

Ethical Challenges in Adaptation: Gothic *Eurico* from Novel to Performance

Graça P. Corrêa

Abstract

Although ephemeral, theatre is a site of deep ethical questioning, a place where choices are made by working with our individual emotions and social existences. This chapter reflects upon the ethical-political challenges that were faced during a collective dramaturgical process of “adapting” a literary narrative—Alexandre Herculano’s novel *Eurico o Presbítero* (*Eurico the monk*, 1844)—into a theatre performance, staged at Lisbon’s National Theatre (TNDMII) in 2012. A major challenge of this devised theatre process consisted in “translating” the ethical drive of the nineteenth-century Gothic novel for a contemporary audience in the context of Portugal’s ongoing debt crisis within the EU.

In 1873, Portuguese historian, playwright, novelist, and political polemicist Alexandre Herculano (1810-1877) wrote, “Freedom is not so much an end as a means; we seek freedom in order to become happy” (*Opúsculos* 24, my translation). In this commentary, as in most of his writings, Herculano draws a close association between personal agency and a reinvention of social practices, between political improvement and subjective change. The pursuit of freedom is an ethical exercise that must be first sought individually, as the sound foundation of a collective politics with a soul.

Contemporary critics have similarly underscored a close association between individual ethics and political practice, among them Martha Nussbaum, who asserts that what animates present-day ethical theory is “The sense that we are social beings puzzling out, in times of great moral difficulty, what might be, for us, the best way to live” (101). Drawing on the ethical concepts of seventeenth-century philosopher Baruch Spinoza, Brian Massumi claims that ethics is the philosophy of the becoming-active (*Parables* 32), an embodied praxis that arises from being deeply immersed in the larger field of life, or from experiencing an intense belonging to a world that comprises human and non-human otherness. Ethics is therefore “a political knowledge-practice that takes an inclusive, nonjudgmental approach to tending belonging-together in an

intense, affectively engaged way" (255). Encompassing political perspectives and practices, ethics involves affects and reciprocity among living beings immersed in actual situations, and is therefore inherently concerned with the connections and tensions between personal and collective agency.

Due to the interplay between individual creation and collective work, between personal ethical choices (by authors, actors, directors, designers, producers and managers), and political effects (upon the performance collective, audience members, and the wider societal context), theatre is, perhaps more than any other art, a key and fertile terrain for ethical questioning. Accordingly, this chapter reflects upon the ethical-political challenges of collaboratively adapting Herculano's canonical novel *Eurico o Presbítero* (*Eurico the monk*) as a theatre performance, *A Paixão Segundo Eurico* (*Passion According to Eurico*). Commissioned by and presented at the National Theatre in Lisbon (Teatro Nacional D. Maria II) from 1 December 2011 until 29 January 2012, the adaptation was collectively created by a group of six artists: Cristina Carvalhal (actress/director), Sara Carinhas (actress/director), Inês Rosado (actress), Graça P. Corrêa (dramaturg/director), Pedro Marques (film director/photographer), and Ana Vaz (costume and set designer). Mostly inspired by Herculano's novel, the performance script ensued from the interweaving of multimedia texts brought about by our distinct artistic itineraries and practices. Consequently, a first major ethical challenge of the adaptation was that of the collaborative process itself, or the ways affective interactions with otherness, and operating principles in teamwork, eventually led to particular outcomes in performance.

The ethical and political questions of puzzling out "what might be, for us, *the best way to live*" animate the source novel of *Eurico* (Nussbaum 101; my emphasis), upon which the theatre production was based. Accordingly, this chapter assesses two additional ethical issues arising from our devised theatre process: a dramaturgical consideration of the ethical drive and political dimension of the nineteenth-century Gothic novel; and the challenges of translating the ethical-political traits of the source material for a contemporary audience within the present historical moment, i.e., of relating Herculano's nostalgic idea of a distinctive communal *Portugueseness* to Portugal's current cultural crisis within the European Union.

My goal is to reflect upon how the collective practice of adapting a novel to a theatre performance entails an exercise in ethics. Although this collaborative process involves an inclusive nonjudgmental approach of tending to one another and to the group in an affectively engaged way, it risks sacrificing—especially if it is consensus-driven—valuable dramaturgical possibilities towards production, in terms of ethical-political correspondences between the source text and the contemporary moment.

Ethical Challenges of the Source Material

Herculano situates his Gothic-historical novel *Eurico* (1844) at the start of the Arab invasion of the Iberian Peninsula and concurrent decline of the Visigothic rule, in the eighth century CE. In this historical context, the author unfolds the tale of Eurico, a noble Goth warrior who in his youth took a vow of celibacy because of his frustrated love for the Goth King's daughter, Hermengarda, but who years later abandons his life of monastic confinement to become the Black Knight, an avenger and sole protector of his homeland in a time of decadence and in a country drained of its physical strength and spiritual values. When, close to the end of the novel, Eurico reencounters Hermengarda and both confess their love, it is too late for the consummation of their union, for the Arabs have already occupied the southern lands of the peninsula. Accepting this defeat, Eurico slays the corrupt Goth rulers who have betrayed their own nation for gold and luxuries, and finally chooses an honorable death at the hands of the Arab warriors.

At the outset of the adaptation process, six months before the production's opening, each one of the collaborating artists read and made notes on the book, and subsequently exchanged those impressions in a first meeting. From the very start, Herculano's novel engaged us in a lively and clear-cut deliberation about ethical issues, perhaps because the author works his plot through various sets of symbolic oppositions, namely: man/woman; heaven/hell; Muslim Arabs/Christian Goths; monk/knight; duty/desire; individual/collectivity. As Spinoza notes, although binary categories such as good and evil "indicate nothing positive in things, considered in themselves," they remain useful for ethical debate since they "are modes of thinking, or notions we form because we compare things to one another," and through which we may conceive the things' power of acting to be increased or diminished (199-200).

Some of us, myself included, sought a contemporization of the novel's political drive, especially regarding the wars between East and West, the resistance of small groups to despotic expansion, and the depiction of plutocracies ruled by corrupt politicians; others, however, wanted to offer a more literal version of the novel, focused on Eurico's passions and private ordeals with a minimum of overt political commentary.

Two months later we started working on the adaptation, meeting eight to ten hours a day for a whole week, in order to analyze the novel dramaturgically. To facilitate our collective enterprise, we drew up a table concerning the various aspects of our research across the twenty-one chapters of the novel, namely: recurrent verbs, images, and sounds; phrases to be recalled and/or spoken in performance; intertexts and secondary sources; physical actions; material and

imaginary spaces; list of objects and potential props; evocation of contemporary political contexts; and additional miscellaneous notes. A chart with these categories was drawn in a large piece of craft paper, so that we could all contribute thoughts for each column, by jotting them down.

As an example of what ensued from such brainstorming sessions, in the column of contemporary issues evoked by the novel we ended up listing: Silvio Berlusconi, plastic surgery, increasing alienation between the people and their government representatives, corruption of judicial powers, remote war by drones, religious fundamentalism, and phone tapping. In the columns concerning space and objects, we registered: prison, emptiness, night, ruins, wind, river, cave, bridge, tombs, broken clocks, daggers, and writing paper. In secondary sources we evoked multiple works: films such as Akira Kurosawa's *Ran* (1985) and François Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451* (1966); Donizetti's opera *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835, based on Walter Scott's novel); poems by Fernando Pessoa; and Herculano's own writings on the history of Portugal.

As indicated by these lists, the source material clearly evoked many present-day ethical dilemmas concerning "the way we live" and "what we might do about it," as Nussbaum suggests.

Ethical Challenges of the Gothic Mode

As I have argued elsewhere, the process of adapting a text for performance involves, additionally to understanding its cultural and linguistic language, the ability to inhabit the space of its landscape in conceptual (theoretic, speculative) and sensory (embodied, phenomenological) terms (Corrêa, "Ecocritical Translation" 286). It is our task as translators, adaptors and dramaturgs to understand the source text's own mode, so as to supplement it and produce what Walter Benjamin in "The Task of the Translator" designates an "echo of the original" (79, 76). Because at the time of the adaptation of *Eurico* I was coincidentally involved in a research project on the transdisciplinary Gothic sensory landscapes across different arts and media (theatre, film, architecture, painting and literature), I became particularly alert to the Gothic-Romantic mode of Herculano's novel.

Portuguese critic Vitorino Nemésio states that due to its hyperbolic writing style and densely packed plot, and because it displays fantastic heroes and unfolds tales of unquenchable love set in the Dark Ages, Herculano's novel may be deemed Gothic-Romantic (372). Beyond such stylistic and thematic characteristics, I suggest that what is noteworthy in Herculano's work is its

negotiation of political and cultural anxieties through a Gothic ethics of emotional excess, as I elucidate below.

As Herculano discloses in his preface, *Eurico* was inspired by Walter Scott's historical novels, with a similar prophetic urgency to fictionalise the medieval past for political purposes. In a letter to a friend he states,

I wish we linked modern freedom to ancient freedom. From what I sense, by studying the institutions of our dark and middle ages we can discover the real principles of freedom that we believe have been found only in our times, and I see there stronger ethical guarantees than those we think we enjoy. ("Carta a F" 26, my translation)

Herculano wrote a fictional history of the Dark Ages to expose the governmental corruption and the loss of autonomy for the Portuguese nation in his own time, when, following the Napoleonic invasions of the Iberian Peninsula, Portugal resorted to the help of the British army to defend its territory, and thereafter considerably lost much of its sovereignty.

Politically opposed to a patriotism based on the glorification of Portugal's colonial empire, Herculano proposed a return to pre-modern notions of honour, courage, love, and ethics. Thus, in his chivalrous Gothic tale, the invasion by the Arabs functions as a duplicate colonization, since they are the new barbarians who invade the Gothic kingdoms at a time of political and moral decadence, replacing the barbarian Goths who three centuries before had attacked a comparably corrupt and debauched Rome, causing the collapse of its western empire. In typically Gothic-Romantic fashion, Herculano envisages a cyclical pattern of events, contradicting the linear sense of history as a forward movement in terms of human development. Moreover, the novel's antagonists are not the Arabs but rather the few Goth leaders/politicians who betray their community for personal wealth and power. Perhaps due to my research of the Gothic-Romantic aesthetic mode, I was particularly aware of the potentialities in theatre adaptation of using the medieval past as an ethical-political tool to discuss the present.

Ethics' Correlation to Emotions and Affects

Fred Botting argues that the Gothic mode is "about excess: excessive imagery, excessive rhetoric, excessive narrative, and excessive affect" (193-4), and such excess abounds in *Eurico*. The novel displays a heightened emotionalism that may be viewed as oppositional to the neo-Cartesian valorization of rational

and measurable truths. In the Western world, and especially since the seventeenth century, emotion has been pitted against reason and associated with mistaken cognition, bestiality, and the feminine. The Cartesian account considers that emotions are caused by “animal spirits” that disturb particular parts of the body, and thus engender perceptions, sensations, and desires that lead to obscure reasoning (Schmitter). By contrast, the Gothic-Romantic mode activates emotional excess to counter the normative valorization of rational cognition, and often utilises sensory overload for oppositional political purposes.

In the writings on ethics by Immanuel Kant, emotions are irrelevant or harmful to moral reasoning, and it is human beings’ capacity for rational thought what makes them responsible for their beliefs and allows them to make moral decisions upon which they act (Baron 204, 221). Contrasting with such Cartesian mind-body dualism, in *Ethics* Spinoza proposes that affects are experienced by both body and mind and are central to all ethical processes and outcomes: “By affect [*affectum*] I understand affections [*affectiones*] of the body by which the body’s power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas [mental conceptions] of these affections” (154). Affects are active affections/emotions that produce alterations and transformations in one’s own mind-body, and that have the potential of increasing or diminishing the power of activity of the other’s mind-body.

Drawing on Spinoza’s embodied notion of affects, Massumi elucidates that affects are unbounded and unfixed sensory intensities that induce action and liveliness. For Massumi, ethics works at the level of affect; it works in the *in-between-ness* of affecting and being affected:

Ethics in this sense is completely situational. It’s completely pragmatic. And it happens in between people, in the social gaps. There is no intrinsic good or evil. The ethical value of an action is what it brings out in the situation, for its transformation, how it breaks sociality open. Ethics is about how we inhabit uncertainty, together. It’s not about judging right or wrong. (*Parables* 218)

Affects interconnect us with otherness, and “with intensified affect comes a stronger sense of embeddedness in a larger field of life—a heightened sense of belonging, with other people and to other places” (214). To bring up the driving power of affects in a discussion on the ethical challenges of adapting a Gothic novel for the stage is particularly relevant at this point, considering that not only does the mode of Herculano’s text invite such an emotional approach, but theatre performance itself may be understood as a network of affects and affections. As we advanced into the collective adaptation of *Eurico*, our working

interactions through affects influenced the way in which the production negotiated and expressed those ethical issues.

The Action of Affects in Devised Theatre

By the end of the first week of collective dramaturgical work, during which we analyzed and charted the twenty-one chapters of the novel, we arrived at a structure that divides the dramatic action into thirteen episodes. Accordingly, an introductory episode would be dedicated to depicting the decadent and corrupt condition of the Gothic nation in 749 CE, in order to establish the novel's social, historical, and political context. In the following two episodes we intended to portray Eurico's dual character: as a dweller of the dark side, a melancholic poet-monk who wanders through cemeteries at night, musing on death-bound humanity; and as a lover of sunlit peaceful nature and a bold warrior, who nurses a passion for Hermengarda, and is devoted to the protection of his nation. A turning point in the play would be signaled by Eurico's nightmarish vision of a bloodstained clash between Goths and Arabs. Other episodes included Eurico's victorious involvement in battle as the heroic Black Knight, his rescue of and encounter with Hermengarda, her forced departure, and his final suicide-like death.

Although this initial structure seemed logical and faithful to Herculano's literary work, we sought to adapt the novel to the stage in a postdramatic style, and thus felt the need of expressing it predominantly through body movement, and aural and visual effects. The concept of sensory landscapes became particularly useful, since it allowed us to explore the novel's mode of emotional excess through a series of improvisations. Prominent landscapes of emotional and sensory excess in the novel include Eurico's permanent insomniac condition, his fascination with rugged wilderness and isolated locations (cemeteries, cliffs, tall bridges over torrential rivers, monastic cells, castle towers, and caves), his prophetic (seemingly post-nuclear) visions of a global war between East and West, his intense conflating of sex with death, and his repressed passion for Hermengarda, who evidently incarnates the eternal feminine or love sublime.

Prior to the two weeks scheduled for improvisational work, we made lists of objects, props, and costumes that could be used to explore, physically and visually, the novel's landscapes. Accordingly, to the left of the rehearsal space we filled two sizeable tables with rocks, dried branches, rosaries, umbrellas, swords, breast-plates, helmets, linen, craft paper, suitcases, envelopes, typewriters, money bills, telephones, lamps, candles, rose petals, red lipsticks, red

paint, high-heeled shoes, tin bowls, sand, white flour, water, and electric fans. Before each improvisational session we would discuss the concept and ideograph for the landscape in question, recalling some of the verbs, images, and phrases registered in the initial dramaturgical chart. As the production's dramaturg and the person principally responsible for a final written version of the performance script, which was to be published, I decided to insert phrases and excerpts of dialogue from Herculano's novel on pieces of paper scattered across the stage. This encouraged the actresses to discover novel and unusual ways of using verbal texts during their improvised actions.

After almost an hour of daily physical warm-up, the performers would spontaneously pick objects and initiate actions, the idea being to act out a specific landscape with their bodies. All of these improvisations were recorded by the film director, and annotated by myself through drawings and verbal impressions. Often we would both intervene in the improvisations by changing the light, producing sounds, moving objects around, or even introducing new ones into the acting space. In the course of one such action, when, during an improvisation on the landscape of war, I threw a large roll of craft paper onto the stage, we arrived at the raw images of war that were later shown in performance: wearing medieval-like armors, the three actresses battled against the unrolling paper, wrapped its folds around their bodies, screaming and smearing it with red paint, finally producing a striking tableau of a battlefield covered with severed corpses and body parts.

According to Massumi, "when you affect something, you are at the same time opening yourself up to being affected in turn" ("Navigating Movements" 212), but in order to be available to the possibilities of affect, or to increase their range and power, one has to live intensely in each and every moment. As Massumi relates,

There is a phrase of [Gilles] Deleuze that I like very much where he says that what we need is to be able to find a way to "believe in the world" again. It's not at all a theological statement—or an anti-theological statement for that matter. It's an ethical statement. What it is saying is that we have to live our immersion in the world, really experience our belonging to this world, which is the same thing as our belonging to each other, and live that so intensely together that there is no room to doubt the reality of it. The idea is that lived intensity is self-affirming. (242)

Ethical acts depend on our own affective loading, on how intensely we are living and moving, on our sense of belonging to and being in the world. Throughout the process of improvisations, we tested and fully enjoyed our capacity for



FIGURE 5.1 *Landscape of war (production): Inês Rosado, Sara Carinhas, and Cristina Carvalhal.*
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FIGURE 5.2 *Improvisation (rehearsal): Sara Carinhas, Cristina Carvalhal, and Inês Rosado.*
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affecting and being affected within the ethically-tending project of coming-together that constitutes collective devised theatre.

Ethical Challenges in Reaching Dramaturgical Consensus

Following the two-week period of improvisations we felt the need to return to some dramaturgical table work, in order to reexamine the narrative parts and dialogues that we wanted to retain from the novel, and arrive at a first draft of the performance script for rehearsal. Later, and throughout the six-weeks rehearsal process, I refined the script, adding and cutting fragments. In the final draft for publication (which was available in print two weeks after the opening night), I introduced dramaturgical explanations of the episodes and critical notes referring to Herculano's novel, and added stage directions and selected descriptions of the performed physical actions in the left margin of the dialogue.

In ethical terms, the composition and completion of a performance script proved to be the most critical phase of our collective adaptation process. This is perhaps not surprising, given the need to explicitly select which passages of the novel and which improvised actions to include. Furthermore, in so doing, we were supposed to justify our aesthetic and dramaturgical choices.

Because we constituted a collective of specialised practitioners in different artistic areas, we could have decided at this stage of the process to attribute to individuals or smaller groups particular responsibilities according to areas of expertise. However, the majority of us had already agreed that, in all artistic matters, we would make decisions collectively. This caused yet another ethical issue, since some members were not knowledgeable in matters of dramaturgy, while others were not especially informed in visual terms to evaluate aesthetically elements of set, costume, and lighting design. If ethics is about how we inhabit uncertainty together, as Massumi suggests, this consensus-based devised theatre approach was most certainly an exercise in ethics.

Whenever we interact with the otherness of a text, we bring with us varying degrees of affective energy, within a range from intense to weak, and possibly including "anti-affective affects" (Massumi, "Navigating Movements" 236), which inhibit a dynamic reading experience. A few of us were personally struck by the novel's identifying love as the supreme goal, as the underpinning, both individually and collectively, of a politics with a soul, of a new and free society built upon a spiritual-material symbiosis.

During the process of adapting *Eurico*, the collective often discussed the relevance of Herculano's novel to the current political, economic, social, and

moral situation in Portugal. Because Herculano had written a medieval tale to discuss the governmental corruption and the loss of Portuguese national autonomy in his own time, some of us wanted to express contemporary echoes of such ethical-political intentions in our theatre production. In Herculano's *Eurico*, we find a eulogy of the *real* nation, composed by the actual inhabitants of villages, towns, and cities, as opposed to the *nominal* nation invented by politicians, bureaucrats, financiers, and the media. In such a political context, the character of Eurico personifies the love of justice, a longing for the true sense of nation as community, and the ethical defense of the public good.

As a result, we ended up including in the performance an episode entitled "The State of the Nation," which was meant not only to provide the social and political context of Eurico's story, but also to present the moral dissipation of the Visigoths, with an allusion to our present-day Portuguese plutocracy. It consisted of excerpts from different parts of the novel, describing the indignation of Eurico before a dying and morally corrupt nation, and his nostalgia for the virtuous and combative past of his ancestors:

This horrifying spectacle of a nation-corpse.

A debased generation steps over the remnants of the brave: humans without belief, blasphemers or hypocrites, succeed to the heroes who gave the human race its moral greatness.

Long ago, the people's princes were the captains of the armies: the sword of the kings was the first to be dyed with the blood of enemies.

Long ago, the judge was the father of the oppressed, the court was shelter to the innocent, and justice stood as the nerve of the Gothic Empire.

Today, in the government palace, we can only hear the loud rumble of parties.

Today, rapacity has taken the place of equality: the judge has sold his consciousness in the market of the powerful.

Oppressed by all kinds of violence, the people no longer believe in their homeland; having become indifferent and cowardly, they sacrifice their collective existence to the quiet domestic peace of their individual homes.

In whose heart persists virtue and willpower in this land?

Freedom has become a word for lie.

And my soul looks on this vain and vile generation, which believes itself to be big and strong, because without any dread it spills the blood of its sisters and brothers in civil disputes.

Eurico is my name. (*Eurico*, my translation)



FIGURE 5.3 *Dark Knight Eurico* (rehearsal): Sara Carinhas. © PEDRO FILIPE MARQUES.

Contrasting with the remaining episodes of the performance, this scene was very simply staged, with an actress sitting alone on a chair, holding a lamp, and slowly speaking the words directly to the audience.

In this particular episode, we manifestly refrained from making more persuasive and politically explicit dramaturgical choices. For that purpose, we could have used suggestive physical actions from the improvisational sessions or even project filmed excerpts that had been recorded during that

period. Apparently, however, not everyone was equally sensitive to the ethical challenges of the Gothic mode and the ensuing implication of circularity in human history. Further, and perhaps due to the institutional context of the National Theatre, which stands as the hallmark of a government-subsidised theatre, we eventually lacked the combined audacity to denounce present-day political corruption, and to assert the contemporary need for alternative modes of democratic rule, through our performance of *Eurico*. This was evidently due to our own individual differences in terms of political awareness, and to the varying ways we dynamically affected, or let ourselves be affected by, the source material.

Ethical Play with Gender

A major ethical challenge of our adaptation arose from its play with gender, i.e., from translating an extensive narrative depicting the deeds of numerous male characters (including the protagonist Eurico) into a performance by three actresses. We often discussed the need (or not) to represent Eurico by having an actress cross-dress, and costumes became a matter for heated debate, especially those of the melancholy Monk, and the ostensible super-hero, Dark Knight. Remarkably, these ethical-aesthetic problems were negotiated and resolved throughout the improvisational sessions: by means of affecting and being affected through mind-body interaction, the three performers managed to express and evoke Eurico in non-representational ways, namely as narrators and as compound title-characters. In performance, although costumes and properties included religious and martial clothing, they were not removed or replaced in relation to character, but instead to denote a change of sensory and thematic landscape.

Once we abandoned a clear signifier of the man, the representation of the woman became similarly problematic. In Herculano's tale, Hermengarda figures as the archetype of the feminine gender, standing for the epitome of purity, sensitivity, beauty, for the union between flesh and spirit, heaven and earth. The Gothic-Romantic mode to which Herculano's novel belongs is noted for a heightened and almost mystical heterosexual eroticism, since it usually depicts female and male characters through extreme psychosexual differences (fragile/strong, passive/active, fair/dark, delicate/coarse, ethereal/earthy, etc.). Although we decided to keep such aesthetic attributes and emotional characteristics to signal the presence of Hermengarda, we were also aware that they are constructs of a patriarchal culture, which ascribe particular gender

qualities to maleness and femaleness. Therefore we construed Hermengarda as a woman-object, the projection of Eurico's (or Herculano's) masculine imaginary, emblematised through the use of typically feminine objects such as lipsticks, high-heels, strings of beads, flowers, and love letters, and the display of characteristically feminine emotional expressions.

This strategy evokes the path of mimicry advocated by feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray, whereby a woman plays with mimesis, deliberately submitting to ideas of what it is "to be a woman" that are elaborated by a masculine logic, in order to make visible what was supposed to be invisible, and thus "convert a form of subordination into an affirmation" (76). By destabilizing the conventional mimetic representation of gender, our approach sought to produce ethical thinking through performance: not only towards an awareness of the ways women have been culturally, socially, and politically represented, but also of the corresponding relations between and among the sexes.

Final Thoughts

Although the collective had decided to avoid overt statements equating the political circumstances of the fictional Eurico with our own, the parallels between the two became clear for many spectators, as we later perceived in two post-show talks with the audience. One critic, however, considered that "the adaptation took itself too seriously, giving way to a slightly disconnected and occasionally incomprehensible performance, and in the process generating a gap between stage and audience when duty demands a bridge" (Monteiro). Yet another critic mentioned how the performance evoked the myth of "the cyclic repetition and fall of empires and civilizations, epochs of anomaly marked by an absence of values, and their replacement with fraudulent practices" (Simões). In both production and reception processes, theatre is political in an ethical sense by way of interacting—through *affects*—with individual consciousness. Thus, although we had refused to show obvious political correspondences between the novel's circumstances and our own times, ethical resonances of the source material were nonetheless salient.

Regarding the performance's ethical outcomes, it is not possible to judge between good or bad, between right and wrong. As Massumi states, "Basically the 'good' is affectively defined as what brings maximum potential and connection to the situation. It is defined in terms of becoming" ("Navigating Movements" 218). Although a consensus-based devised theatre process may overlook individual differences in affect and thereby prevent dramaturgical choices that

might have enriched the performance product, in theatre work we must often surrender our personal agency and ideology to one centered on social practice. Because it is both personal and collective in process and production, theatre is a key site of ethical exercise and questioning, for it implies a shared perception of potentials and impossibilities in evolving circumstances, and also the implementation of personal and interpersonal choices. That is why, as Nussbaum suggests, ethics is of practical importance especially in the arts, where we work with our social existences, personal emotions, and the totality of our connections (102).

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