

MONICA PRENDERGAST*Three Research Poems***Prefatory Note**

These three research poems are included as part of an interdisciplinary dissertation project in theatre and curriculum: "Audience in Performance: A Poetics of Pedagogy of Spectatorship" (Prendergast). The study, to be published under the title *Teaching Spectatorship: Essays and Poems on Audience in Performance*, offers a curriculum theory that attempts to bridge what I see as the alienating abyss that lies between performers and their audiences in much of our contemporary North American theatre culture. The fourth wall is breached and broken down through the mediating influence of education as the teacher of *pedagogy of the spectator* facilitates meaningful drama-based activities (mirroring exploratory rehearsal processes), dialogues, and other interactions between students and performing artists.

Other poetry from this study has been previously published in drama/theatre and education arts education journals. However, it is my intention to elicit some reflection and response amongst my colleagues in theatre with the placement of these poems in this particular setting.

The longer poem raises the key problem addressed in my dissertation, which is reflected upon and responded to by the two poems that follow it.

the stranger in our midst

the stranger
in our midst
in theatre
is the spectator

we open up the doors
of our
dark and secretive
creative process

and then what?

FORUM

(we let in anyone?
everyone?)

these strangers
walk in
sit down

gawp
gape
guffaw
grumble
gag

pass judgments
in applause
(or lack)
trot back home

they are
too strange
estranged (our problem)

they are not part of us

we are apart

we are not part of them

the abyss lying
between actor
&
audience
(of our own creation)
must be brought down

disrupted
dissolved

in the name of art
of authenticity
of meaning
of performance

(from estrangement to intimacy)

to care
to know

not to market

but to mark

audience attendance

becomes

attending to audience

(as we do our own creations)

with great care
with passion
with all our collective
creative powers

our very lives
depend

on the banishment

of the stranger
in our midst

residuum (n.)

#1

what remains (substance)
left after combustion/
evaporation

(Concise Oxford Dictionary)

#2

what remains
from engagement
with performance?

what residua?

for me
what remains?

the undeniable force
of essential loneliness
within the protection

FORUM

of the audience
around me

it is final moments

alone

that mark me
haunt me

in conspiracy
with actors

connecting to
characters

who embody meanings

(all for
one
one for
all)

the storytellers
who suffer

fail

die

loveandhateandfeelanddesire

too much

& are left on stage

or exiting

solitary and silent

breathing to their last breath

with (and
for)
me

Haiku

Vital performance?

Attend to the audience:

All purpose sits there.

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