

# Pro-sessional

a professional development day for practitioners of dramaturgy in British theatre

## Pro-Sessional

### A Reader

dramaturgs'network

The Literary  
Managers' Forum



soho  
theatre



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## **Preface**

This Reader is designed as a precursor to the Pro-sessional day at Soho Theatre, so that we can spend the day together on process; engaging with current and established best practice.

Drawn from the collective knowledge of the partners: The Dramaturgs Network, The Literary Managers Forum, Total Theatre and writernet, the reader functions to establish a relationship between previous discussions and this practice.

When I was approached to be involved in the Pro-sessional Day, I brought with me quite a long wish list. I had been impressed by the way Brian Quirt had overseen the gathering of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas in Toronto – in particular by the focus of thinking and debate around the work. I wanted

to acknowledge recent symposia, for example in Edinburgh, Birmingham, Oval House, Albany, Manchester, Minneapolis, Toronto and look forward to that coming in 2008 which will focus on International models of new writing and performance practice, courtesy of Claire MacDonald and Alison Andrews;

to be mindful of existing documented exchange such as Developing Theatre Writing, Out of Context, Alternative Dramaturgies from Deaf and Disability Perspectives and Illuminate;

to focus on UK practices but also recognise our connection to practitioners globally, including those working in the US, Germany, Netherlands and elsewhere;

to move beyond the binary configurations of:

margins and mainstream  
script and production  
desk and floor  
new writing and new work  
text and performance  
definitions  
status inequalities

to not be checking our creativity at the door...

## **Introduction**

Much has been said and written about the practice of dramaturgy. The intention here is not to reinvent wheels; rather to provide access to some of the investigations, conversations and reflections that have taken place over the last 10 years.

Most recently Beccy Smith was commissioned by Arts Council England to undertake some research to 'take the temperature' of contemporary dramaturgical practice in England. The Reader begins with her findings.

Uncovering tacit knowledge seems to me to be a basic facet of the practice of dramaturgy. Often thoughts are tucked away in periodicals, on websites, in reports. One such report is that written by Tony Craze, also for Arts Council England. It hasn't seen the light of day as ACE personnel changed and a third, planned symposium in Newcastle didn't materialise; but Tony's work as a dramaturg over many years is itself one of the untold stories. So this reader is also built around Tony's observations, reflections and analysis.

In addition I have included appendices on:

- Books
- Articles
- Websites
- Courses
- Symposia

Tony's focus has been on symposia with – to some extent - a script/playwright focus. But his observations seem to me to be not limited to this area of dramaturgical practice. Nor is this reader designed to be comprehensive, for there are always things missed, but the hope is that it can serve as a reference tool, which acknowledges the work of many before us, and which will allow us to approach the pro-sessional day unencumbered: open in mind, body and spirit.

Jonathan Meth  
November 2007

## **Section 1 - Developing the Role of the English Dramaturg: Research & Consultation Findings**

Beccy Smith

### **The Methodology**

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The research was undertaken to 'take the temperature' of contemporary dramaturgical practice in England. The research had two phases:

- **Phase One:** focussed on dramaturgical awareness and practice within non-text based processes (as a balance to the recent development of support for literary managers working dramaturgically with text).
- **Phase Two:** consultation with key stakeholder organisations in relation to the Network and to assess dramaturgical practice within a select range of non-text based focussed institutions.

Phase One was undertaken alongside the Total Theatre Awards at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. The following questions were circulated to companies:

1. How would you describe the dramaturgy of your work?
2. Who do you currently use as the 'first audience' or outside eye for your work and why? (or why not?)
3. To what extent do you feel you are communicating with your audiences? And to what extent do you feel producers or programmers properly understand your work?
4. What sort of resources / workshops / events do you think might help you better articulate your own vision of your work to audiences, and to programmers?

Of 40 identified companies targeted for the survey, 14 responses were received, representing a 40% return and forming the basis for the findings of this research<sup>1</sup>.

Phase Two was undertaken through detailed consultation interviews with selected organisations deemed to have a stake or a potential stake in the work of the network or whose work fed directly into the non text based new work sector. Interviewed companies were Total Theatre Network, BAC, Green Room, PANDA, London International Mime Festival, Hammersmith Lyric and the Literary Managers' Forum.

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<sup>1</sup> Companies who responded were: Shams Theatre, Doo-Cot, Spymonkey, Chopped Logic, Apricot Theatre, Tanagram Theatre, Al Seed, Inspector Sands and Stamping Ground Theatre, Unpacked, Blue Scream, NIE, Gomito Productions, Puppet State, Theatre of Widdershins, Tangled Feet, Big Wow.

The consultations were based around the following script:

1. How would you describe your level of awareness or understanding of dramaturgy as a concept/ practice?
2. Do you encounter many dramaturgical practices within the work of the companies you programme? Do you find that this approach brings (m)any differences with it?
3. To what extent do you feel you or your colleagues employ dramaturgical skills within any aspects of your/their roles?
4. Who, if anyone, do you currently work with to support programming decisions and view potential new work? [how do you assess the calibre of new work and/or commissioning artists]
5. Who, if anyone, do you work with in the development of work - including collecting and mediating feedback and advising artists?
6. How do you work to mediate relationships with your audiences?
7. Are there any other possible applications of dramaturgical skills or approaches that you recognise or foresee within your organisation?
8. Do you have any concerns about the practice or principles of dramaturgy? If so, what are they?
9. Would you welcome more information and debate about the practice of dramaturgy? If so, how might this be best delivered?

The aim of the research was to uncover fields of dramaturgical practice within companies and institutions making and supporting non text-based performance. Then research outcomes were to feed into business planning for the Dramaturgs' Network to relate the services of the organisation more closely to the needs of practitioners and sector.

## **The Findings**

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### *Phase One*

The first question was designed to draw out awareness of the principles of dramaturgy in relation to non-text based companies' idea of their own work. Despite consistent demurring, more than 90% of companies were able to give a detailed dramaturgical characterisation of their work, and were clearly adept at analysing it in such terms. Over half of those questioned had an explicit understanding of the term, broadly this corresponding to those whose training had been completed more recently or whose work was particularly influenced by European practice.

The overwhelming response to Question Two admitted the use and need for an outside eye in the creation of new work. All of those questioned had established structures within which to receive feedback on the development of their work, the quality of objectivity being paramount. Resources included other practitioners, children and young people and, significantly other artists and academics whose prime characteristic was a degree of critical distance. The relationship of the majority of these practitioners to the work was essentially dramaturgical ('She is not a director or performer, and so does not have an interest in imposing her stamp upon the work...making her an excellent outside eye'). Dramaturgical processes, such as peer review, scratch performances and structured feedback were identified by more than three quarters of those interviewed as crucial to the development of their work. The validity of more sophisticated demands from these processes, such as mediated feedback structures rather than wholesale acceptance of external review was continually reiterated<sup>2</sup>.

Question three raised significant discrepancies between audience and industry reception of work. Whilst peer review was deemed vital to the development of work in question 2, producers and programmers were generally mistrusted in their analysis of new work: 'I find many producers and programmers actually have quite a limited appreciation of how a piece of work has been made and what it is aiming at'. More than 60% of correspondents felt that their work could not be accommodated within the classification of marketers and programmers and that to do so narrowed its scope. Audiences, on the other hand, were seen as able to engage directly with the material and their 'untutored' responses were of the most value although the most difficult to clearly identify, except loosely from live interaction within the frame of the piece. Confusion between different 'audiences' professional and amateur, in the reception of the work, was clear in the majority of responses and a desire for industry responses to the work which were agenda-free and a more work-centric was brought up by half of those questioned.

Answers to 3b) similarly reflected this desire for greater fluidity of reception and communication between company, audience and

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<sup>2</sup> An issue similarly raised at New Work Network's Feedback Café, October 2006.

programmer although notions of how to achieve this were varied and often vague (networks of programmers were often suggested as means of giving work greater regional presence although the possibility that this might delimit the variety of artists and companies supported was often overlooked). Specific resources requested included networking opportunities; advice on making show-reels and both audience-focused and process-based professional development opportunities looking at structuring or communication of ideas was also welcomed in more than half of the companies' responses.

### *Phase Two*

The aims of the second phase of research were to ascertain if dramaturgical activity was occurring within organisations in contexts different to the straightforward production of work; also to involve a number of strategic organisations in the potential development of the Network and in dramaturgical practice generally.

#### *Questions 1 and 9*

Several correspondents recognised that the survey itself enacted advocacy by creating an opportunity to define dramaturgical practice, allowing them to identify elements of dramaturgical activity in their own work. All correspondents felt that they would benefit from further information about the practice, and that it might be relevant to their work, and the majority were interested in taking part in CPD activity. Three organisations<sup>3</sup>, whose work was notably developmental, explicitly interpreted dramaturgy as integral to the work of their organisation. The roles of artist development and creative producing were deemed to have a major cross over with dramaturgical practice.

#### *Questions 2, 3 and 7*

Despite the textual associations of the term, the reality of artists performing a dramaturgical function within total theatre and new work sectors (although not necessarily operating under that name) was broadly accepted. Sectors such as new circus, live art, physical theatre and street art were particularly highlighted as ripe for dramaturgical input, as forms whose discourses are more demanding and work processes less concrete than other parts of the sector. The usefulness of outside eye work across the new work sector was emphatically agreed by those with an overview, outlining both its artistic and economic advantages for devisers often wary of directors' imposition on collaborative work, and unable to afford the constant presence of a director. Dramaturgical activity was also identified within marketing and fundraising activity also raised, although two correspondents emphasised the danger of allowing the remit for the job description to grow too wide and 'woolly'.

#### *Questions 4, 5 and 6*

Responses indicated that formal and informal peer networks were reasonably well established, particularly regionally, which support the work of producing agencies in many of the more dramaturgical aspects of

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<sup>3</sup> Green Room, BAC and PANDA.



their roles, such as programming or assessing work, although the minefield of assessing work was also emphasised by several correspondents. In effect peer-to-peer networks such as these can be seen as dramaturgical fora. Several organisations reported on evolved structures within which to modulate engagement with developing work and with their audiences which were also dramaturgical in approach. There was a clear generational discrepancy from self-definition as of arts managers as 'artistic rather than artists' to value in more creative individual responses in younger practitioners. This suggests a perceived market for dramaturgical training for a new generation of arts manager as well as artists, and that more sophisticated models increasingly in operation for the development of work and for audience development also offer a space for dramaturgical input.

### *Question 8*

Concerns were articulated by all correspondents about the definition of the term, and the importance of regulating or developing this. There was a perceived risk in the role becoming a catch-all or panacea for new work making with no specific artistic territory of its own and thus no real respect or recognition. Two correspondents expressed concerns about there being room in the process for a dramaturg without it impinging on the role of the director, and the difficulties of negotiating this space. Several correspondents<sup>4</sup> also highlighted the vital importance of training for those taking on such a sensitive role in relation to others' work, to protect both the work and the integrity of the role. Dramaturgy was seen as, in effect, a highly specialised skill, with a need to define and develop its own specialism.

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<sup>4</sup> Green Room, PANDA, LIMF

## **Conclusions**

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Dramaturgical practice is as useful to the development of non text-based work and artists as it can be to literary development. In a sector working in diverse forms and processes and often on collaborative models, dramaturgical awareness is central to developing work, working with a dramaturg may present economic and practical advantages.

There is a requirement for enhanced profile and definition for the discipline.

There is an urgent requirement to develop and support the specific skills used by the dramaturg, to support the sensitive work many practitioners are undertaking and to enact advocacy for the role through promoting good practice.

Possible applications for dramaturgical skills can be seen to cross over with skills for programmers, arts managers and arts development organisations. Rather than seeing this as a dilution of the role, it may more usefully be seen as a market for activity developing skills and profile of the dramaturg.

The work of the dramaturg might in future encourage greater fluidity between the work of artists and arts managers

## **Section 2 - DRAMATURGY: The symposia held in Birmingham and London 2005-2006**

Tony Craze

### **Contents**

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Review of context

Key questions

Findings from the symposiums

Summary and pointers for the future

*A note on definitions used in the report*

dramaturgy: *the practice of facilitation of aspects of public performance work toward a cohesive whole*

British model of dramaturgy: *where the major dramaturgical work is done on a script prior to rehearsal*

Continental model of dramaturgy: *where dramaturgical work encompasses the entire production*

model: *umbrella term to describe numbers of different processes*

process: *series of different methodologies selected and designed to meet facilitation requirements of particular personnel, projects and productions*

methodology: *a specific facilitation strategy within any process*

dramaturge: *operating personnel defined by function performed within any particular process under review*

## **Brief review of Context**

Dramaturgy has been operative throughout theatre history. The audience function in the dramaturgical process was not absent in Shakespeare's work. The great actor managers of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries oversaw the dramaturgy of their productions. But with the 'democratisation of theatre', following the end of the World War II, the new play, in 1956, assumed a previously unarticulated importance - how such productions were created, and how similar future plays might be written and produced were questions which naturally arose. Dramaturgical practice in British theatre began to be articulated.

The writers workshops held in the old paint shop in Flood Street, run by George Devine and Bill Gaskill, may have ceased, once the particular group of writers outgrew them, but writers now knew - the Royal Court was a place they might get help if they sent in a script.

The model for the contemporary literary department began to evolve, and its function was given high profile in 1963 with the appointment of Kenneth Tynan as the National Theatre's first literary manager.

The 60's consciousness of the need for new audiences, indeed of the future of theatre production being in new plays, saw a certain market demand for new work and notions of a literary manager and literary department may then well have infiltrated the explosion of theatre companies after 1968. In reality, however, most of these were backroom strategies failing to cope with material piling up by the day.

And although emerging from these backrooms now, were those who became known by writers as 'someone good to talk to about your play...', (literary consultants, script advisers), any serious address of a notion of dramaturgy (had the process then been articulated as such), relied on sporadic initiatives - the odd weekend workshop; dedicated writers groups; the Arts Council of Great Britain itself would admit it 'didn't know what to do with workshops'. . . albeit one might apply for funding for such.

Through the eighties however, a number of individuals began networking the idea that aspects of the craft of playwriting might be learned (if not taught); soon more sustained workshop programmes were instituted; playwrights networks began to grow; readings proliferated; conferences and gatherings were held where a flirtation with the term dramaturgy began.

Through the nineties, different initiatives beamed an articulating lens on the practice: Rules of Engagement (Albany, 1992); Developing Theatre Language (RNT Studio 1996); establishment of the Dramaturgs Network (1999); with London Arts even operating a trainee dramaturge scheme for British Asian practitioners.

Elsewhere theatre directing courses had become common. University playwrighting courses were being established. 'Dramaturgy' saw her opportunity and insinuated herself through such endeavours. Indeed, there soon were courses for dramaturges too . . .

The professionalisation of theatre was underway, and dramaturgy now a familiar term. Except – suddenly someone said – it wasn't dramaturgy, since it didn't follow the Continental model. So what had we all been doing the last 15 years?

The 'regionalisation' of theatres, emphasizing consciousness of community identity (and identity of different communities), called for still more articulation of the process by which work might be made – from which context; which aesthetic; which culture; for whom? And literary managers then, to take care of these calls, might appoint workshop directors, project directors, or even - project dramaturges. Had the latter appointee had a 'Continental education', they might be in for a rude awakening – as one well known director, when informed there would be a dramaturge working on his project, responded, 'Does that mean I have to let her interfere with me?'

But there was no doubt British Theatre culture was coming under the influence . . . LIFT gave London productions in which there was only a director and dramaturge to be credited; British practitioners were appointed as dramaturges in Germany – and returned to tell the tale. When soon the new RSC literary manager appointee, adopted the preferred title 'dramaturge', well might the novice have asked, 'What does he do? And who's the literary manager anyway?'

But now dramaturges had been appointed to Northern Stage, to Polka, and to Tinderbox (even if at the latter, the post title 'literary manager' was retained – 'for funding reasons'). Conversely however more than one GfA applicant, applying for funding to write a script, would be informed the application might be improved by addition of a dramaturge to the process . . .

No surprise, those considered the de facto, primary creators of British theatre – the writers – were somewhat confused. Dramaturgy was surrounded in mystique, somewhat threatening, yet still with a certain dark attraction . . . how might the veils be lifted, and the process be demystified? Appropriately at this stage, ACE Theatre Strategy mooted that perhaps there was an initiative by which a clear snapshot of the landscape could be taken, to better see existing milestones, and perhaps project future landmarks . . .

It was to be an initiative taken forward, by numbers of partners across the country, supported by and in liaison with ACE theatre officer, Charles Hart, and resulted in the two symposia exploring dramaturgy, in Birmingham and London, held 2005-6.

This report looks at the snapshot taken; at the clarity of the landscape described; and likely future directions suggested through the symposia.

## **Key questions**

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Outcomes of any critical symposium maybe somewhat intangible – there are not usually, easily measurable, specific objectives – say of appointment of at least three dramaturges to RFO's . . .

Nonetheless questions can be drawn, and set against original objectives of the umbrella initiative, and against more specific, individual objectives of separate symposiums, and a fair indication of the overall impact of the activity calculated.

Overall objectives of the symposia were seen to be:

- to contribute to a national critical debate on dramaturgy in Britain
- to enhance overall understanding of dramaturgy practice
- to explore and make more widely known different processes used

## **Findings – 1**

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Across the symposia, dramaturgy was explored through:

- presentations on script dramaturgy – given by Tim Fountain, and by Noel Grieg
- presentations on production dramaturgy – given by Frauke Franz, Hanna Slattne, and Duska Radosavljevic
- case studies of writers and dramaturges working together
  - o focusing script dramaturgy prior to rehearsal
  - o focusing script dramaturgy during rehearsal
  - o focusing script dramaturgy with groups of writers
  - o focusing production dramaturgy with live artists
- through presentations on models of dramaturgy in operation beyond Britain – given by Mary Luckhurst, Thomas Frank, and Gabriel Gbadamosi
- and through four discussion groups (salons) exploring:
  - o off line drama – facilitated by Roney Fraser-Munro
  - o whose play is it anyway – facilitated by Ola Animashawun
  - o cultural perception versus individuality – facilitated by Janet Steel
  - o dramaturgy of the audience – facilitated by Gabriel Gbadamosi

The range of processes presented, is reviewed here, under the following headings:

- script dramaturgy processes prior to rehearsal
- script dramaturgy processes during rehearsal
- script dramaturgy processes applied to groups of writers
- production dramaturgy processes

Specific focus, on any individual presentation or case study below, is only on those aspects that provoked critical debate.

### *Script dramaturgy processes prior to rehearsal*

These were delivered through case studies – writers and dramaturges in dialogue together:

- Amber Lone (writer) and Ben Payne (dramaturge) on work at Birmingham Rep
- Tanika Gupta (writer) and Lin Coghlan (dramaturge) on work at the RNT Studio
- Sarah Woods (writer) and Laurie Sansom (dramaturge) on work at Birmingham Rep & Scarborough Theatre
- Wayne Buchanan (writer) and Annie Castledine (dramaturge) together with Karena Johnson (director) on work with Kushite Theatre Company

While each process outlined was particular to the project in hand, and to the writer and dramaturge at work, processes shared a number of elements:

- work was usually conducted on a one to one basis
- initial focus was on the (somewhat instinctual) making of a relationship between writer and dramaturge:
  - o establishing trust
  - o a shared respect,
  - o a common sensibility
- emphasis in the initial stages of the work, was on enabling the writer to excavate through 'the chaos of early creation', toward identification of the truth of the motivating impulse
- later stages focused crafting of the identified impulse, through story, character development, plot – areas in which it was considered 'easier' for the dramaturge to input subject to finding 'the right vocabulary'.

As a procedure, this proved to be a generic aspect of any process, operating where focus is on development of a particular script. But the unique particularities of each case study, are informative of the adaptability of the overall practice.

Writer, Lone had spoken to dramaturge, Payne (in an initial series of café meetings), of her concerns following attacks on the World Trade Centre in NY – concerns about Muslim reaction in the communities she knew, about reaction against Muslims . . . How might she explore this?

Payne suggested, 'Let's hear the voices – see if there's a play there.'

Three monologues were put before an audience. Payne saw a potential dramatic cohesion, and suggested refinement toward a 25 minute piece for later presentation.

The topicality of the subject, and journalistic perspective of audience and critics on the material, (distinct from a theatrical aesthetic perspective) – it was to be deemed 'a play about the Tipton three' – ensured, especially in Birmingham, considerable 'buzz' following its presentation. A decision was taken to go to production and a deadline set for the production – which Payne, fortuitously, was elected then to direct.

Recounted through emails, which writer and dramaturge had since passed between them, and here read out to the symposium, this single process raised numbers of critical issues, which were to emerge across the symposia):

- the 'reading' as part of the process
- the audience operating a dramaturgical function on material
- the 'deadline' as part of the process
- the dramaturge as director (and thus the continuing dramaturgical role through rehearsals)



Writer, Gupta, and dramaturge, Coghlan, worked together at the RNT Studio where Gupta was on attachment – Coghlan being hired on a freelance basis. The process described here, reflecting generic stages outlined above, and focusing on the nature of the fusion of inter personal and working relationships, evidently prospered particularly because of Coghlan's non institutionalized status.

Critical issues to emerge from this dialogue (which are again taken up later) include:

- the independent status of the dramaturge
- the nature of the relationship between writer and dramaturge

Buchanan and Castledine worked, together with Johnson, artistic director of Kushite - a project funded company often reliant on co production interest. There was then no programmed production slot awaiting - and no real deadline set for the dramaturgy programme - indeed, it was to be a two year relationship – 'long enough to be tempestuous', said Castledine, and stressed it was not a social arrangement.

Johnson stated Castledine has been chosen (in addition to her proven reputation) 'because she knew the territory'. Selection of course was contingent on Buchanan's approval.

Castledine stressed her approach, through individual tutorials, to which Johnson was also invited, embodied rigour.

'A play is made through its architecture; this gives the central idea, and the narrative . . . every word is then finely wrought by the writer, and meaning follows through . . .'

Castledine and Buchanan stressed the value of actors reading the text at particular stages – 'to give a shared three dimensional experience of the play'.

'Actors can be seen as tools to gauge content . . .' said Buchanan. 'The Search of the Moor', the play under scrutiny here, actually received four readings – the first taking the whole day – before being deemed ready to go to the rehearsal floor.

Buchanan also focused a distinction undergone as writer between that aspect of process focused to craft; and the personal process – suggesting the need to evaluate the two objectively, to be bold enough to stay with the fear of the latter process, and learn from the vulnerability. But this meant choice of the dramaturge was thus crucial – echoing Tim Fountain at Birmingham who had commented: 'You choose your theatre as you would a church – and your dramaturge as you would a priest.'

Critical issues to emerge from the Buchanan/Castledine encounter include:

- selection and choice of dramaturge

- the time scale of any dramaturgy programme
- the relationship between writer, dramaturge, and director

The process relayed through the work of Woods and Sansom particularly focused:

- the importance of that initial coming together of writer and dramaturge
- considerations where the dramaturge is also a director.

Both stressed the importance of a genuine shared sensibility, and trust, as pre requisites for work between writer and dramaturge. Samson spoke of the difficulties a director, working as dramaturge, may find in anticipating 'the directorial vision' and allowing anxiety about this to impinge on integrity of the writer's vision.

Critical issues taken forward here include:

- the nature of the relationship
- the director as dramaturge

#### *Script dramaturgy processes during rehearsal*

Kwame Kwei-Armah, writer, and Angus Jackson, director, worked at the RNT on *Fix-Up* and *Elmina's Kitchen*. The relationship had been established during workshops on *Fix-Up* at the RNT Studio, following which, three way meetings took place with Armah, Jackson, and dramaturge, Nick Drake – meetings joined from time to time by NT literary manager Jack Bradley.

Going into a six week rehearsal period, which would enable Armah still to make changes, raised the question – must the dramaturge in rehearsal be a writer (as Nick Drake), or can necessary skills be seen as an extension of the director's – a function to be performed here by director, Jackson.

The particular focus to emerge from this process was on the writer's reworking of aspects of the script, which could only be fully understood when in performance. 'It was a process of listening . . . not to the script . . . rather the sense it might make to an audience – to white folks . . . things like that . . .' The process allowed a gauging of a sense of pace, emerging subtext and overall shape - elements a work only assumes on the floor.

Armah described himself as undoubtedly the beneficiary of good dramaturgy, and while citing the NT as both protective bubble and 'coal face', it was a bubble within which dramaturge and director had a duty to ask hard questions of the writer – and the writer a responsibility to respond - and when appropriate state: 'That's not the play I want to write . . .'

Critical issues raised here include:

- the dramaturgy process in rehearsal and the degree to which it might be writer centered, or broader . . .
- relationship of dramaturge to director
- relationships between theatre establishment and writer

*Script dramaturgy processes applied to groups of developing writers.*

While the engine of good script dramaturgy – the concern to facilitate and empower a writer to touch the heart of their truth, and to deliver through good crafting, a developed theatre work from that initial impulse – remains (from evidence of the symposiums), the kernel of any script dramaturgy process, dramaturgy programmes will usually be structured to meet specific needs of writers, and specific groups of writers – and sometimes specific theatre agendas.

Programmes embodying processes for application to groups of developing writers, were outlined, by Esther Richardson (New Writing Partnership), with Oladipo Agboluaje, and Janet Steel (Kali Theatre Company), with Azama Dar.

Richardson heads the New Writing Partnership (NWP) – now an independent script development organization, supported by the consortium of theatres, which originally helped establish NWP, in an endeavour to create a culture of new writing (in the region).

Activity outlined at the symposium focused work with the Eclipse programme, a project backed by the theatre consortium, to address the dearth of middle scale work from Black writers, and to develop suitable material toward commission.

NWP built on its experience of running a similar project, Hosanna, for writers, at Leicester Haymarket, where six writers from an Asian background, had developed work, knowing only one would be commissioned – and that after six weeks each would submit and pitch for the single commission – a process which inevitably produced tensions – not least between development toward a specific agenda, and of the individual voice.

In the Eclipse project, structure of the laboratory phase then was separated out from the commissioning phase. Ten writers were enlisted, and paid, to spend an initial period together, during which they would work on a single scene. As important, in this first coming together of writers, was the aim to create 'a culture to change the industry . . .' – and thus peer networking assumed a pivotal role.

Agboluaje emphasized the value of peer networking in affirming the individual voice, against questions which emerged during workshops given by different practitioners, regards the gender, race and class assumptions inherent in 'a national aesthetic' or any definition of middle scale . . .

After a months break writers returned to actor-director workshops. Richardson acted here as mentor to writers exposed to individual dramaturges according to the nature of the workshop in progress.

Next followed a presentation to theatre managements, and only at this time were writers informed of the commission potential. 'Had we known, most would probably not have entered the programme,' commented Agboluaje.

In the event all 10 writers received seeding commissions (five of which were later fully commissioned)

Critical issues raised here include:

- structures and goals of dramaturgy programmes
- in any intervention to change the industry, is it more important to build networks than to 'find the next playwright'?
- distinctions between mentor and dramaturge
- on theatres relationship to an authentic, open ended lab process - developing middle scale work called for definitions – whose middle scale?
- theatres as guardians of the status quo

A second programme, designed for groups of developing writers, here of Asian women playwrights, was presented by Steel, artistic director of Kali Theatre Company, together with writer, Azama Dar.

Kali's is an initial two-step process:

Shorts:

- in which writers, meeting weekly over three months, are invited to work on a short piece, during which time, theatre professionals will give seminars

Futures:

- to which four writers from the Shorts programme will be invited to develop work further, together with a dramaturge, and workshops with director and actors, concentrating on character development and character through lines. Material resulting will be viewed for its production potential, following a public reading with which Futures culminates.

Dar's journey through this process was tracked through a dialogue with Steel, in which it became evident, that the early relationship between writer and artistic director, and the latter's response and commitment to the work, was all important.

Dramaturgical input had been made during the Futures programme by company dramaturge, Penny Gold, and additionally offered in terms of audience feedback following the public readings – written feedback which would be filtered before being passed on to the writer.

Following Dar's reading, and positive response, a dedicated dramaturge was next enlisted. Notwithstanding a synchronous matching of cultural backgrounds, between writer and dramaturge, Steel began to see that perspectives on the script and its development were not in synchronization. The artistic director then reverted to role of dramaturge, and moved the project to production.

Critical issues raised from the encounter include:

- criteria for the structure of any development programme:
  - o for whom is the programme written
  - o what are the goals (balancing voice development and skills learning)
  - o to be delivered by whom
  - o when
- selection and matching of dramaturge to writer

### *Production dramaturgy processes*

Production dramaturgy, as evidenced through the symposia, follows the Continental model, and encompasses - where there is a writer on the project - elements of script dramaturgy (if not from the same perspective as the British model), before continuing into rehearsal, where the emerging production will be viewed as a collaborative endeavour, open to dramaturgical input from all disciplines, input given coherence by the dramaturge, working in service to the director's vision.

Presentations at the symposia focused on the stage of script dramaturgy, conducted by a production dramaturge, rather than the overall process of production dramaturgy. Key points of that stage are extracted from the presentations below.

In her Birmingham keynote, Frauke Franz outlined the following elements of her work:

- work when with a writer is to facilitate location of appropriate theatre language to begin exploration of the writer's idea
- work is not to arrive at a beautiful text, but a text open to input from overall production processes/disciplines
- the dramaturge as advocate for the production, facilitates inputs toward a coherent structuring of forms and languages
- the process is applied across new work, new writing, devised work and classical work.

Franz illustrated the process referencing the structure of Polka's year long Play-grounding programme, which involves five writers and is composed of the following key elements:

- writers begin with a five page synopsis, attending a week long workshop, consisting of one to one dramaturgy, but focusing theatre as a collaborative process and the way different disciplines can influence texts
- writers go away to write, less the finished text, more a script where there are spaces for a director's and actors' interpretation and input
- a two day workshop with directors and actors, then sets the text aside, and explores the potential of the idea, and how this might influence further writing
- this initial process concludes with a staged reading

Critical issues raised from this presentation include:

- the dramaturge function as advocate for production rather than writer alone
- the focus of the script dramaturgy component, and distinctions from 'stand alone' script dramaturgy

A like process, outlined by Hanna Slattne in her work with Tinderbox - a new writing company led by a directorial vision - focused on a script which 'structurally did not work'. A week long workshop was organized with *two* directors, the writer of the script, and Slattne, to look at the idea and possibilities of structure and language.

They took a three pronged perspective on the material:

- what's the material about – what are the choices
- what's the potential for development of theme, characters, etc
- what has emerged from work on the floor – what devices, rhythms, etc, which might be carried forward

S stressed that all decisions were related back to the first question – thus upholding the integrity of the writer's impulse.

Critical issues arising include:

- is any production, the writer's vision – or a director's vision
- do playwrights define their function by preconceived ideas of creative primacy

Duska Radosavljevic, dramaturge with Northern Stage (NS), viewed dramaturgy as an international practice – with script dramaturgy pertaining to new writing, as but one variant, rather than a different 'cultural activity'.

Dramaturgical processes she employs in her work with the ensemble company of NS, where she works bridging theory and practice, across different theatrical forms, cover a wide range of projects:

- oral story telling
- dance
- classical
- contemporary plays

- new media

Radosavljevic touched on the importance of her role to *an ensemble*, pointing out that, 'the dramaturge's reflection and articulation of processes', was to pave the way to new possibilities, and was not about censorship.

Radosavljevic however acknowledged that here she was, 'only scratching the surface of her role - and not talking about the intricacies of the work . . .'

Critical issues arising here include:

- the *perception* of the dramaturge who follows the Continental model
- necessity *for* a dramaturge within an ensemble company

Further insight into such working processes was offered by Thomas Frank, speaking of his work as dramaturge and head of programme at Sophienmsaele, in Berlin – work which he characterizes as 'inventing structures for artistic approaches . . .'

- working in the tradition of the German dramaturge, operating from a social/political perspective
- beginning any project with 'an idea about a performance'
- commissioning of productions (not plays) following discussions with the artistic director and a programming decision
- working next with all disciplines on the question of 'how to realize the idea . . .'

Frank also outlined (at the London symposium), his work as dramaturge with live British artists Mem Morrison and Robin Deacon:

- facilitation here was of artists in process of making the production – a process directly parallel to that of the dramaturge in rehearsal
- one to one work was conducted through Frank's daily visits to the studio in which the artists worked
- essential characteristics of the dialogue between Frank and the artists was:
  - o of questioning the material in progress – it's impetus and the resulting imagery in the space
  - o questioning how the material might translate to an audience
  - o how different elements may be understood
  - o offering a different perspective on the work and encouraging the artists to take a new perspective, which might then provoke them to mine further to the truth of their exploration

Morrison acknowledged Frank's contribution – citing how in a work around his own bullying at school he had originally planned to use a young child . . . Frank suggested he try 'doing away with the boy . . .'

- this enabled Morrison to go deeper into his own impulse to make the work.

Critical issues arising here include:

- identification of elements of process which may be transposable to script dramaturgy
- dramaturgical function of the audience for which a work is intended

Dramaturgy of the audience, was also spotlighted by Gabriel Gbadamosi, in presentations in both Birmingham and London. Examined as an encompassing process within dramaturgy practice, it is actually a component of all processes, of which script dramaturgy, and production dramaturgy must take cognizance.

The function of the audience as dramaturge, was illustrated with reference to the making of theatre in Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda, and composed the following points:

- the primacy of any work commences before 'theatre makers' begin production
- work is drawn from, and directed to audience concerns and subtexts
- the dramaturgy of the audience operates as an impetus to write, and as final shaper of the process
- the function does not cease operation until the work meets the audience *in* presentation

Critical issues arising here include:

- how might writers/theatre makers take cognizance of the audience function, in allowances made for:
  - o the dynamic of the actor in performance
  - o agendas any audience will bring to a work and so shape its reception

Allied processes were examined in the salon, Off Line Drama, facilitated by Roney Fraser-Munro. This looked at processes operating in interdisciplinary, cross art form, and compositional process led work. It included presentations from Garfield Allen, and from Jeff Caffrey, the latter outlining devised work on the making of a film – where finally the subjects of the film – young people – became dramaturges, and effectively also directors and producers.



## **Findings - 2**

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Critical issues arising from presentations outlined above are subsumed here under the following headings:

- On the nature of the relationship between dramaturge and writer
- On contexts of the dramaturgical function and status of the dramaturge
- On the qualifications of dramaturges
- On the structure of dramaturgical programmes
- On distinctions between functions of the lit' man', the dramaturge and the mentor
- On distinctions between script dramaturgy and production dramaturgy
- On the location of appropriate finding and matching mechanisms for writers and dramaturges
- On sustainability issues around the forward movement and good practice of script and production dramaturgy

The questions raised, relevant to each heading, (together with some points of consensus) were:

### *On the nature of the relationship between writer and dramaturge*

- was the function of the relationship concerned with script development, rather than a mentoring process, which focuses *writer* development
- is trust more easily established when the dramaturge is appointed from outside, rather than part of an institution
- a characteristic of any process is questioning and provocation of a writer to take a different perspective on material, rather than 'teaching playwrighting'.
- there is a balance between the relationship as 'a social arrangement' – and as rigorous enquiry, in which dramaturge is friend for the journey, but also, where necessary, a tempered enemy . . .
- writer and dramaturge embark on a shared journey in which often, the depth of conversations, may focus well springs which can provide the key to the end of the journey . . .
- a shared sensibility and theatrical taste, more quickly establishes trust and a working respect than any formal qualification . . .
- the relationship will usually follow twin tracks:
  - o the dramaturge traveling with the writer through the chaos of the forest, lighting paths, which the writer wishes to explore
  - o the dramaturge offering as appropriate, questions and provocation on theme management, character development, plot.
- what is the appropriate point at which the dramaturge hands over to the director
- is the relationship born of an aesthetic imperative or of defensive risk limitation concerns

### *On contexts of the dramaturgical function and the status of the dramaturge*

(In addition to points raised from the presentations and case histories – below – ‘contexts’ were the subject of much of the discussion comprising the four salons conducted at Oval House, especially Cultural Perception versus Individuality, and points from this salon have been subsumed here):

- to what extent do dramaturges employed by theatres, influence a writer toward a theatre management’s inherent agenda, at expense of loss or inhibition of integrity of the writer’s voice
- are institutional dramaturges de facto gatekeepers of the status quo
- what might be a healthy structural relationship between a theatre, it’s commissioning policies, and support of any opened ended lab process
- in establishment of any dramaturgical programme designed as an intervention to foster under represented cultures, how might the following elements be prioritized
  - o the function of peer affirmation and networking
  - o the function of script development toward preset commissioning ends
  - o the function of voice development
  - o the notion of competitiveness ‘designed to spur writers . . .’
  - o the notion of developing ‘Black or Asian experience’, against asking Black or Asian writers, ‘to write from your *own* experience . . .’

### *On the qualification of dramaturges*

- while dramaturges do not have to be writers, ought they not to have made the journey before
- a dramaturge needs to know the theme/territory the writer is setting out to explore
- concerns to match gender/race/culture of writer and dramaturge should not override more essential criteria
- directors also working as dramaturges require an ability to set aside the director’s agenda
- does a dramaturge work objectively

### *On the structure of dramaturgical programmes*

- a dramaturgy programme may be structured by address of the following questions
- what are the goals
  - o to support writers
  - o or theatre
- what are the matching and selection arrangements
  - o can writers walk away
  - o can dramaturges walk away

- what components and skills might be called for through any programme
  - o input from other theatre disciplines
  - o readings
  - o workshops
  - o audience feedback
  - o deadlines
- at what stage might these be best scheduled
- at what stage should dramaturgy itself commence – after first draft or on inception of idea
- how might the structure of any programme be influenced when there is no theatre building support and no production deadline – what governs the schedule?

*On distinctions between functions of the lit' man', the mentor and the dramaturge*

- is the lit man focused to infra structure, script management, and address of the theatre agenda alone
- does a dramaturge bridge literary department function and production function (where the dramaturge is working to the Continental model)
- is a mentoring function – the concern with a writers overall development – a distraction from the dramaturgical function on a particular piece of work - what are the inevitable overlaps
- will any distinction be cancelled by the literary manager who also functions as dramaturge and mentor

*On distinctions between script dramaturgy and production dramaturgy*

- are distinctions between a British and Continental model, addressed in the structure of any programme
- is any dramaturge attached to a writer focused to script dramaturgy (alone) or to production dramaturgy (which will view the script, as but a first step in a more encompassing process)
- is it appreciated that the aesthetic distinctions mean far more than the dramaturge simply not being in rehearsal (in the British model)
  - o is the dramaturge serving the director's vision
  - o is the dramaturge working to envisage a text 'open to input and interpretation from other disciplines - a text to be developed in rehearsal' – or as in the British model, a play open to the collaborative rehearsal process of any production
- which aspects of production dramaturgy might *transpose* to script dramaturgy
- are writers bound by a pre conception of how they have to work (as primary creators) - is there a need for 'writer education'
- what is the difference in function between a dramaturge in rehearsal focused to script dramaturgy, and a dramaturge in rehearsal focused to production dramaturgy

*On location of appropriate finding and matching mechanisms for writers and dramaturges*

- when writing a script on spec, where might a writer find a dramaturge
- is there funding for attachment of a dramaturge to a script to be written on spec
- how might you assess a dramaturge's qualification
- do you need or have to have a dramaturge

*On sustainability issues around the forward movement and good practice of script and production dramaturgy*

- rather than individual symposiums being isolated platforms, might there be a mechanism for:
  - o setting down and disseminating proceedings of the symposiums
  - o publication of a guide to good practice or toolkit
  - o a continuing forum
- to what extent do director's HE & FE courses feature work with new writing and writers
- to what extent do courses for dramaturges feature work with writers, distinct from work with forms and language – or are dramaturges educated only to a Continental model

## **Summary and pointers for the future**

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### *Pointers for the future drawn from the critical heart of the symposia*

The practice of script dramaturgy offers a processing tool enabling delivery in crafted theatrical form of the individual voice; it enables the examination and shaping of ideas; it enables a defining of experience; an ordering of the chaos. It is a tool enabling individual voices to contribute to the culture of our times and thereby advance understanding of ourselves.

The kernel of script dramaturgy processes is the rigorous testing of material in development, the provocation to a writer to reveal the heart of their impulse; the questioning of appropriateness of structures, character development and plot; and in production dramaturgy, similar dialogues will pertain with director and other disciplines.

While there may be optional strategies to achieve this, all capable of being formalised and set down, that which is selected – the specific line of questioning, designed to provoke alternative perspective on a work – will always be particular to the dramaturge, the writer, and the project in hand – and to some extent always intuitive, drawn from experiences the dramaturge will have had when making similar journeys. Good dramaturgy will be found in the gift of the good dramaturge – a process sometimes as elusive as quick silver.

Noel Grieg reported in Birmingham on a Dutch dramaturge, who will first suggest a walk through the forest, with any writer, saying, 'We will learn about nature, and the play will write itself . . .'

British theatre practitioners need not *rely* on magic. And evident through the symposia were calls for the construction of future landmarks to further the development of dramaturgical practice:

- *for dissemination of a guide to good practice or tool kit*

From the last decade it is probably possible to list at least 10 not such dissimilar initiatives as the symposia – the dramaturgical wheel is invented annually . . . A guide to good practice may well serve as a baton, and thus avoid necessity to reinvent the wheel with such frequency.

- *for information on 'selection mechanisms' and funding opportunities*

A mapping exercise of qualified dramaturges (a '*Spotlight of . . .'*') would be a first step, enabling writers to link with dramaturges – and thus advance, together with the guide to good practice, frequency and development of the practice itself.

- for an ongoing forum

A dedicated forum initiative would hold potential to enable the practice to be *continually* developed – distinct from isolated events, which so often start at square one again.

### *In summary*

There are existing embryonic organizations (at least three), which might take on board any of the above three points. However, these tend to be predicated on the Continental model of dramaturgy. And while this model may increasingly be making positive incursions in British theatre, the three pointers for the future, drawn from calls across the symposia, were from a script dramaturgy perspective - the call for an ongoing forum perhaps somewhat excepted – forum development of the practice *will* encompass production dramaturgy – and there *were* calls to know more about how dramaturgy operates in non text work, as indeed in devised work.

But any future initiative must engage writers working in current practice today. The stance of production dramaturges is sometimes, '*This is dramaturgy . . .*' and negates the importance of script dramaturgy to British theatre - and alienates its writers.

The call in Britain, evidenced by the symposia, is firstly for further clarification, and exploration of script dramaturgy. Where British theatre moves to encompass other processes, practitioners will then wish to focus exploration of production dramaturgy, and fora for such exploration will evolve – driven by practitioner demand – and this may indeed emerge through any ongoing forum established initially from a script dramaturgy perspective.

It is likely then, any immediate future activity, such as outlined above, to ensure engagement with current practitioners in British theatre, will be spearheaded, by a writer sensitive spirit, one with awareness across the spectrum of dramaturgical practice, one where 'mission' is individually driven - yet one working in partnership with a wide range of sector interests.

Like theatre production, dramaturgy and the debate, will go on. Today's working voices will shape the tenor of tomorrow's debate . . .

This was the snapshot taken during the symposia held 2005-6; this was some of the sense made of landmarks identified; and some of the future milestones foreseen.

*Tony Craze has worked as theatre writer and dramaturge since winning the inaugural Verity Bargate Award, with his play, 'Shona' ('Makes going to the theatre seem a necessity rather than a luxury or diversion' (Time Out))*

*Work since includes, 'Passion', ('An honourable and engrossing attempt to explore the gulf between Western liberalism and burning Palestinian rage' (Guardian)), 'Flying Ashes', ('For those who like their theatre poetic, this is a beautiful and assured piece of work' (FT)), and 'Living With your Enemies', ('Carries an emotional charge powerful enough to send one reeling into the cold night air' (Time Out))*

*As artistic director of the Soho Theatre Company he created the first formal, theatre based, writer training programs. As Theatre Writing Associate to the Arts Council England, he established numbers of training initiatives that sought to provoke writers to write new theatre. He has led teaching programs, and workshops, with numerous professional theatres, at London's City Lit, with Syracuse University (British Centre), with the former Beaver College for Education Abroad and with the Trace Online Writing School, at Nottingham Trent University.*

## **Section 3 - Appendices**

### **1. Symposia**

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*Recent*

Manchester

Next Stages - Dramaturgy and Beyond: Writers and their Careers  
29 – 31/03/07 At Manchester Metropolitan University

Alternative Dramaturgies Symposia, Exeter University March 2006 and  
Liverpool Hope University. November 2006

London (Oval House) (Dramatrix) 12/12/05  
Birmingham (Dramaturgy, The What, The Why, The How) ,  
03/06/05

Panel discussion hosted by the Dramaturgs' Network in association with  
Literary Mangers and Dramaturgs of the Americas at the Albery Theatre,  
London on the 15/10/04

Edinburgh (Dramaturgy and The Word) 01/04/04

*Previous*

Writernet Expos at Soho Theatre 11/01 & 11/02  
Out of Context at Stratford Circus 06/01  
Dramaturgy: a User's Guide, Total Theatre & Central School of Speech &  
Drama 09/99  
Challenging Language at The Jerwood Space 09/98  
Commissioning The Future at the Young Vic 03/97  
Developing Theatre Writing, at the RNT Studio 07/96

### **2. Articles**

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***Available on The Dramaturgs' Network site:***

<http://ee.dramaturgy.co.uk/index.php/site/C8/>

Ken Bentley, *A Director's Diagnosis: Thoughts on the discussion at the  
Albery with the LMDA*

Marina Burton, *Interview with Duska Radosavljevic Dramturg at Northern  
Stage*

Sara Clifford, *A Playwright's Perspective: Thoughts on the discussion at  
the Albery with LMDA*

John Keefe, *A Dramaturg's Deduction: Thoughts on the discussion at the  
Albery with the LMDA*



John Keefe, *Dramaturgies, the Writer, the Audience: A panel session at writernet's Writers' Expo, November 2002*

John Keefe, *Looking and Listening with Knowledge*

John Keefe, Elyssa Livergrant and Katalin Trencsényi eds., *New Writing: How Do We Develop New Plays: Transcript of a panel discussion hosted by the Dramaturgs' Network in association with Literary Mangers and Dramaturgs of the Americas at the Albery Theatre, London on the 15th October 2004, Dramaturgs' Network 2004*

David Lane, *Report from the Dramaturgs' Network's Inaugural Symposium on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2002 at the Albery Theatre*

David Lane and Mavis Howard, *Exploring the Text*

Elyssa Livergant, *The Practice of a Dramaturg in Germany*

Ben Payne, *Thoughts on the dramaturg in British theatre prepared for the Dramaturgs' Network Symposium on the 18th of March 2002*

Hanna Slattne, *In-Yer-Face Conference: a dramaturg's view*

Hanna Slattne, *Work in Progress Dramaturgy Festival at Newcastle Playhouse*

**Available at Dolit – The online Journal of Creative Writing**

<http://www.dotlit.qut.edu.au/journal/writing/index.php?id=362>

Errol Bray, *The Role of The Dramaturg in New Play Development: International Perspectives*

The research into playwright development projects on which this article is based (Bray, "Pathways to Playwriting") revealed significantly different approaches to development between the nations which were the focus of the study: Australia, Canada, Germany, the UK and the USA.

**Available on PDC Dramaturgy Blog, PDC's Dramaturgy Discussion Site**

<http://www.pdc1.org/dramaturgy/>

Richard Nelson, *Richard Nelson addresses ART/NY (April 9, 2007) (for an argument against dramaturgy)*

**Available at Total Theatre**

<http://totaltheatre.org.uk/explores/reflections/dramaturgy.html>

Becky Smith, *Dramaturgy in Action*

## **Available at the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the America's**

www.lmda.org/ blog (see individual links)

M. Louise McKay, *Whose lines are they anyway?*  
[http://www.lmda.org/blog/\\_archives/2006/3/23/1836382.html](http://www.lmda.org/blog/_archives/2006/3/23/1836382.html)

Lucy Powell, *Even the RSC is hiring dramaturgs, but what do they actually do?*  
<http://www.lmda.org/blog/WhoWeAre/DramaturgyintheNews>

Liz Engelman, *What the heck's a dramaturg? TimeLine offers clues -- Chicago Tribune*  
[www.lmda.org/blog/\\_archives/2006/2/19/1772925.html](http://www.lmda.org/blog/_archives/2006/2/19/1772925.html)

## **Available at writernet**

[www.writernet.org.uk](http://www.writernet.org.uk) (see individual links)

Hanna Slattne, *A Report on the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas Conference 2006*  
<http://www.writernet.co.uk/php2/news.php?id=324&item=227>

Kate Brannigan, *Dramaturgy: A User's Guide*, 1999  
<http://www.writernet.co.uk/php2/news.php?id=324&item=192>

Chloe Veltman, *Dramaturg. Dramawot?*, 1998  
<http://www.writernet.co.uk/php2/news.php?id=322&item=59>

Jacqui Somerville, *Collaborative Theatre Practice: The role and function of the dramaturg*, 1997  
<http://www.writernet.co.uk/php2/news.php?id=322&item=55>

Jacqueline Bolton Report on *Next Stages Conference Dramaturgy and Beyond: Writers and their Careers -Held at Manchester Metropolitan University in conjunction with North West Playwrights 29<sup>th</sup> -31<sup>st</sup> March 2007*

## **Available at Dramaturgy Pages**

<http://www.dramaturgy.net/dramaturgy/what/Description.html>

Winston D. Neutel, *Thoughts on a definition of dramaturgy*

## **Available at An American Dramaturg in Armenia (Blog)**

<http://dramaturginarmenia.blogspot.com/>

Dr Mary Theatre, *An American Dramaturg in Armenia: Reflections on a 5-month sojourn as a Fulbright Scholar to the Yerevan Institute for Cinematography and Theatre*

**Available at Minnesota Public Radio**

<http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2006/07/19/dramaturgs/>

Marianne Combs, *What does a dramaturg do, and what are so many doing here?*

**Available at Dramaturgy Forum**

[www.dramaforum.com](http://www.dramaforum.com)

Alan Lyddiard and Alison Andrews, *Tightrope*  
Lyddiard and Andrews worked together, as director and dramaturg respectively, on 'New Ways of Working' - a project that places dramaturgy within its developing practice as a way of uniting what the company is with what it does.

<http://www.dramforum.com/?articleid=56&tab=archive>

alex, *When i grow up, can I be Dramaturg?*

<http://www.dramforum.com/?articleid=46>

**Available at Disability Arts Online**

[www.disabilityarts.org](http://www.disabilityarts.org) (see individual references)

Kaite O'Reilly, *alternative dramaturgies informed by a d/Deaf and Disability Perspective Symposium at Exeter University's Drama Department*

<http://www.disabilityarts.org/site/alternative-dramaturgies/>

Alicia Grace, *Alternative Dramaturgies informed by a Deaf and Disability perspective – a reviews of a symposium which took place at Liverpool Hope University in November 2006*

[http://www.disabilityarts.org/site/alicia\\_grace](http://www.disabilityarts.org/site/alicia_grace)

Colette Conroy, *disability dramaturgy: reflections on the Alternative Dramaturgies Symposium at Exeter University*

<http://www.disabilityarts.org/site/alternative-dramaturgies/alternative-dramaturgies-4.html>

**Available Elsewhere:**

Jozefina Komporály, *Crippling up is the twenty-first century's answer to blacking up": Conversation with Kaite O'Reilly on theatre, feminism and disability - 6 June 2005, British Library, London in Gender Forum, vol. 12. (2005)*

### **3. Books**

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#### ***For a collection of US texts see:***

*The Dramaturg's Bookshelf*

<http://www.amazon.com/The-Dramaturgs-Bookshelf/lm/3CLVQPTOA9GKM>

#### ***Recent UK Publications***

Mary Luckhurst, *Dramaturgy – A Revolution in Theatre* (Cambridge University Press, 2006, ISBN 0521849632)

In the first exhaustive history of the origins of dramaturgs and literary managers--people who act as advisers and play-doctors at today's theatres, Mary Luckhurst examines the major theorists and practitioners, arguing that Brecht, Granville Barker and Tynan have central roles in this history. Contentious figures, often accused of sinister intent, the numbers of dramaturgs have multiplied considerably in the last decades. This study inquires as to the political and cultural agendas behind this revolution, and whether dramaturgs are mentors or censors.

John Keefe (Editor), Simon Murray (Editor) *Physical Theatres: A Critical Reader* (Routledge, 30 Sep 2007, ISBN-10: 0415362520)

"Physical Theatres: A Critical Reader" is an invaluable resource for students of physically orientated theatre and performance. This book aims to trace the roots and development of physicality in theatre by combining practical experience of the field with a strong historical and theoretical underpinning. In exploring the histories, cross-overs and intersections of physical theatres, this critical reader provides: six new, specially commissioned essays, covering each of the book's main themes, from technical traditions to contemporary practices. It includes a discussion of issues such as the foregrounding of the body, training and performance processes, and the origins of theatre in both play and human cognition. It provides a focus on the relationship and tensions between the verbal and the physical in theatre. It contains contributions from Augusto Boal, Stephen Berkoff, Aetienne Decroux, Bertolt Brecht, David George, J-J. Rousseau, Ana Sanchez Colberg, Michael Chekhov, Jeff Nuttall, Jacques Lecoq, Yoshi Oida, Mike Pearson, and Aristotle.

John Keefe and Simon Murray, *Physical Theatres: A Critical Introduction* (Routledge, 30 Sep 2007, ISBN-10: 0415362504)

"Physical Theatres: A Critical Introduction" is the first account to provide a comprehensive overview of non text-based theatre, from experimental

dance to traditional mime. This book synthesizes the history, theory and practice of physical theatres for students and performers, in what is both a core area of study and a dynamic and innovative aspect of theatrical practice. This comprehensive book: traces the roots of physical performance in classical and popular theatrical traditions; looks at the Dance Theatre of DV8, Pina Bausch, Liz Aggiss and Jerome Bel; examines the contemporary practice of companies such as Theatre du Soleil, Complicite and Goat Island; and, focuses on principles and practices in actor training, with reference to figures such as Jacques Lecoq, Lev Dodin, Philippe Gaulier, Monika Pagneux, Etienne Decroux, Anne Bogart and Joan Littlewood. This book can be used as a standalone text, or together with its companion volume, "Physical Theatres: A Critical Reader", to provide an invaluable introduction to the physical in theatre and performance.

Cathy Turner and Synne Behrndt, Dramaturgy & Performance (Palgrave, 16 November 2007, ISBN-10: 1403996563)

There is a growing interest in 'dramaturgy' as a critical concept and as a practical process. Outlining different perspectives this book introduces both concept and practice in an accessible and engaging style. Using case studies and suggesting areas of further study, the authors provide an insight into contemporary debates and new directions

\* Ruth Little is continuing her research around metabolic dramaturgy – which to date formed the paper she gave as the opening address to the Annual Meeting of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas in Toronto in July 2007. Look out for the book's future publication

***Some reading on and around Dramaturgy, recommended as part of the Reading List for the University of Kent***

S Jonas, G Proehl, M Lupu, eds, Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book (Harcourt Brace, 1997)

Theaterschrift 5/6 (1994), *On Dramaturgy*

Theatre Research International 31:3 (2006), special issue on dramaturgy

J Daniel, ed., Dramaturgy: A User's Guide, (Central School of Speech and Drama, 1999)

E Barba, "Dramaturgy. Actions at work", in E Barba, N Savarese, eds, The Secret Art of the Performer. A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology (Routledge, 1991)

**Useful Dramaturgy journals**

**Drama Review**

<http://www.mitpressjournals.org/loi/dram?cookieSet=1>

Forum for writing all kinds of performances in their aesthetic, historical, social, economic, political, and theoretical contexts.

### **Studies in Theatre and Performance**

<http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals.php?issn=14682761>

Discusses issues related to theatre practice and to examine experiments in teaching and performance. Rather than just the end product, the processes of making theatre and performance are at the centre of enquiry.

### **Theatre Journal**

[http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theatre\\_journal/](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theatre_journal/)

Features social and historical studies, production reviews, and theoretical inquiries that analyze dramatic texts and production.

### **Theatre Research International**

<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=TRI>

Articles on theatre practices in their social, cultural, and historical contexts, their relationship to other media of representation, and to other fields of inquiry.

## **4. Weblinks**

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### **The Dramaturg's Network UK**

<http://ee.dramaturgy.co.uk/index.php/site/front/>

The Dramaturgs' Network is an organisation for UK theatre practitioners committed to developing dramaturgy and supporting practitioners development in the field. We are an informal network run by volunteer members of professionals committed to the role of the dramaturg being a production-based activity as well as a literary role in the UK.

### **The Dramaturgy Pages (US-based)**

<http://www.dramaturgy.net/dramaturgy/>

The purpose of the dramaturgy pages is to: Entertain some discussion of the question: What is a dramaturg?; Point to examples of dramaturgical work; Point to resources useful for dramaturges.

### **The Dramaturgy Forum**

<http://www.dramforum.com/?articleid=59&tab=archive>

The Forum is an archived site for developing a critical vocabulary for dramaturgy between practitioners and academics. Articles, reviews, discussion and info exchange, links.

### **Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of America (US-guild)**

<http://www.lmda.org/>

When LMDA was formed over twenty years ago, our mission was to create a national network to affirm the role of dramaturg, to expand the possibilities of the field to other media and institutions and to cultivate, develop and promote the function of dramaturgy and literary management. As an organization comprised of dramaturgs, literary managers and other like-minded artists now numbering over 500, we remain true to that initial mission. We encourage you to explore this site, read about our work, join our ranks and become a part of some of the most compelling discussions today.

### **Kontext**

[http://www.univie.ac.at/kontext/english/index\\_e.htm](http://www.univie.ac.at/kontext/english/index_e.htm)

the office for dramaturgy and performance research is an independent project supporting theoretical discussions on the aesthetics of dance and body orientated performance art. Lectures, discussions, workshops and network projects give an impetus to examinations of dance and performance art in Austria, etc. Check the links, notably the online pages on cyberdance, gender and performance theory, and the research centres.

### **Dramaturgy Northwest**

<http://www2.ups.edu/professionalorgs/dramaturgy/main.htm>

### **Dept of Dramaturgy Aarhus University, Denmark**

<http://www.dramaturgi.au.dk/department>

### **Total Theatre**

<http://www.totaltheatre.org.uk/>

### **writernet**

<http://www.writernet.org.uk>

## **5. Courses**

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### **University of Glasgow: MLitt Dramaturgy and Playwriting**

<http://www.tfts.arts.gla.ac.uk/Courses/dramplay.htm>

The course aims towards a dual training in research and methods as well as practical experience in writing and/or in a placement working in appropriate theatre companies.

**Central School of Speech and Drama: MA Advanced Theatre Practice (Dramaturgy)**

<http://www.cssd.ac.uk/postgrad.php/12/dramaturgy.html>

The Dramaturgy strand is part of the group of subjects that comprise the MA Advanced Theatre Practice, designed especially for individuals wishing to create new and innovative work for the theatre - in companies. You will be working with colleagues from other strands, exploring an integrated language of theatre and building creative teams for the future.

**Goldsmiths College: MA in Writing for Performance**

<http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/pg/ma-writing-performance.php>

This programme concentrates on the process of writing for live performance, together with an ongoing evaluation of the work in process. You choose to take a strand in either playwriting or dramaturgy, but all students examine dramaturgical issues – learning about the theatrical frameworks and different stages of theatrical production which shape and contribute to the staged event.

**King College London and RADA: MA in Text and Performance Studies**

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/gsp08/programme/103>

Offered by King's College London in collaboration with RADA, this one-year course leads to a Masters degree in Text and Performance Studies. The course offers an opportunity to explore text as a medium for performance. Lectures, seminars and tutorials at King's College are complemented by scene-study workshops with professional directors and classes with specialist skills tutors at RADA.

**University of Birmingham: MPhil Dramaturgy and MPhil (B) in Dramaturgy**

<http://www.drama.bham.ac.uk/pg/dramaturgy.htm>

By special arrangement students may elect to pursue an MPhil (B) in Dramaturgy. This course consists of all elements of the MPhil (B) in Playwriting Studies except the play script and accompanying essay. In lieu of this element Dramaturgy students present a 20,000 word dissertation on an aspect of dramaturgical theory or practice agreed in consultation with their personal tutor.

Normally applicants for the MPhil (B) in both Playwriting Studies and Dramaturgy are expected to have an Honours Degree or equivalent. However, suitable professional experience, or clear evidence of achievement in the field of playwriting, will be taken into account in assessing qualifications.

**University of Loughborough: BA Drama**

<http://www.lboro.ac.uk>



This programme combines the theory and practice of drama. The two approaches are seen not merely as complementary but as indivisible in the study of drama and theatre at degree level. Playwriting and Dramaturgy module in Year 2.

**University of Exeter: BA Drama**

<http://www.ex.ac.uk>

In the early stages of the programme the emphasis is on group collaborative work. As you move through the degree this group work becomes the basis for the development of individual interests and skills. Throughout the programme all Drama students get equal opportunities and challenges to act, to direct and to write or otherwise create dramatic events. Dramaturgy module in Year 2.

**University of Exeter: MA in Playwriting and Script Development**

<http://www.ex.ac.uk>

The programme provides students with the opportunity to explore script creation in a variety of different performance contexts, and to develop a particular line of script creation under close supervision. Dramaturgy module available.

**Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh: BA Drama & Theatre Arts**

<http://www.qmuc.ac.uk>

Through a combination of practical and theoretical study, and creative development, you will explore the ways in which the changing forms of theatre and cultural shifts in society have influenced the development of drama into its present diversity. You will gain a broad understanding of the overall contexts of theatre from a historical and contemporary perspective..

**University of Manchester: BA (Hons) Drama**

<http://www.man.ac.uk>

The study of drama in performance as well as on the printed page, addressing the various conditions that inspire dramatic production.

**Queens University College: MA English/MPhil Drama**

<http://www.qub.ac.uk>

Taught programme for MA English includes literary history and theoretical models, as well as the points of contact between the methodological practices of various disciplines (for example, art history, dramaturgy, film studies, linguistics, philosophy, et cetera). Research MA in Irish Theatre Historiography and Dramaturgy also offered.

**Queen Mary and Westfield College, London: MA Performance**

<http://www.english.qmul.ac.uk>

The MA in Performance encompasses seminars and studio-based practical courses that encourage students to explore performance through a variety of intellectual and aesthetic processes.

The Individual Practical Project includes options for Dramaturgy.

**University of East Anglia: MA in Creative Writing: Scriptwriting**

<http://www.uea.ac.uk>

Compulsory Dramaturgy unit exploring advanced elements of dramaturgical technique at advanced level study of dramatic theory in the four major performance media: theatre, film, television, radio

**University of Hull: MPhil/PhD Drama**

<http://www.hull.ac.uk>

The Centre for Performance Translation and Dramaturgy provides a focus for the study of translations of dramatic and performance material from English into other languages and from other languages into English.

**The University of Kent: BA(hons) Drama and MA Drama**

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/sdfva/Drama/dramaturgy.htm>

The University of Kent offers 'Theatre Dramaturgy' as one of its masters specialisms on the undergraduate Drama-programme, and as postgraduate MA for external candidates/postgraduates.

**University of Leeds: BA Theatre (Dramaturgy)**

<http://www.leeds.ac.uk>

On the Dramaturgy programme students are involved in the theoretical and practical creation of performance. This degree is ideal for those who have an all-round interest in theatre. Students study theatrical and literary forms, performance methods and practice, and develop understanding of contemporary cultural trends and political issues that impact on performance.

**University of Nottingham: MA in Dramaturgy and Performance Analysis**

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk>

Work is done on performance analysis and dramaturgical practice. The course appeals to those who want to combine the study of theory and practice, and makes a foundation for further work in the areas of performance and dramatic theory, whether academically or practically based.

**Nottingham Trent University: MA Theatre Art**

<http://www.ntu.ac.uk>

Projects explore contemporary issues in theatre arts and extend students' knowledge of and skills in research, dramaturgy and technology in relation to different performance contexts

### **University of Bristol: MA in Performance Research**

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/drama/postgrad/mapr/>

The NEW MA in Performance Research offers students opportunities to further their interest in a range of critical, conceptual and practical issues surrounding performance, as part of a lively and growing cohort of postgraduate students working across performance and screen media both critically and practically. Not only is the Department currently rated the highest in the country for its research - 5A\*\*, but it also houses one of the foremost archives for theatre-related materials in the country - The Theatre Collection, which amongst many key holdings recently acquired The Live Art Archives. The Department has a reputation for both the highest standards of scholarship and cutting-edge practice-led research

The programme will cover historical and contemporary contexts of production, circulation and reception of performance texts as well as a broad range of key practitioners and practices, authors and theorists. A core unit will develop students' knowledge and understanding of critical and theoretical approaches to performance and performance research issues. A range of options\* allows students to pursue a pathway of study appropriate to their interests and prior experience. It is a distinctive feature of this MA that it allows students opportunities also to work across media, with units offered from a range of performance and screen studies perspectives. The programme culminates in a dissertation, which may contain elements of performance practice.