helps us realize the imperatives behind this process (257-84). What has often been underestimated is the sheer economic scale of contemporary theatre, its connections to capital, flows of people and its relationship to complex social networks. As part of a negative backlash of opinion about the play, controversy surrounded its author's reputation as much as its dramaturgy. Despite stage success, reactions to Kotzebue's plays in the conservative contemporary print culture were frequently hostile, accelerated by the perceived immorality of Inchbald's version of *Lovers' Vows* (1798) and the politics of Sheridan's derivative at Drury Lane, *Pizarro* (1799). As *The Dramatic Censor; or, Weekly Theatrical Report* put it, apparently directly in response to *The Wise Man of the East*, "we see the Theatres overflowing, night after night, with the crude abortions of *Kotzebue*" (53). With *Lovers' Vows* and *Pizarro* both runaway successes at the box-office, Kotzebue was a hot property but word seems to have circulated at the same time that Covent Garden was busy buying manuscripts directly from the author. One of the earliest commentators on these purchases was Thomas Dutton, who had himself published an annotated *Pizarro in Peru, Or the Death of Rolla; Being the Original of the New Tragedy .... with Notes, &c. By Thomas Dutton, A.M.* (1799); today a source of fascinating comments on the Drury Lane production. However, the vehicle for Dutton's news that London theatres were taking "a regular supply of his newest manuscripts" was his (lengthy) hostile poetic satire on Inchbald's Kotzebue, *The Wise Man of the East; or, The Apparition of Zoroaster, The Son of Oromanes, to The Theatrical Midwife of Leicester Fields* (iii).

It says much for the appetite for this kind of satire, presumably emanating from book-buying theatre-goers, that Dutton's poem reached a second edition in its year of publication with the author, apparently criticized by Inchbald's well-wishers, recanting only so much as to claim he had written it (despite the dating anomaly) before the publication of the printed version of her play, *The Wise Man of the East, A Play, In Five Acts, Performed at The Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden, From the German of Kotzebue* (1799) (vii, 63). Despite his claims to

[7] Ben P. Robertson, *Elizabeth Inchbald's Reputation: A Publishing and Reception History*. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013: 116-119.

the contrary, Dutton's attacks were highly gendered, situating her not only as the "Midwife" of his subtitle but referring to her throughout, by implication, as the piece's "matron." However, while Dutton's may have thought his vitriol principally aimed at incongruities in plotting, Inchbald's short "Advertisement" prefacing her edition had briefly but elegantly indicated the comprehensive nature of her changes.

Whatever Dutton thought of Inchbald's role as "matron" or "Midwife" to Kotzebue, his surmise that London playhouses were buying 'a regular supply of his newest manuscripts' turns out to have been accurate. Such direct purchases are an extremely unusual feature of contemporary theatre. Payments made to Kotzebue's intermediaries are recorded in the financial accounts of Covent Garden.[8] The ledger entry, income side, for 9 April 1799 records a payment of £500 from Thomas Harris, the Covent Garden manager. This seems to have been money intended to pay Kotzebue through two London agents. On the same day there is an income entry, "Rec^{vd} of ditto [Thomas Harris] to pay Mr. Poppendick [Poppendieck?] for Manuscripts Plays of Mr. Kotzebue £200." On the expenditure side of the ledger for the same date, outgoings are recorded as "Paid Mr. Streit for Mr. Kotzebeau[sic] £250.0.0." On 15 April the accountant "Rec^{vd} of D^{o}. Mr. Poppendick for Mr. Kotzebeau £50.0.0." and on 30 October, on the expenditure side, he recorded "Paid Mr. Poppendick for the use of Mr. Kotzebeau £200.0.0." In other words, in the run-up to *The Wise Man of the East*, Covent Garden paid £450 directly to Kotzebue with a further £50 also possibly being earmarked for his use. On 21 November, nine days before its first night, the theatre "Paid Mrs. Inchbald" £500 in a single transaction. Before anyone had stepped foot on the stage to perform *The Wise Man of the East*, Covent Garden had incurred costs of £1000, with apparently all of it going directly to the authors.

To give some kind of perspective on these figures, at the end of the 18th century an artisan family living in London needed about £40 per year to live on while a more middling rank family might require £100 per year to reach a more comfortable standard ("Currency, Coinage, and the Cost of Living.") To the man or woman in the street, the sums connected with running Covent Garden as a going concern must have seemed vast. The £1000 of author fees for *The Wise Man of the East* represented just under 2% of Covent Garden's £49,371.6.10. turn-over that season. The theatre's weekly wage bill was substantial. In the last week of December 1799, it employed 50 male performers at a weekly cost of £128.0.0. and 39 female performers at a wage bill of £66.1.6. In addition, the theatre employed "Guards," "Barbers" and other "supernumeraries" (as so described in the account books) at an expense of £24.9.6. Nor was this the end of

[8] All financial details come from British Library: Egerton Ms 2298, Covent Garden account book, 1799-1800.

their outgoings. Painters, carpenters, dressmakers not on the company pay roll were paid separately (usually promptly) and, of course, the theatre had to meet such things as poor law rates, taxes and water company bills.

In the event, surmounting the hurdle of these fixed costs on this production was done almost effortlessly. On *The Wise Man of the East*'s first night, box-office receipts came to £321.12.6. Remarkably, given Kotzebue's reputation, on 18 December, the accountant recorded that "Their Majesties & Princesses" came to the show (with a box-office of £253.12.0.), and returned again, as the same party, on 15 January 1800 with receipts of £405.10. This was extremely unusual. The presence of royalty, usually advertised in the press on the day they came, always boosted receipts but for the royals to make a return visit to the same show was rare. Whatever were the reasons the royals came back (possibly nostalgia for the German heritage of the British Hanoverian monarchy?), box-office receipts from just these three performances reached a little over £980, almost matching the amount paid to Inchbald and Kotzebue.

There were 13 performances of *The Wise Man of the East* that season but paying visitors were not the only source of Covent Garden's income for this work. In addition, the theatre sold "the Copyright of the Wise Man of the East" to the publishers, G. G. and J. Robinson, Inchbald's publishers since 1785, with Covent Garden receiving a single payment of £250 on 21 May 1800 (although their edition had been published the previous December) (Robertson 56, 117). For their part, the Robinsons' were no doubt hoping to repeat the success of their printings of *Lovers' Vows* (1798) which had reached eleven editions by 1799 (Inchbald 6).

The Wise Man of the East was not one of Inchbald's greatest successes. It never attained the popularity of *Lovers' Vows* or *Every One has his Fault* (1793), her original comedy of contemporary social manners about a destitute British army officer returning from defeat in America to face an unhelpful London society. Dutton's satire was extraordinarily elaborate but *The Wise Man of the East*'s box-office receipts, as indicated by its run of performances, means that it was only modestly successful, its far-fetched plot of a European disguised with "a dark Indian complexion, a long beard, and [...] dressed after the Eastern manner," masquerading as "a native of Cambodia, beyond the Ganges," perhaps limited its credibility (Inchbald 6). Nevertheless, assuming audiences at two thirds full levels (around 2000 people) and with the full house royal visit of 15 January (on what proved to be its last outing that season), *The Wise Man of the East* would still have been seen by about 30,000 people. Furthermore, by September 1800 – less than a year after its London debut – it had reached America where, in addition to the five performances in Boston and New York noted by Ben P. Robertson, on 3 October 1800 it was also produced at the Theatre, Newport, Rhode Island (117).

What has been outlined here is a historically sequenced description of the production of Inchbald's *Wise Man of the East*, setting it out as an adaptation from Kotzebue's original manuscript with both texts functioning as individual singularities enfolded within an array of universal singularities, all materially historicized, sequenced and situated within an overall theatrical assemblage whose annualized London theatrical assemblage population reached approximately one million people. All of these features are decomposable and irreducible in the state of their activity. By demystifying the processes of adaptation, one can see that the adaptation from Kotzebue's *Das Schreibepult* took place as an emergent characteristic of an assemblage of considerable material and social complexity, one which existed within a cross-European literary system whose outliers included new places of reception ten months later with performances on the north eastern seaboard of America.

Rather than examining texts as comparative case studies, working from original to adaptation, this analysis has attempted to rematerialize theatrical adaptation as an advanced, economically complex, cultural practice fully active in London by 1799. Such types of analysis may reverse our expectations. There is no particular reason, for example, to suspect Inchbald selected or chose *Das Schreibepult* herself. As Covent Garden had bought a batch of manuscripts from Kotzebue, and paid him and Inchbald separately, the choice of the play may have been entirely in the hands of the theatre management. As an ex-Covent Garden actress herself in the 1780s, and with a proven track record as a playwright and adapter, Inchbald must have been in a position of trust to adapt whatever was given her. Similarly, although often treated as primary materials by modern scholars, the copyright and printed edition of *The Wise Man of the East* probably figured some way down Covent Garden's priorities. Interestingly, ownership of the copyright was clearly not included in the fee package Inchbald obtained from Covent Garden. Indeed, it looks likely the theatre itself retained the copyright until they had worked out how successful it was going to be, selling it on to the Robinsons' at much less than they had paid Kotzebue. Quite clearly, its cost benefit to Covent Garden came from the box-office receipts of the 30,000 people who went to see it at the theatre. In a similar vein, despite criticism in *The Dramatic Censor; or, Weekly Theatrical Report*, or Dutton's noticeably personalized satire, or even the more supportive reviews published in *The Monthly Magazine* and *Monthly Review* cited by Ben P. Robertson, the contemporary print culture – a first port of call for modern scholars – presents a very poor guide to its financial success since the theatre more than got back their original investment (117-8). *The Wise Man of the East* did not repeat the success of *Lovers' Vows* but the structures of the theatrical assemblage which supported it are profound, extensive and unquestionable.

So, what exactly are the socially emergent characteristics exemplified in *The Wise Man of the East* and subjected here to assemblage theory analysis?

Have a look at this week's London West End theatre listings and count the adaptations.

Works Cited

"Account Book: Theatre Royal, Drury Lane." Folger W.b. 327, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C. Print.

"Covent Garden Account Book 1799-1800. " British Library: Egerton MS 2298. Print.

"Currency, Coinage and Cost of Living." *Old Bailey Online*, 30 Jan. 2014. Web. 6 Aug. 2014.

De Landa, Manuel. *Deleuze: History and Science*. New York and Dresden: Atropos Press, 2010. Print.

-----. "Deleuzian Ontology and Assemblage Theory." Martin Fuglsang and Bent Meier Sorensen, eds. *Deleuze and the Social*. 250-66. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP., 2006. Print.

-----. *Philosophy and Simulation: The Emergence of Synthetic Reason*. London and New York: Continuum, 2011. Print.

-----. *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity*. London and New York: Continuum, 2006. Print.

Dovey, Kim, and Felicity Symons. "Density without Intensity and What to do about it: Reassembling Public/ Private interfaces in Melbourne's Southbank Hinterland." *Australian Planner* 2013. Web. 7 Sep. 2014.

Dutton, Thomas. *The Wise Man of the East; or, The Apparition of Zoroaster, The Son of Oromanes, to The Theatrical Midwife of Leicester Fields*. 2nd ed. London: H. D. Symonds, 1800. Print.

Felsenstein, Frank, and Michael Scrivener, eds. *Incle and Yarico and The Incas: Two Plays by John Thelwall*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP., 2006. Print.

Fuglsang, Martin, and Bent Meier Sorensen, eds. *Deleuze and the Social*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP., 2006. Print.

Gordon, Scott Paul. "Reading patriot art: James Barry's *King Lear*."*Eighteenth Century Studies* 36 (2003): 491-509. Print.

Hayward, Major Edward P. W. "Planning Beyond Tactics: Towards a Military Application of the Philosophy of Design in the Formulation of Strategy" Diss. School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, 2008. Kansas: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012. Print.

Holcroft, Thomas. *The Deserted Daughter; A Comedy ... Covent Garden*. 1795. T.a.73., Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C. Print.

Hopkins, William. "Diary" (1798). Folger W.a. 104 (8), Folger W.a. 104 (10), Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C. Print.

Inchbald, Elizabeth. *The Wise Man of the East, A Play, In Five Acts, Performed at The Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden, From the German of Kotzebue*. 2nded. London: G. J. and J. Robinson, 1799. Print.

Landers, John. *Death and the Metropolis: Studies in the Demographic History of London, 1670-1830*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP., 1993. Print.

Lawrence, James Henry. *Dramatic Emancipation, or Strictures on the State of the Theatres*. London: Printed for Henry Colburn, 1813. Print.

Lester, Alan. "Personifying Colonial Governance: George Arthur and the Transition from Humanitarian to Development Discourse." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102 (2012): 1468-88. Print.

Massai, Sonia. "Nahum Tate's Revision of Shakespeare's *King Lears*.'*SEL* 40 (2000): 435-50. Print.

Moody, Jane P. "Suicide and translation in the dramaturgy of Elizabeth Inchbald and Anne Plumptre. " *Women in British Romantic Theatre: Drama, Performance, and Society 1790-1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP., 2000. Print.

Pascoe, Judith. *The Sarah Siddons Audio Files: Romanticism and the Lost Voice*. Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan P., 2011. Print.

Roach, Joseph. *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*. New York: Columbia UP., 1996. Print.

Robertson, Ben P. *Elizabeth Inchbald's Reputation: A Publishing and Reception History*. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013. Print.

Thomas, Tandy Chalmers, and Hope Jensen Schau Price. "When Differences Unite: Resource Dependence in Heterogeneous Consumption Communities." *Journal of Consumer Research* 39 (2013): 1010-1033. Print.

Warren, Edward. "General Average of Kean's Performances." 8 Jul. 1815. Folger Art Vol. b 8, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C. Print.

-----. "Statement of the Number of Persons [who] Paid at the Theatre this Season." Aug. 1814. Folger Ms. W.a. 12, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C. Print.

Wilson, Kathleen. *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.

-----. "Pacific Modernity: Theatre, Englishness, and the Arts of Discovery, 1760-1800." *The Age of Cultural Revolutions: Britain and France, 1750-1820*. Eds. Colin Jones and Dror Wahrman. 62-93. Berkeley: U. of California P., 2002. Print.

-----. "Rowe's Fair Penitent as Global History: Or, a Diversionary Voyage to New South Wales."*Eighteenth-Century Studies* 41 (2008): 231-251. Print.

"The Wise Man of the East." *The Dramatic Censor; or, Weekly Theatrical Report*, 11 Jan. 1800: 53. Print.

Worrall, David. *Harlequin Empire: Race, Ethnicity and the Drama of the Popular Enlightenment*. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007. Print.