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"Nothing New Under The Sun " The Use of Projections in Theatre

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Abstract of Thesis

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Projections, a popular form of spectacle seen in many live theatrical productions today, have unfortunately become a much over used mode of spectacle. Once a specialized form of avant-garde expression, projections can now be found at rock concerts, on small experimental stages, enormous stadiums, and large theatrical production houses. Although critics and theatre historians claim that this is the result of a generation of entertainers and designers weaned on television and film, who wish to reach a more technical savvy audience, the actual use of some form of projected imagery has been traced back as far as the Paleozoic era. In this thesis, I provide a history of the techniques used to marry the spectacular use of the moving image with live performance in order to enhance storytelling. By honoring ancestral techniques, theatre practitioners interested in creating a new language for the stage, move far beyond the use of projections as spectacle, in order to actively engage the audience.   By studying the works of composer John Moran, the performer Robert Lepage, the director Ingmar Bergman, and my own work as a filmmaker and playwright, I hope to illustrate the use of projections as a tool to broaden the language of modern stage works, as they incorporate the moving image to create a homogenous and thought provoking art form.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION:
THE EVOLUTION OF PROJECTION TECHNOLOGY

In 1945, Tennessee Williams added a prologue to the published text of his new play, *The Glass Menagerie,* in which he illustrated the use of a special kind of stagecraft. Williams, who was eager to bring modernity to what he called "an exhausted theatre of realistic conventions," explained that a "screen device" he had hoped to use in the production was never employed in the Broadway staging. "There is *only one important difference between the original and the acting version of the play*, and that is the omission of the latter of the device that I tentatively included in my original script. This device was the use of a screen on which were projected magic lantern slides bearing images of titles" (Williams 6). Williams went on to say that he was only sharing this vision with *certain readers*, because they might find it interesting. "When a play employs unconventional techniques," he explained "it is not, or certainly shouldn't be, trying to escape its responsibility of dealing with reality, but … should be attempting, to find a closer approach, a more penetrating and vivid expression of things as they are... They have to do with a conception of a new, plastic theatre" (Williams, 7). Were Williams to attend the theatre today, he might be surprised to find that the "unconventional technique" he was so eager to apply, has become a conventional device. Lost is the significance of the origin of metatheatrical forms of theatre, beginning in the early part of the 20th century, when projections were used to produce cutting edge performances.

Lori Leather Single, notes in her paper that Erwin Piscator the German expressionist director who worked with Bertolt Brecht to create Epic theatre, and who "founded The Dramatic

Workshop of The New School of Social Research in New York, where Williams studied as a young man," was a master of the form. "In one Berlin production, Piscator used four projection screens," and incorporated front, back, and overlapping projections to create a brilliant montage of imagery for the stage. (Single 1) Piscator's genius would influence many generations of experimental artists, including the Czech company Lanterna Magika, New York's The Wooster Group, and filmmaker and theatre director Ingmar Bergman. These practitioners used the application of visual reference to produce a detachment from mainstream story telling, by focusing the narrative through a post-dramatic lens. This practice evolved in the later part of the twentieth century when artists like John Moran and Robert Lepage became interested in exploring film techniques and their theories in order to create intellectual connections between the images on the stage and the spectators in the audience. Yet the quest to execute experimental or avant-garde expressions by using projection technologies, began to unravel on the eve of the 21st century. With shrinking budgets and advanced digital platforms, projections became to spectacle of choice, and by 2010, they could be found in theatrical productions from black box theatres on New York City's lower east side, to large Broadway production houses.

An article in *The New York Times* addressed this phenomenon when Anita Gates observed that: "going to the theatre these days is a lot like going to the movies" (Times 2010). Her article focused on the sudden rise of productions that employed cinematic spectacle. An interview with Wendell Harrington, a lecturer teaching projection techniques at Yale claimed that the this sudden interest in projection technology came from the young theatre practitioner who "has grown up watching TV, so cinema is their language. Motion is their language. Of course they are going to try to express themselves that way" (Times). What Mr. Harrington

failed to note however, was that television and film are new forms of entertainment, and live performance has incorporated some form of projections since storytelling began.

In the following chapters, I will examine the history of projections as a storytelling device, and the organic relationships, which successfully linked that form to an experimental modern narrative. By investigating the melding of these dichotomous languages - one which tells story through image, the other through dialogue - I trace the rise of a hybrid art form, that attracted artists who were, and are today, interested in breaking barriers, while creating a new language incorporating old forms. I will argue that the use of projections in theatre, when applied to enhance and expand cinematic territory, can develop an art form that speaks for itself. This in turn allows a new language to arise; one, which not only captivates its audience, but intellectually engages them as well. It all begins with the wonder and magic of the moving image, and the desire to capture and redefine that image in order to create something modern, organic and whole.

LANTERN CULTURE

Early Projection Theory

Before language was ever spoken, when grunts and gestures were the primary form of communication, primitive man devised representations, which told stories about his existence and that of the living world that moved around him. According to film historian Paul Burns, the wish to capture those images and translate them into story-telling form, can be traced back to the was artistic representation of motion in early cave paintings. Burns theorizes that man watched the shadows of animals passing on the walls of their habitats through cracks in the cave, which created a pinhole effect, and produced the first known camera obscura which projected moving images inside primitive dwellings.   He, and other historians, identifies this as paleo-camera theory.[1] As evidence, Burns points to a painting of a wild boar, discovered inside a cave in Alta Mira, Spain. The work depicts the animal in flight with what *appears to be* two heads and six legs: "The artist doesn't understand why he is seeing more legs than the animal at rest has. Understanding movement is the beginning of recording movement" (Burns 1). This early attempt to capture motion provides us with a rudimentary understanding of man's fascination with changing perspective.

Filmmaker and playwright Robert Lepage agrees that the desire "to create figures larger than life" was investigated very early on in a desire to capture and manipulate motion. Primitive storytellers, instinctively connecting image and narrative, would use the flames of a bonfire to illuminate a granite wall and use their shadows to enhance the performance: "That's how theatre was born, that is how film was born" (Lepage). Lepage, who implements shadows to support his

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[1] See Matt Gatton, http://www.paleo-camera.com/

live performances, expands on the notion of shadow puppet plays, an early and successful attempt of theatre and cinema working in tandem with one another.

Shadow Puppetry was developed by nomadic communities sometime around 600 BC, and spread throughout Asia.   The characters in the plays were developed from folk stories, and the work accompanied by song, or at times, a full musical score. The fascinating aspect of this was the erection of a portable, light- weight screen made from mulberry or rice paper. By using fire, and later gas lanterns, puppets were held up behind the screen in order to create an illusion, through close-ups, medium shots and wide shots, which can be looked at today as the mechanics of film editing.   This early attempt to manipulate light and shadow, with the use of a screen apparatus, illustrates a desire to support narrative using a visual language much like that of cinema. Yet it wasn't until four centuries later, with the creation of a primitive contraption, a forerunner of the modern slide projector, called the magic lantern, that projected entertainment would leave the close knit communities that it had been presented to, and move into modern entertainment territory with the introduction of an early ancestor to the horror film, known as Phantasmagoria.

Phantasmagoria and the Rise of Mainstream Entertainment:

From the moment of its birth sometime in the 15th century, the magic lantern was destined to entertain. Its greatest achievement was the production of spectacular scare shows called Phantasmagoria, which seized the imaginations of audiences, seduced poets, novelists and composers, seeping into the imagination of artists from every genre.

The images for these productions were produced with a projector called the Lanterna Magica, and later the Magic Lantern.   Considered an exciting frontier in projection technology, the lantern's mechanisms "consisted of an illuminating power" (Chadwick 12), hand painted

pictures, two lenses, and a light sealed chamber.   In *The Magic Lantern Manual* written in 1878,

William Isaac Chadwick, a "fellow" lanternist, relates with relish the constant modifications

performed throughout four centuries in order to achieve greater clarity of image. Magic lantern

shows were the first time that moving art met with commerce, and Chadwick presses that point

by encouraging young men to seek their fortune in this exciting new field, for "a boundless

ocean is open to those willing to embark in the buoyant ship Industry, navigated by Captain

Perseverance, and his honoured crew, with Fortune at the helm" (Chadwick 11).

The first Phantasmagoria shows were presented solely with images that appeared to

move, and which were primarily tied to the supernatural: The conjuring of ghosts and demons.

Although the device was primarily used to perform parlor tricks by "mediums" that conducted

séances at the beginning of the 18th century, it was the Belgian inventor Etienne-Gaspard

Robertson who turned the format into a phenomenon.   By exploiting the fragile stability of post

revolutionary France, Robertson, in 1797, developed fantastical scare shows focusing on the

occult. He did this simply by taking the lantern off a fixed pedestal and placing it on wheels in

order to move the contraption back and forth.   In doing this, Robertson was able to manipulate

the display of ghostly images so they could zoom forward at the audience and quickly recede on

an opaque screen made up of fog and smoke.   The unstable screen allowed the images to appear

as if floating in mid-air, "calling up...the ghosts of such heroes and celebrities of revolutionary

France as Voltaire, Rousseau, Marat, and Lavoisier" (Altick 217).

Phantasmagoria developed out of a response to the era in which it was born. The show

provided a psychological connection to a population wrestling with catastrophic change. With

the Industrial Revolution in full swing, and political unrest spreading across Europe, motion, and

an urgent sense of propulsion pulsated in the air and captured the imagination of a new

generation of spectators. By wrestling with the grim realities of the past two decades, Robertson

transformed the use of spectacle to reach an audience's deepest fears and desires, resulting in an

entertainment milestone.

Richard Altick, whose book *Shows of London* examines the early theatre industry in

England, quotes spectator, Sir David Brewster, whose description of one performance gives a

perfect illustration of how the projections worked to create a form of chilling entertainment for

audiences, akin to a hybrid of cinema and stage:

> The small theatre of exhibition was lighted only by one hanging
> lamp, the flame of which was drawn up into an opaque chimney or
> shade when the performance began. In this 'darkness visible' the
> curtain rose and displayed a cave with skeletons and other terrific
> figures in relief upon its walls. The flickering light was then drawn
> up beneath its shroud, and the spectators in total darkness found
> themselves in the middle of thunder and lightning...
> The thunder and lightning were followed by the figures of ghosts,
> skeletons, and known individuals, whose eyes and mouth were
> made to move by the shifting of combined sliders (Altick 217).

Brewster goes on to describe figures as large as life bearing down on the audience, and

then sinking into the floor. The spectators, he writes, "were not only surprised, but agitated, and

many of them were of the opinion that they could have touched the figures" (217).   These shows

were clearly revolutionary, and seized the imagination of a restless population hungry for

something new.

Filmmaker Jo Andres, whose has worked with the Wooster Group, and who own work

reexamines the use of lantern technique in order to create a third dimension for staged

performances incorporating dance, believes that Phantasmagoria began a growing relationship

between cinema and stage, moving away from primitive techniques into modern entertainment

territory:

> These projectionists were working at the *end of the 1700's*, we forget that, and the medium was always being pushed to achieve greater, clearer, and more convincing imagery.   This approach, some of it pretty similar to what I was working with in the 80's, were projected before audiences in the graveyards of Paris after the revolution... and was essentially a form of stagecraft. When I discovered this, after I had been producing similar work for dance theatre, and which I truly believed I had invented, I thought, 'there is nothing new under the sun as far as projections are concerned, for me.' Old forms are always the best forms, even if we try to improve upon them. The only real difference being, I was using it with live performance, and these folks were not (Andres)

Phantasmagoria may appear by today's standards to be a charming, albeit antiquated form of entertain, but for the Victorian era lanternist, it was a provocative form of entertainment and industry, which could always be improved upon, and in 1839, Phantasmagoria moved one step closer to cinema when lanternist Henry Langdon Childe created the first cross-dissolve. Childe did this by using two lanterns, and "gradually cutting off the picture of one lantern, and disclosing that of the other by alternately shutting out the light from each lantern" (Chadwick, 10).   The dissolving views could be used for scientific lectures, as well as travelogues, and horrifying temperance shows, which showed with frightening progression the impact of alcohol on an otherwise good family man. The magic lantern, once the purveyor of ghoulish thrills and chills, was beginning to traverse brave new territories:

> Victorian dissolving views brought the wonders of nature, Empire and science to respectable family audiences. The critical difference was the method of projection: phantasmagoria Lanternists worked from behind the screen, in total darkness, hidden from the audience, with 'pseudo-necromantic' effect. Limelight, and the front projection it made possible, turned the Lanternists who embraced the dissolving view into showmen-educators, expounding their marvels in full view of their much-enlarged audiences: Gibraltar by day and by night; Napoleon before and after Elba; the regions of the North Pole. (Marsh)

The enormous impact of Childe's modification cannot be understated. Joss Marsh's investigation into the advancement of this practice looks at the capacity of cross dissolves to

bring literature to life. This exciting progression was the first attempt at novel to film adaptation, represented with the use of dissolving views. Charles Dickens, enormously popular during the mid 1800's both in England and America, would join the ranks of the represented when *A Christmas Carol* became a phantasmagorical spectacular.   Dickens' famous story was especially successful using this technique to propel the miserly Scrooge through a 12-hour period and a lifetime of regret, at a steady pace.   Using text and pictures to tell the tale, the dissolving views were essentially a precursor to the silent cinema.   According to Marsh, Dickens' own work was made for the medium, due to the author's own obsession with the practice.   "His work is saturated in lantern reference: Miss Havisham's 'ghostly reflection', for example, 'thrown large by the fire upon the ceiling and the wall, or Genoa's 'extravagant reality' as phantasmagoria in the virtual-travel book Pictures from Italy" (Marsh 5).

The monumental popularity of Phantasmagoria cannot be ignored. That Lantern work and its moving images was so entertaining, that its influence could be found in pages of some of the greatest literature of the 19th century, illustrates its enormous impact on audiences from all walks of life, who were seduced by a non-static image.

In a similar vein, twenty-eight years later, in 1888 - the magic lantern made a personal appearance in August Strindberg's novel, *Tschandala*. Strindberg, who was a painter, photographer, sculptor, novelist, and playwright, was mesmerized by the lantern's ability to grab the viewer quickly and hold their undivided attention. In his book, *Cultural Functions of Intermedial Exploration*, Erik Hedling points out that Strindberg, who thought that the moving image should be utilized in creating modern theatrical works, conceived of a character, Torner, who conjures up images that drive his adversary, a gypsy, insane.

> The ingredients of this magic lantern act are described in lively
> details. We witness a scene in which Torner talks the gypsy into

> spending the night near a forest, close by an open fire so that the
> dark trees and the smoke of the fire can function as a projection
> surface. Torner then inserts the glass slides one by one into the
> lantern and giant apparitions of a dark woman, a dead body, a
> snake, ... appear in front of the gypsy. (Hedling 105)

The fantastical qualities of lantern technology applied in *Tschandala*, clearly engaged

Strindberg's imagination. More specifically, it appears that the ability to move from one image

to another was creating powerful impressions, which he would apply to theatre.   Strindberg

essentially transferred the same techniques used in his novel, to the stage, creating a dreamlike

world, which would essentially be one of the very first attempts to marry theatre and projections

together to produce a hybrid form of entertainment.

In 1901, Strindberg applied magic lantern imagery to his plays, when he began dreaming

of a new kind of spectacle for the stage. Just as lantern imagery had influenced the descriptive

devices used to create otherworldly tropes in his novels, Strindberg wove similar devices into his

stage directions.   Swedish film historian Vreni Hockenjoss notes: "Strindberg never kept his

writing separate from his interest with the visual arts, but established a symbiotic relationship

between the two fields, with manifold ramifications" (Hockenjoss 10). In Ett *Dromsel*, *A Dream

Play*: Strindberg's prologue describes distortions of space and time, clearly influenced by the

emergence of cinema. "Everything can happen; everything is possible and likely. Time and

space do not exist; on an insignificant basis of reality imagination spins and weaves new

patterns: a blending of memories, experiences free inventions, absurdities, and improvisations"

(Strindberg 5). Strindberg then opens the play with these stage directions: "...formations

resembling castles and citadels in ruins on crumbling slate hills form the backdrop. The

constellations Leo, Virgo, and Libra can be seen, and among them is the planet Jupiter shining

brightly. INDRA's DAUGHTER is standing on the uppermost cloud" (2). Three pages later,

(about four minutes in theatre time) the scene shifts again to: "A mass of gigantic white, pink, scarlet, sulphur yellow, and violet hollyhocks in bloom; over their tops can be seen the roof of a castle with flower bud resembling a crown uppermost. Along the bottom of the castle walls, heaps of straw covering cleaned-out stable litter. The side wings which remain throughout the play are stylized wall painting, at the same time, rooms, architecture, and landscapes (5)." These rapid scenic changes, originally dreamt up as backdrops, were clearly projections seen in the artist's imagination, precursors to the quick cuts that would be introduced into film almost two decades later.

It is important to note that in 1902 Strindberg *did* suggest changing these backdrops to projections. The backdrops that Strindberg wanted to incorporate as scenic devices were representational of the ever-changing screen images that audiences experienced while attending the cinema. In a letter to the director Hjalmar Selander regarding a production of the play which was to be staged later that year, the playwright clearly indicates that by changing to projected works, the set could be freed of everything - except the actors themselves: "On looking through A Dream Play, again, I find that it only requires 12 projected back cloths...The framing arch throughout the play is made up of a forest of Giant Poppies. A permanent inner stage of poppies, with an opening of 3 ells in which there would either be transparent screens or a white screen in which a Sciopticon images could be projected. There are no costumes of any kind" (Strindberg 702). By stripping the stage to the bare minimum, Strindberg was hoping to create a bold new form. The dreamscape that he imagined for his play, could be fully realized by turning away from traditional theatrical sets, and relying instead on the esoteric - a world created through projections and lighting.

The desire to use projections as an indicator of fluctuating space and time, while limiting traditional spectacle was never realized in Strindberg's lifetime. Lantern technology could not provide backdrops for live theatre due to lighting restrictions: a double-edged sword of darkness needed for the projection, and lights to illuminate the actors. These techniques would be developed soon after the turn of the 20th century in America with the advent of film.

THE LANGUAGE OF MOVING IMAGERY

A Medium of Mystery and Magic

The development of celluloid film in 1848, sounded the death knell for the magic lantern, but opened a door for a highly advanced form of motion driven entertainment, when it enabled photographers to capture images in real time. In 1878, the English photographer Eadweard Muybridge used twenty-four cameras to capture a horse in full gallop. He then lined up the photographs next to one another to suggest a moving image.   This quickly led to the invention of a camera by Thomas Edison, which could capture the movement of an object by using optics and celluloid film. Filmmaking immediately grabbed the attention of audiences, and began a lively discourse amongst intellectuals. The power of cinema conjured up a maelstrom of scholarly writings revolving around the purpose of film and its effect on the spectator. Walter Benjamin was especially taken with the practice. He saw cinema as a portal to new forms of thinking, both that of the masses and the individual. Film, Benjamin said: "is the prism in which the spaces of the immediate environment - the spaces in which people live, pursue their avocations, and enjoy their leisure - are laid open before their eyes in a comprehensible, meaningful, and passionate way"(204). Film at that moment was unlike any other medium and had the unique power to take the viewer through a looking glass, illuminating the mundane and revealing its beauty. [2]

In her paper "Filmed Scenery on the Live Stage" Gwendolyn Waltz points out the exciting atmosphere surrounding early moving images, and the mystery of cinema's purpose: "At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century, it was unclear just what motion pictures would become. Almost immediately, people began to experiment with various exhibition setups and venues for film and with different uses of the new medium. One of these uses was the

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[2] See Walter Benjamin "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."

theatre. Combined with live action on stage, motion pictures created an intriguing hybrid

format" (Waltz 3). In America, where the format was quickly replacing the magic lantern, two

early inventors were Lincoln J. Carter and Frank D. Thomas. Both men, pioneers in the film

industry, immediately understood how cinema could be employed to replace painted theatrical

backgrounds with moving ones. For example, a 1907 Ziegfeld Follies number entitled *A Gibson*

Bathing Girl, featured young women frolicking in the sea. This was ingeniously created by

projecting a "kinetoscopic surf" onto canvas, which stretched across the stage and sloped down

to the apron.   The canvas served as a screen of sorts and had holes cut into it for the actresses to

pop their head and shoulders through.   A review in the *Atlantic Journal* describes the scene:

"...a photo-projectory apparatus turns the painted ocean into a close resemblance of foamy

breakers, the bathers seem to be tossed about, they emit little feminine screams of scarred

delight, and the whole moving picture is altogether lovely" (Waltz, 554). This early attempt

successfully incorporated the entertainment of live action and the wonder of cinema, while

quickly elevating the stakes of theatre production on Broadway. Audiences immediately

gravitated towards this innovative use of film and live action, and much like phantasmagoria,

clamored for more.

     While Americans were creating a bridge between art and commerce by creating a

fantastical escape for audiences through mainstream entertainment, Europeans were looking at

film as a political tool.   The years directly following the start of WWI were especially heady

times for European intellectuals and artists trying to make sense of a society on the brink of utter

destruction. Men returning from the battlefields were overwhelmed by the horrors they had

faced. In an effort to disrupt the status quo and resist mass acceptance of a society controlled by

the bourgeoisie, Europe saw the rise of several prolific avant-garde movements - the most

profound being: Surrealism, Dadaism, Futurism, and German Expressionism.

Just as the creators of Phantasmagoria had capitalized on the public's unrest in a world

that was constantly shifting beneath their feet, philosophers, sociologists, artists, and art

historians were now discussing the need for a new aesthetic approach to foster political dialogue

through the arts. Avant-garde practices, which arose from these vanguard movements, were

largely interested in experimenting with the manipulation of movement.

The French Surrealist filmmaker René Clair was one of the first filmmakers to push the

boundaries of film by establishing a distortion of time and space, which he applied to a live

theatrical event. His first film, made in 1924 for avant-garde artist Francis Picabia's ballet was

Relâche called *Entr'acte* , "between acts," and was shown during intermission. The film had an

accompanying score by the avant-garde composer Erik Satie, and played with unrelated

juxtapositions of imagery, the tenet for surreal cinema. Although the film was not run in tandem

with the live action on the stage, it was still considered part of the performance. Some of the

images featured in the film are a ballerina shot from beneath by dancing on a plate of glass, and a

funeral procession of bourgeois attendees chasing a runaway casket in slow motion.   In a

brilliant stroke of juxtapositions, Clair juxtaposes images of the ballet dancer as she leaps up and

down, her tutu moving in slow motion, to the funeral scene also set in slow motion, to a street

scene of a busy Parisian boulevard with pedestrians and cars moving in slow motion,

exaggerating the solemnity and gravity of a funeral procession. Clair's radical approach to

bending and re-shaping perspective was a far cry from the way film was being implemented in

the United States.   The advancement of film manipulation however, would come from the states

with the introduction of American director D.W. Griffith and his methods of editing.

Ironically, it was Griffith's desire to tell story in mainstream films, which would evolve into serious film practices for European filmmakers. Griffith's triumph was achieved primarily through editing techniques, implemented to reveal close ups, medium and wide shots, coupled with panning shots and dissolves. The use of these varying frames allowed audiences to become deeply engaged with the screen characters, while following a storyline with agitated anticipation. That this was achieved without actors exchanging dialogue meant that Griffiths was effectively manipulating images that could speak for themselves. The idea that editing was at the center of dynamic storytelling became part of a global dialogue. When the Russians employed this idea, it resulted in a revolutionary act to make audience members active participants, rather than passive observers.

In 1928, the Russian film director Vsevolod Pudovkin wrote that: "...editing is the creative force of filmic reality, and that nature provides the raw material with which it works. That precisely, is the relationship between editing and film" (Reisz, Millar 9). Pudovkin's insistence that editing was at the heart of sophisticated storytelling led directly to a young theatre director's experimentation with intellectualizing the juxtaposition of images. Russian film director Sergei Eisenstein formulated theories based on film editing, which arose in conjunction with his work in theatre. Those theories, both modern and intellectually compelling, can still be found at the heart of avant-garde theatre performances using projections today.

Eisenstein and Montage Theory: The Sum of its Parts

Before Sergei Eisenstein became one of the greatest experimental film directors of the 20th century, he worked as a designer for the Prolekult theatre. A member of the avant-garde Russian Futurist movement, Eisenstein used techniques that focused on unusual modes of scenic display. Lights, and projected films, held center stage while plot and storyline were more or less

ignored. Eisenstein's goal was to psychologically manipulate the audience in order to actively

engage them, thus shaking them out of their complacency. He called this technique, *The Theatre*

of Attractions:

> The basic materials of the theatre arise from the spectator himself -
> and from our guiding of the spectator into a desired
> direction...which is the desired direction of every functional theatre.
> .. The weapons for this purpose are to be found in all the leftover
> apparatus of the theatre (the "chatter" of Ostuzhev no more than the
> pink tights of the prima-donna, a roll on the kettledrums as much as
> Romeo's soliloquy...) For all, in their individual laws to their
> common quality of *attraction.* (Eisenstein 230)

Using this central idea as a platform, Eisenstein would apply aspects of this theory to the art of

film editing through the use of montage.

Eisenstein described montage as follows: "Piece *A*, derived from the elements of the

theme being developed, and piece *B*, derived from the same source, in juxtaposition give birth to

the image in which the thematic matter is most clearly embodied." (Eisenstein 69) By

experimenting with film and constructing a sequence of carefully orchestrated shots, the

filmmaker wanted to reach the spectator subconsciously, thus allowing them to analyze the

film's sub-textual themes.   He categorized this theory into five principals: Metric, Rhythmic,

Tonal, Overtonal and Intellectual. Although the first four are still employed today, it was the

Intellectual Montage, which created a seismic impact on modern filmmakers.

Intellectual Montage was created by juxtaposing two disparate images, constituted from

two completely different ideas, in order to create a third concept. In his definitive book on

editing *Film Sense*, Eisenstein provides this example: "… a grave, juxtaposed with a woman

weeping beside it" as a form of translation. When the viewer is shown a grave, followed

immediately by a woman dressed in black weeping, they able to connect with a new concept, that

of a grieving widow. Eisenstein elaborates on the creative power of montage: "The basic fact

...that the juxtaposition of two separate shots by splicing them together resembles not so much a

simple sum of one shot plus another shot - as it does a *creation*.   It resembles a creation - rather

than a sum of its parts - from the circumstance that in every such juxtaposition*, the result is*

qualitatively distinguishable from each component element viewed separately" (Eisenstein 5).

Eisenstein's intention was to engage the audience, allowing them to make inference to images

that produced a full range of expression. A woman in a black dress and a grave do not need

spoken language to alert the audience to the filmmaker's intention. The images, due to their

juxtaposition, speak for themselves.

Eisenstein's *Theory of Intellectual Montage*, was created it in direct opposition to what

filmmakers like D.W. Griffith had accomplished by making films with linear cutting patterns,

i.e.: a woman, a house, the woman walking to the house, the woman's face becomes fearful as

she approaches the house, etc. Karel Reisz and Gavin Millar examine how Eisenstein considered

Griffith's work, weighed down by a littering of visual literary tropes, too closely related to

literature, thus circumventing the power of film editing:

> To the parallelism of alternating close-ups, of America [i.e., of
> Griffith] we [i.e., the young Russian directors] offer the contrast of
> uniting these in fusion; the montage trope. In the theory of
> literature a trope is defined thus: a figure of speech which consists
> in the use of a word or phrase in a sense other than that which is
> proper to it, for example, a *sharp* wit (normally a *sharp* sword).
> Griffiths cinema does not know this type of montage construction...
> But Griffith at all times remains on the level of representation and
> objectivity and nowhere does he try through the juxtaposition of
> shots to shape *import and image.* (26)

Eisenstein's theories, revolving around juxtaposition, created a new relationship between the director and the audience. Instead of leading the spectator to themes presented in direct representations which form a collective emotional release - i.e., pathos, joy, fear, or anger - each member of the audience must upon to draw their own conclusions, based on the perceptions that are derived from the juxtapositions of images displayed on the screen.

In this same way, the contemporary interdisciplinary relationship of live theatre with other cinematic elements, use projections for innovative effect, also creates intellectual attractions and juxtapositions. This technique can include anything - sound lighting, image - in order to combine elements of the cinematic and live performance, serious practitioners produce an environment in which each spectator experiences an individualized interpretation while watching the staged work. The following examples starting with Ingmar Bergman and ending with my own work, illustrate how projections have been employed to heighten elements of cinema and movement within live theatre, to elicit new forms and approaches.

PROJECTIONS AND THE MODERN THEATRE

The philosopher and social critic Theodor Adorno once stated that for works to be considered pure art, the artist must break from societal expectations and create from a strictly isolated, highly personal place. Adorno believed that art should be organic in its inception, not geared towards mainstream acceptance. He believed that once this was achieved, the work of the artist could be considered unique.

Modern theatre therefore, does not derive from new mechanics that are implemented to expand spectacle or create textures that enhance narrative tropes and themes. In the 21st century, spectators have been introduced to a myriad of spectacular scenic forms applied to live action plays in order to excite and engage their interest. From

the mid to late twentieth century the hybrid of cinema and stage began to explore new

frontiers by updating old techniques. This is not to say that the techniques used were

forms of mainstream expressions. They were instead extensions to the past, which created

a bridge to the present.   By taking established forms of image driven language, and

reinvestigating their support for a live event on stage, new techniques were born and the

language of antiquated imagery was - and continues to be - reborn.

Ingmar Bergman and Strindberg's Cinematic Vision

Ingmar Bergman was a dedicated admirer of August Strindberg's plays, who endeavored

to bring the underlying themes, which were part of Strindberg's dream life, to the surface by

using limited stage sets and projections as the central focus.

These images served as an indicator of environment, freeing the actors from the use of any stage

properties, including furnishings. By eliminating the stage of any properties, and allowing the

audience to focus entirely on the actor's expressions and bodily movements, Bergman would be

creating a sense of community between the audience and the actors on stage.[3] In other words, by

placing actors on a stage devoid of any particular setting or properties, and using projections to

create a third dimension, Bergman created a three dimensional dreamscape and enabled the

audience to enter the world of the characters, no longer bystanders but inhabitants of the space as

well. Theatre historian Egil Törnqvist describes the effect:

> "The absence of properties, enabled Bergman to appeal to the
> spectator's imagination, thereby involving him in the action. The
> Milkmaid washed herself with imaginary water, the old man read an

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[3] Bergman was known for his work with close ups in cinema.   The methodology behind it was simple, film was meant to be a close up medium - meaning you could not achieve it on a stage with actors alone. Just as dialogue reveals a person's deepest thoughts, a close up does the same without dialogue. Every passing thought is reflected on the face, and emotion is telegraphed through expression. It would make sense that Strindberg's deeply felt works, embodied in the subconscious, would elicit Bergman's use of his own screen techniques.

> imaginary poster or an imaginary advertising column, the young
> lady closed an imaginary window and busied herself with imaginary
> hyacinths. This non-realistic device helped to increase the feeling
> of witnessing, or being part of a dream world"
> (Törnqvist 123)

Furthermore, the projections themselves invited the audience to leave their role as spectator, and become one with the characters. Törnqvist illustrates this by examining a scene in Act One, which Bergman deliberately orchestrated in order to create a sense of communion between the audience and the actors on stage.   He did this by projecting a "beautiful white art nouveau building" on a cyclorama that inhabited the back of the stage.   Two characters - The Old Man and The Student - do not look at the projection, but instead look out into the audience, and describe the house the audience is seeing on the projected screen.   The arrangement does not allow the characters to turn and look at the projection themselves; they imagine it, and the experience is reflected by the expression on their face.   Through the use of projections, the director created an environment in which no one was excluded, a world that was inhabited by those on stage and those in the auditorium. By incorporating the projected backgrounds, Bergman suspended the audience in an alternative reality:

> ...Where the house represents Life, and its inhabitants stand for
> humanity, the spatial reversal was meaningful also in the sense that
> it linked the audience with the characters on the stage. Appearing
> on either side of the proscenium frame, the inhabitants of the house
> came to function as mediators between the audience inside The
> House of Life, and the characters out in the street. (Törnqvist 123)

Bergman linked the two realities, that of being a spectator in the seats, and those on the stage. The screen images therefore created a link to the audience and the play's characters, allowing the audience the unique experience of stepping into the character's shoes and seeing through their eyes.

Bergman also understood the psychological implications that were inherent in the play, and implemented projections in later scenes to create a stark contrast between young and old, life and death. The power of Bergman's visual interpretations supported Strindberg's vision. Each scene enhanced the next one, building in intensity and creating signifiers, which engaged the spectators emotionally as well as intellectually. Although Bergman's approach was simple, it was nonetheless an economic and brilliant way to establish new relationships by creating a connection between what was projected on the screen and the live action on stage. This counterpoint of imagery drew upon Eisenstein's theories of juxtaposition. By creating two dichotomous juxtaposed images, the projections for the audience, and the live action on the stage. For instance, the projections created by Bergman, were for the most part static. The director seems to have wanted the audience to make creative leaps in order to experience a cerebral connection, in this case juxtapositions of stage life, screen life, and the experience of intellectually moving away from the usual passive experience of the spectator, to become an active member of the play's community. The viewer therefore, could make intellectual connections, which were created through visual techniques, and partake, in a high unusual communal experience, allowing the audience to connect on a symbiotic level, and move away from mainstream experiences of the past.

Bergman's staging was tremendously effective in helping to redefine the post dramatic by using pre existing forms. The director's work would influence other filmmakers and stage directors, examining relationships between contemporary and antiquated techniques to speak to a modern audience. This includes the French Canadian playwright and performer, Robert Lepage, whose one-man journey through four decades, two cities, and three characters pushed the use of projections forward by implementing cinematic technique to create *Needles and Opium*. This

work would not only rely on the image, but also on the screen itself, to create a symbiotic relationship between cinema and stage.

Robert Lepage and the Cinematic Stage

More than any other theatrical performer and writer working in theatre today, Robert Lepage has managed to take his audiences into new territory by combining elements of cinema and stage. A strong example is his play, *Needles and Opium,* which is steeped in filmic language, illustrated with antiquated and contemporary techniques, in order to connect the audience with the past and the present. With *Needles and Opium,* Lepage takes the audience through a triptych of narratives revolving around the lives of jazz musician Miles Davis, the surrealist writer Jean Cocteau, and Lepage himself, as they journey to explore their relationships to love and addiction. Lepage, serves mostly as a conduit through which past and present flows. He is, if you will, the stage manager or guide between two realms. "You need," Lepage says, "a third character in order to help the audience enter your world" (Lepage).

A room in Paris links the three men, "room number 9," the one Lepage is staying in, and which both Davis and Cocteau have inhabited. They have all been there in various stages of addiction: Lepage to a lost love, Davis and Cocteau to opiates. These, Lepage tells us, are almost impossible to cure. In order to accommodate his travels through time and space, Lepage incorporates film and all its technical magic to create a truly seamless trilateral adventure. The techniques he integrates are both antiquated and modern; a mash up of film, live performance, shadow puppetry and a musical score, the implementation of which, allows the audience to tramp across three landscapes, that of terra firma, air, and ocean - as well as two continents, with Lepage serving as a mystical tour guide.

The play revolves around the conceit of Cocteau and Davis suspended in 1949, both are on route home, one to Paris and the other to New York City. Davis, is traveling back to the states by ship, and wrestling with his adoration of a woman he has performed with in Paris, the Surrealist Juliette Greco, with whom he was romantically involved during his stay there. He is also addicted to heroin. Cocteau, who is visiting Davis's home, New York City, is making his way back to Paris by plane. Lepage himself is the grounding force, waiting for a phone call in "room number nine," in Paris, wrestling with demons of his own. All three characters are connected by the use of the screen device, which employs shadow puppetry, cinema and music. All three are used in quick succession in order to create the hypnotic spectacle of film. However, Lepage serves as the actor, he is live and a representative for theatre. The settings of the play are cinematic - including the music - which suspends the actor in an alternative environment - not quite film and not quite theatre.

The first image presented is that of a map illustrating the pressure points on the human body, the kind used in an acupuncturist's office. Behind the transparent screen is the legendary Surrealist Cocteau, who is suspended from a harness. He is suspended in air floating behind the projection of the body map, which Lepage in voice over, explains is indeed a picture of the human body and its nerve points. Lepage's disembodied voice tells us that there is only one thing that acupuncture cannot cure and that is addiction. He also tells us that he is addicted to the memory of a woman and is searching for a cure. As the suspended body, that of Lepage playing Cocteau, is lifted up and over the screen and lowered into the frame; Cocteau we discover is on his way home. On either side of the character , projections of airplane propellers indicate a passenger on a flight. The effect is twofold: On the one hand it is amusing, a clever decorative device to remind the audience of the simplicity of air travel in the 1940's, but on the other hand,

it is a reminder, that the spectator, as well as the character, is suspended somewhere between the past and the present, a reminder of the instability of memories. Cocteau confirms this by announcing that: "Memories move like underwater dancers and each time they touch each other they take off in other directions." The screen then yields to a charcoal drawn face, which is gradually erased from hands that are drawing over it.   The screen suddenly becomes part of the scenery by rotating and performing as a simple wall in a small hotel room in Paris.   The music of Miles Davis fills the theatre, whole shadows of a chair and a phone appear behind the wall still serving as a screen.   Later shadow puppetry will be used to push the medium of folk tales and ancient stories into a new realm of storytelling, by using the form to represent Davis's character.

Instead of physically putting Davis on stage, Lepage creates a character with the use of continuous juxtapositions, using identifiers like the shadow a trumpet, an artistic extension of Davis himself. Behind the screen, shadow hands work to assemble the instrument, mimicking cinematic use of wide shots and close ups. A figure then walks into the frame, the shadow of a man yields to a representation of a cinematic dissolve, which reveals a projection of a record. As Davis's music continues to play, Cocteau (Lepage) is lowered again from a harness in front of the screen. This visual technique mimics the way dissolves are used in film to transition from one scene to the next, as the projection then yields to a New York City apartment building. Yet, Lepage needs to take it one step further. Cocteau free falls down the front of the building, creating a metatheatrical aside for film buffs - homage to Hitchcock's film of lost love and obsession, *Vertigo,* in which Jimmy Stewart dreams of free falling through the air. This scene in turn dissolves and is replaced by a home movie of a woman, which yields to the shadows of a dish and two glasses filled with wine. Shooting from above, Lepage provides a visual point of

view of two people - Davis and Juliette Greco, but it can just as well be Lepage and the woman whose memory he cannot let go of.   As the piece progresses, the audience is subjected to the bombardment of images, cut in quick succession much like that of a film. Lepage uses the technique to bend and shift the passage of time, much like filmmakers do when they want to push a story weeks, months, or even years forward - in a matter of minutes.   This series of cut images, is able to create a visual understanding, an intellectual juxtaposition of time, wending through four decades, past two continents, over water and through air, and then back to Lepage's room in Paris.

   Imagery is not the only aspect of film cinema that Lepage applies here. The musical score he uses is brilliantly devised to drive story forward.   In cinema, both documentary and narrative, music is used to allow for seamless transitions.   Music pushes the narrative forward leaping from one thought to another without the use of narration. Music may be cut into the story gradually bringing music up underneath the last frame of a specific scene and then continuing to play that music into the next scene. This signals to the audience that a transition is about to take place. The audience therefore will allow for a change in scene, location, etc, because the score has allowed for a moment of recovery. Alternatively, music may be cut hard in, and then related to a montage of images, which allow for an intellectual connection, thus producing another form of seamless transition , while simultaneously establishing an intellectual dialogue between frame and viewer. The director and audience are breaking what may seem to be a coded message, and communication opens into a new realm of being. By subtly engaging this technique, Lepage weaves the three characters together.

   In his book, *Connecting Flights*, Lepage talks about sound as the single most important indicator of change in film:

Ingmar [sic] Bergman said that film is a three dimensional thing:
Sound is the first dimension, image the second, and the meeting of
the two creates the
third. . . People often speak of the *"cinematic"* aspect of my work
… because of the visual qualities of my plays. However, I see film
as a medium of writing and sound... Film editing has taught me that
what really shapes film, is sound. People go to see images, images,
images, and more images of course, but what would these images
be without sound to unite them, bring them together. (Lepage 123)

This is well illustrated in the scene in which Cocteau has fallen past the windows of the

aforementioned apartment building in New York City. Lepage uses his linking device, a Miles

Davis piece, to yield to the image of Juliette Greco; this yields to the sounds of heavy breathing.

As the image of the woman recedes and is rendered to a half dissolve with a map of Paris

superimposed over her, a little red marker indicates where the audience is being taken. The

breathing cross fades to the loud moans of a woman in the throes of a passionate session of

unbridled sex. When the lights on the stage are brought back up, Lepage is on a phone,

complaining about the woman to the concierge. There is nothing different here from a well-

designed scene in a film.   The performer uses these elements to keep the story moving and

connected, the same way a film director would create a seamless connection through the use of

sound design.

Lepage in the meantime is waiting for a call from a woman he is estranged from, who

lives in New York.   The phone call arrives, but Lepage is disappointed to learn that the woman

has no desire to be in any kind of communication with him; she wants him to leave her alone.

As he hangs up the phone, the music rises up again and a Polaroid picture of the woman shows

up on the screen, then a painting, a drawing, the actor's face, and finally the Polaroid, which

slowly fades into an overexposed frame.   The music rises in crescendo, the screen flips with

Lepage standing on it, and the lights fade. When the lights come up again, Lepage is now

Cocteau who is suspended behind a lectern serving as a screen device.   The projection of a <u>Life</u> <u>Magazine</u> cover, dissolves into photos of Cocteau in eccentric poses, as Lepage reads from the writer's "Letters to America."   The scene ends, and again the music rises, as a body dives into a sea of blue water on the screen. The body is holding a horn, it is Miles Davis, swimming under the sea suspended in what the audience must assume is an opium dream. The music begins to fade as Lepage is lowered down in front of the screen, in a chair, which is in a hypnotist's office. There is a break, and the actor now talks to the hypnotist, responding to questions the audience is not privy to, but to which Lepage's responses fill in the missing information. At one point in the conversation, Lepage asks, "Look at what spiral?" and suddenly the screen in back of him becomes a spiral, which the actor slowly tumbles into. The screen flips to reveal his shadow, which reaches out and grabs a shadow phone - a busy signal rises up and over the music - and this yields to a four minute scene of shadow puppet work which takes the audience deep into the world of opiates and addiction.

This description illustrates Lepage's intent to move the use of theatre and projections into new terrain, relying on antiquated techniques to create something modern.   Gone are the traditional puppets replaced by images, which head into edgier terrain: a shadow heroin needle for instance, a trumpet, an arm being injected by the needle, and so forth. The revolving screen apparatus, used in most theatrical productions as a stationary panel, becomes an intricate part of the production, serving not only as a device used for projections, but also a floor which becomes a trampoline.   By utilizing long established approaches, and re-examining their purpose through a cinematic lens, Lepage manages to execute and deliver a completely new hybrid, using projected imagery to import a hypnotic world of dreams, which also represent the characters' experience on opiates. Projections that work on this level, create a staged performance where the

live performance could not exist without the visual elements to support it. It also heralds Benjamin's claim that film can transform the most mundane image into something powerful and dramatic.

John Moran and The Book of the Dead

  On the opposite end of this creative spectrum is the composer John Moran, whose staged works have often defied any kind of expectation or genre. A protégé of the composer Philip Glass, Moran works less with the poetic metamorphosis of everyday images, and embraces instead something like a mathematical equation with precision dictating to technique.   Moran does not necessarily transport his audience into a dream state, but instead keeps them at an emotional distance, inviting them to witness a modern sideshow.

      Moran, whose main focus is composition, began using projections because "I really wanted to make films...That was the original intention, to make backdrops that ...could change quickly" (Moran 1). Whereas Lepage's plays ultimately use traditional sound techniques to reflect the editing of cinema, (i.e., slipping a piece of music under one scene to link it to the next, Moran's main attraction is created with a composite of music, dialogue, and ambient sound effects. The visuals, both projected and performed, are there are supporting elements.

      In his 2000 production *Book of the Dead (Second Avenue),* Moran pushes the idea of cinematic spectacle into layers of sensations, describing them as "attractions." Moran says he was largely influenced by the constant barrage of imagery, and repetitive themes he experienced at Disneyland as a child:

        "I grew up obsessed with Disneyland. Everything I've ever done
        was inspired by a trip there when I was little.   And later, when...

> Disney was in a sad state of disrepair, I would ride the attractions hundreds of times repeatedly, all by myself. It was a place at that time, where if I behaved cool about it, I could get blazingly stoned in areas I knew the tourists didn't know about, and then go back to ride the rides again, standing up and facing backwards, so I could take in each detail about how the illusions were created...*The Haunted Mansion*, *Pirates of the Caribbean, Brer Rabbit, Pinocchio,* these are masterpieces of blending image, and sound, and taking audience movement through a simulated environment" (Moran, interview).

Book of The Dead illustrates Moran's rhetoric, as these "illusions," are transported to the stage. By creating an environment that begins and ends with sensationalized concepts, the performance simulates a ride or funhouse attraction. The set, for instance, is an illusion, a simple series of constructions that take us from scene to scene over the course of a twenty-four hour period of time. For instance, Spanish bodegas are conceived only by stage lighting, and the characters that inhabit it. Likewise, a counter represents a McDonalds, with projections in the back of the corporate logo.   Yet Moran manipulates these sets, by devising complex approaches to cinematic devices.   By layering pre-recorded soundtrack, i.e., footsteps, a door opening and closing, as well as the dialogue between the characters, Moran ingeniously creates a commentary on the miscommunication, or lack thereof, amongst a society that seems to prefer living in an artificial world.

 Book of the Dead, begins when the lights of the theatre are brought down and the audience is suspended in semi-darkness. Much as they do in a movie theatre, the audience sits and waits for the screen to spring to life, but here it doesn't. Instead, Moran starts his attraction with sound - a set of strings that is joined by the sounds of water dripping. Moran then layers voices into the mix, which are punctuated with the long howl of a wolf. Directly following this, the theatre is plunged into complete darkness.   An oboe hovers above the darkened theatre, and

a narrator begins the journey by announcing "In the Book of the Dead we are concerned with

Beginnings." The sound of strings fills the theatre and the narrator tells us: "if there is a

beginning, then there will come an end. There is a body, it has not moved in several days - and it

has begun to grow offensive." A blue light slowly rises up on center stage, and a body is

illuminated. A mortician arrives, wearing the head of a jackal, and an arch of stars rise up on a

screen as the dead body begins to rise, as the lights on stage brought down.   The screen springs

to life, and produces a series of fast cut projections ending with an Egyptian tomb, and the image

dissolves into the words "Good Morning."

When the lights come up on the stage again, the audience suddenly finds itself inside a

McDonald's.   This is indicated with nothing more than a counter, and two women who stand

behind it. The speed in which this series of hyper shifting scenes unfold, mimics the hard cuts of

film, which allow a script to move from place to place, as the characters hurtle through the

narrative.

Thinking back to Pudovkin's theory of filmmaking, and his belief that 'editing is the

creative force behind filmic reality, and that nature provides the raw material with which it

works" (Millar, xx), the same can be said for the use of these techniques in Moran's production.

Yet, Moran not only manipulates the screen and its projections to imply the edited scene, he also

uses the doubling of actors to refer to the technique.

> "If you look closely, you'll see some scenes where one character is
> actually played by two different people...sometimes groups of people
> dressed in pairs, and they're used to 'cut' from one angle to another, or *to
> cut to (sic)*later in time, the way a film is usually thought to do... *Book of
> the Dead,* does this when a woman goes in and out of the store (it's 2
> actresses)... It's the bodega scene. There's an outside setting and
> perspective, when she's (the woman) talking to (me) on a bike, and when
> she goes into the store, there is a bump cut to the interior - *which is (sic)*
> (lighting and area of the stage) where another actress takes over as she
> enters. So you see her (the 1st main actress, outside) walk back towards

> the store (going far upstage) and suddenly the lights change as she's (the 2nd actress) is entering the store coming towards us, in a closer perspective. It's happens so fast it's easy to miss, but live it has an arresting quality I think. When I do that, there is a change in the soundtrack, because it is easy to create a sudden, completely different setting" (Moran).

Whether this change in perspective registers directly with the audience is undetermined, yet what is interesting is Moran's motivation in regards to the applied stagecraft. He manages to lose the screen altogether, while implicating modes of cinematic blocking, by manipulating the placement of the actors.   The living aspect of theatre, therefore, also becomes part of the mechanism of cinema. The actors are not on screen, but are blocked to mimic screen performances. Likewise, the doubling of voices and repetition of scenes, a hallmark of Moran's work, can be construed as the rewinding of a film, in an editing room where editors will often spend hours on one scene of dialogue, listening, cutting a few frames, cutting, and then listening again.   What makes it theatrical is the way in which Moran expands each scene through repetitive patterning.

To illustrate: Moran's scene in McDonalds opens with a woman behind a register serving customers while she talks to a friend: "Oh, I know that girl. She's a bitch" Her co-worker, a manager calls to another employee asking if they placed an order.   A customer, with a bag turns and heads out the door, and freezes.   Lights slam down and then up on stage right.   A woman stands on the corner calling to her child; she promises her a hamburger if she comes.   The lights go down on the woman and come up again on the MacDonalds. Now the woman behind the counter expands her conversation, this time incorporating the customer: "Oh, I know that girl, she's a bitch." Sound effects are brought in as she approaches an invisible register: "Four out of ten."   She rings up the purchase. Her colleague joins in and her conversation with the other

employee overlaps that of the girl's conversation behind the register, while the man with the bag turns around goes to the door and freezes.   The lights come up on the street where more ambient sound is layered in. The woman calls to her child to come and she will buy her a hamburger. The lights go down and back up on the stage where the cashier stands at the register: "Oh I know that girl. She's a bitch. Four out of ten. She really is. 563 is your change. Next in line step down."

Moran expands the scene without projections, but he incorporates the elements of soundtrack, and the techniques used when editing sound in a film, by moving back and forth through sound scapes, advancing the scene as it continues to expand.   By constructing these motifs, without announcing his intent, Moran provides critical advancements in the way that theatre not only uses projections, but the ideas behind projections, and the elemental devices used to produce cinematic narratives. The results are expansive scenes of layered music, movement, sound effects, and narrative which mimic the actual piecing together of a scene in a film, thus deconstructing the narrative by stripping away, or rather exposing the edifice. In other words, he exposes the mechanics behind the magic, pulling aside the curtain to show what lies behind the facade he has created.

Projections and The Inner Life of the Character

My final example, of the influence of film on theatre is drawn from my own work. By heading in the opposite direction of Moran, I am interested in implementing the most basic techniques used in creating juxtapositions, which denote relationships of power and status.

As a filmmaker who has dealt in both documentary and narrative forms, I am interested in two things: First, I record the stories directly from an interview, then dramatize those stories

by taking liberties with the transcribed dialogue. The work is presented in monologue form, with the projections taking on two forms - first and foremost, I incorporate the use of b-roll, or supporting footage, which is fictionalized in order to support the character's story. By incorporating old methods, in this case super eight film (film used for home movies, prior to the advent of video), I manufacture memories, which the actor shares with the audience.   This is in response to the climate of reality television, and the egomaniacal need to recognized as someone who is special.

The Starbuck's Monologues all take place in the well-known coffee chain during a stifling summer afternoon. Several characters, played by different actors and actresses, eager to communicate with someone, turn to the audience to share an important part of their lives. *Mr. Barnes*, a senior citizen who works as barista due to losing all that he had due to a gambling problem, recounts his glory days as an executive in an ad agency during the Madison Avenue heyday of the 1950's.   His "conversation" with the audience is interrupted only by the drink orders that are placed, and which he is responsible to deliver to the customer.   As he tries to relive the happiest moments of his life, he is continuously interrupted. His frustration in dealing with the present is telegraphed on the screen as images of his happy youth, yield to those of darker times. This is done by projecting images Barnes wants the audience to see, i.e.: his glory days, and replacing them with more truthful representations of his past.   For instance: halfway through Barnes monologue his ex-wife suddenly appears. She has come to tell her side of the story. The screen device, now shifts as Barnes wife, Jane, begins to mock him. At first he ignores her, then he defends himself to the audience.   "That's Jane," he says "Long legs and a cold heart."

While Barnes speaks to the audience, Jane listens by peeking around the bottom left corner of the screen. Her looming force immediately puts him, and the audience at a disadvantage. The intent is to deconstruct the idea of the spectator as passive voyeur, by giving Jane the advantage of watching the audience as the audience watches her. The intent is to create a position of power that Jane holds over Barnes. Jane is the keeper of memories, which Barnes cannot escape.

I try to manufacture these feelings by using cinematic shooting techniques to telegraph a character's point of view, or emotional state. In the case of Barnes, I work to project feelings of the character's anxiety and shame.   For example: As Barnes boasts the audience about his standing in the community when he was a young man, Jane enters to create a shift in the audiences perspective of Barnes.   The arrival of Jane may produce scorn, or perhaps pity, but her arrival will signify a shift in the way he is viewed.   The audience therefore becomes a community, which will judge Barnes one way or another. As his story slowly falls apart, and the spectator is forced to watch his life unravel, they should experience the same discomfort that Barnes does.

I have also used filmic point of view in my plays, which deal directly with marginal characters from novels whose stories are not the author's focus.   My directive is to use the screen to isolate the lead character from the others characters in the play.
My performance piece *Grace Poole* uses the screen in an effort to illustrate that isolation.

Grace Poole is a minor character from Emily Bronte's novel *Jane Eyre*. Although Grace is rarely heard from directly in the novel, she is often alluded to, and holds significant real estate in Jane's thoughts. Although we know nothing about her (no back-story is provided by the

author) it is the position she holds in the household, which makes her story psychologically interesting: Grace, is the caretaker to Edward Rochester's wife, Bertha.

I became interested, in the idea of expanding her story and relating it to screen work in order to illustrate the complex social hierarchy that exists in households that employ servants. In *Grace Poole*, the only person who actually has dialogue on stage, is Grace herself.   All of the other characters are either seen working quietly, or addressing her from the screen. Adopting the same techniques used in cinema to exploit relationships of power, I utilize the projections as a tool to provide Grace's point of view, in relation to the relationships around her.

In the opening scene, Grace is summoned to Mr. Rochester's study. As she makes her way down the center aisle of the theatre, the audience can see her in a spotlight. The stage is dark. Music sweeps through the house, very grand and epic, mimicking the score of a film.   The stage itself is lit in pools of light, each pool harbors a piece of furniture, in order to denote aspects of a house belonging to an aristocrat. Next to the center screen, are two panels - these are used primarily to indicate time of day, and space.   They may also harbor characters as they go about their day in the house. The projections are almost like security cameras in their point of view. At the moment, these show two rooms, a dining room being prepared for a dinner party, and a view from a window.   The view shows the grounds, as the caretakers hustle to ready for guests. The center panel is inhabited by Rochester, he is shot in a medium close up.   Next to him, his dog pilot sits, while Rochester strokes its head, as Jane enters the room the dog begins to growl. Once Grace reaches the stage, she is presented with her back to the audience as Rochester's screen presence peers down upon her.

By using techniques to create signifiers of power for the audience, the looming presence not only indicates Rochester's position in relation to his servant, but her point in view in regards

to that relationship.   Playing with the scale of a live performer and a projected one, the audience experiences the dread of that relationship as well. Grace must answer to Rochester for Bertha's recent outbursts, and the audience is made to feel what Grace feels, that of frustration and fear in relation to the master of the house.

Later on when Grace travels to a wooded area collecting plants for a drug she will make to sooth her charge, the center screen reflects the canopy above her, telegraphing freedom from responsibility and position. Yet the right and left panels, hope to retain some of the claustrophobia she feels, by telegraphing her thoughts as they focus on an image of Jane Eyre standing naked before Rochester, and Bertha's back as she stands naked in front of a window looking outward, and away from Thornfield Hall.

By allowing the projections to "speak" for the character's unconscious thoughts, the psychological aspects of their most private emotions are brought to life without dialogue, using cinematic language to speak the unspoken. Utilizing concepts of cinematic language, stories can unfold using limited staged dialogue, thus allowing the characters to become an individualized experience for each audience member. Preconceived relationships, therefore, between the "reader" and the characters change drastically, as their stories are presented through the facade that they have carried before either in the novel, or in the interpretation of directors who turned *Jane Eyre* into a film.

Creating scenes that employ cinematic form to represent a character's individualized perspective, by allowing performances on stage to mirror techniques used in film, creating a seamless dialogue between the actors and the projections, which drive the story.

CONCLUSION

When projections are used to support live action on stage, they can provide powerful connections for the audience, while laying strong foundations for work that explores hybrid forms of entertainment. However, in order to ensure that these do not become overshadowed by less interesting works that are embedded in mainstream entertainment, practitioners involved in such practices must apply this device judiciously and with clear purpose. Projections when used as a scenic device without true reason can seem like an alien appendage, instead of an integral part of the play's language and tenor. However, when they are used to engage an audience in an intellectual discussion, they can become transformative works of power and beauty.

The danger is that, as projections move into the future and a wider range of techniques are applied, producers may find themselves scrambling for bigger and better, as opposed to the organic and profound. 3-D images are already making their way to the stage, as Broadway shows labor to keep up with new technologies in order to serve a tech savvy audience. Yet, conversations with young practitioners have yielded promising results. A young up and coming playwright, Deborah Yarkin, looks at the technique as an important tool that can strongly support storytelling: "I feel like anything is fair game for the stage as long as it serves what's at the heart of the play," says Yarkin in regards to her latest piece *Portmanteaux*, a play which looks at two emotionally struggling college graduates. Her decision to use projections was not only based on the ability to move her subjects quickly through time and space, but also to create a signifier relating to the insular, i.e., computerized world of their generation. The effect is a choice, which enhances the connection for audiences of all ages, to the world of the play.

> Even though they're not always projected, things we access from
> screens are woven into the fabric of the play: Wikipedia, facebook,
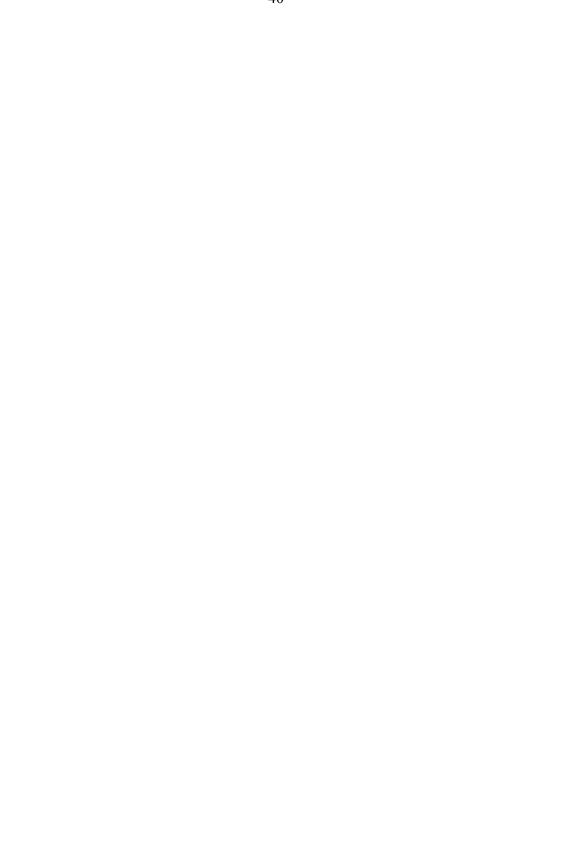> AIM, texts, etc. One of my characters, Liza, even creates a piece of

music inspired by Gustav Holsts' *The Planets* using the different "cyber spheres" of craiglist [sic] personals: "Strictly platonic is my Jupiter; Casual encounters, my Mercury." In my earliest drafts of the play, when her romantic interest [sic] Dale and Liza were in their separate spaces and communicating, they spoke to each other directly. They still do this, but I have now added their conversations simultaneously unfolding through a projected AIM conversation" (Yarkin).

Jo Andres, who still employs magic lantern technique to her dance productions, believes that the future of projections can be kept fresh through an artist's good intentions.

For me, film or lantern work on stage is like performance art, a painting coming alive to create a third dimension . . . my work's are like paintings on stage. When I started, I was thinking of performance work as art work, as opposed to people talking and having projections happen behind them...I'm not thinking about theory or deconstructionist ideas... let's give the audience something exhilarating . . . magic, and a kind of ethereal liquid flow of light" (Andres).

Not surprisingly however, the world of theatre finds many artists today, such as John Moran, moving away from projections in order to simplify their work and make intentions cleaner, clearer, and less cluttered. Just as Strindberg had turned his back on projections, and then scenery all together until he employed nothing but a bare stage, the world of stage projections will more than likely become so compromised by overuse that serious practitioners will find themselves going back to the basics in order to find new and interesting ways to tell a story. As Tennessee Williams directly stated in his prologue for *The Glass Menagerie*, there must come a time to move away from "an exhausted theatre of realistic conventions," and in this case those conventions may be the very theatre that he believed to be an expression of originality and modernity.

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