PERFORMANCE TIME:
Suggestions for a Methodology of Analysis

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Time is possibly the least theorised element of the experience of performance. Though the work of Richard Schechner and others has enhanced our understanding of theatrical performance as an event situated in time and place, within both the immediate environment of performance-related warm-up and cool-down and the wider cultural matrix enclosing all of this, not enough has been done to allow us to specify the different ways of experiencing time that come together in a given performance.[1] Schechner gives brief attention to the issue of time in noting that various forms of performance, including play, games, sports, theatre, and ritual, share 'a special ordering of time'.[2] In performance activities, he emphasises, '*time is adapted to the event*, and is therefore susceptible to numerous variations and creative distortions' (Schechner's italics). He proposes three major varieties of performance time: *Event time*, in which the given sequence of an activity must be carried out however long it takes (like a church service or a scripted play); *set time*, where the event is delineated by given time parameters (like a football match); and *symbolic time*, where the action represents an activity that is different in either length or nature (like plays or rituals re-enacting events in condensed or expanded form, or the attempt to represent something like Doomsday). This approach posits broad categories that will allow whole performances to be slotted into one or another. It does not, however, seek to break down the experience of time *within* a single performance or across performances. The third category, furthermore, holds within itself two very different concepts, the duration and the nature of time. These, I would argue, need to be approached quite separately.

What I want to do here, then, is to suggest some further terms and categories for understanding and responding to performance time. Though I have begun above by directing the reader's attention to the work of one seminal performance theorist, I was first prompted to think harder about the experience of performance time by being forced to confront the bluntness and inadequacy of the familiar and theoretically unsubtle distinction between *stage time* and *real time* that I, together with many others, was bringing to the analysis of performance. This project began as

an attempt to answer a question that proved to be its own undoing. Working, as I was at first, with the simplistic *stage-time/real-time* binary, it seemed to me that the awareness of *real time* was regularly produced through clowning, and my initial question was why there should be this strong link between the two. Once I started to look closely at play texts, however, looking particularly for moments that would challenge the association of *real time* with clowning that seemed so initially dominant, I found that the binary broke down, partly because it was too simply reductive and oppositional, and partly because it sought to define modes of time as though they had objective status, while eliding the crucially subjective and constructed element of audience awareness necessarily defining the way 'real' time is experienced. The really difficult and necessary task, then, was to identify and specify how and why an audience might experience *real time* differently from moment to moment in watching a given play.[3] Patrice Pavis, whose entry on time in his *Dictionary of the Theatre* begins by formulating the *stage-time/real-time* binary, but quickly finds it necessary to move beyond that duality, also proposes the need to organise and analysis of *real time* into 'pertinent units based on its perception'.[4] It is the task of organisation that I wish to initiate here.

I propose to try to specify some of the distinctions in the audience's experience of *real time* by focusing primarily on one play, with occasional reference to others for comparative purposes. The play I have chosen to focus on is the one that first made clear to me how clumsy and inadequate my rough and ready distinction between *stage time* and *real time* was: *The Croxton Play of the Sacrament*. What first drew me to thinking about this play in relation to my proposed *clowning/real-time* link was the episode in which the comic doctor and his man burst into the play in a sequence that marks itself off as very different from the surrounding fiction about a Jew and a merchant stealing and testing the sacred Host. While some scholars have taken the view that this episode is a later addition to the play, I have argued elsewhere that it is, on the contrary, closely and importantly bound in to the shape of the experience the play offers.[5] I therefore wanted to look carefully at both the experience of time in the episode itself and the experiencing of time on either side of it.

Within the episode there are some typical markers that call attention to *real time*. First of all there is the fact that this part of the performance takes place, as the stage direction explicitly states, within 'the place' (524). Robert Weimann's pioneering work on place and scaffold (or *locus* and *platea*) staging has made clear the central significance of the interaction

and tension between these two areas of the performance space, and he notes the strong association between the place, or *platea*, and clowning.[6] Secondly, there are the deictic markers to the here and now, including direct address to the audience. The opening line of the doctor's servant, Coll, who enters first, is 'Aha, here is a fayer felawshippe' (525).[7] His speech reiterates the direct *you* form: 'I tell yow' (528, 534); the collusive *we*: 'I trowe, best we mak a crye' (561); asides to the audience (for example at line 580); and a direct reference to 'Babwell Mill' (621), a known geographical location in the vicinity of the play's place of performance, Croxton in East Anglia, rather than its fictional location of Heraclea. In all these ways the performance at this point roots itself in *real time* by rooting itself in real place and actual space.

As the clichéd phrase, 'the here and now', suggests, one of the ways in which an audience's sense of time is typically constructed as either 'real' or illusory is through references to place. Just as references to fictional location encourage spectators to immerse themselves in the illusion of the play's 'other' world, so references to places familiar to the audience, especially when in direct contradiction to fictional location, construct them as 'outside' and framing that other world. A linguistic feature of medieval and early-modern stage directions that compares interestingly with the automatic linkage of place and time in the phrase 'here and now' is the optionality of the two deictics *here* (or Latin *hic*) and *then* (*tunc*), both of which, as Linda McJannet demonstrates more fully, display a self-consciousness about the act of playing.[8] McJannet's overarching argument is a chronological one, proposing (in the footsteps of Walter Ong) that the evolving preference for *here* and *then* illustrates a shift towards a more spatial thinking about text. In terms of play texts as printed objects this is probably true, but for the argument about performance here, the point of interest is their mutual capacity to highlight *real time*. Despite the fact that one marker is temporal and the other spatial, neither functions exclusively: both call attention to the time and place of the real world beyond the fictional frame.

'Real place' and 'actual space', however, are not quite the same thing. While Babwell Mill is a real place and may help to remind the audience of their 'real life' outside the playing area, actual space *is* the playing area, the place where the audience is standing or sitting at the very moment of audition, and to which they may be especially highly attuned by the way performers move and act in the space as well as by direct address and deictic markers. The different may be clarified by comparing two moments

of *platea* action in two other medieval plays, the first when A and B joke with the hall audience in the opening lines of *Fulgens and Lucres* about what they are standing waiting for, and the second when the shepherds of the Towneley *Second Shepherds' Play* grumble about the severity of their taxes.[9] Both break free of fictional location, but while the first underlines the place of performance, the very hall in which the audience stands, the second summons up the wider world beyond the place of performance. Both therefore introduce '*real time*' in different senses and need to be named differently if their difference is to be recognised. The theoretical challenge is to find a workable set of categories that allows sufficient distinction to be made without proliferating into so many distinctions as to become unworkable.[10]

It must be acknowledged that finding terms for categories is both arbitrary and difficult, since no term comes without baggage, and every possible term nuances a category differently. The experience of time called into place by reference to the contemporary world, as in the *Second Shepherds' Play*, will resurface in later discussion below. Meanwhile I would like to begin by proposing the term *corporeal time* for the category that highlights the present moment in the actual performance space, as in the doctor's episode in the *Croxton Play* and in *Fulgens and Lucres*. I began by calling this category *carnival time*, since that properly foregrounded its scripted disruptiveness, but the problem with *carnival* as a term is its association with the extra-daily, whereas in the example of the *Croxton Play* the location is precisely in the daily. *Corporeal*, however, I take to be a more inclusive term. In its focus on the way this experience of time emphasises temporal presentness through bodily presence it allows for the widely recognised correlation between 'carnival' and the body, but is not delimited by that correlation. *Corporeal time* is the irruption of the present moment (not just the contemporary world) into the space of the fictional world. It allows daily or everyday time to call into question the constructed order of illusionary time and to question its privileged integrity, and is most characteristically, but not exclusively, associated with clowning.

Although my interest here is in performance time and not in varieties of fictional time, it is important to examine how the conjunction (or disjunction) between fictional time and present time is constructed and how it may be experienced. Clearly a play can construct an audience to be made more or less aware of disjunction. When Coll first enters into the place in the *Croxton Play*, his appearance marks a complete break with the

action that precedes it. That action, in which Jonathas and his fellow Jews subject the stolen sacrament to a sequence of physical assaults, culminates in Jonathas losing his arm, as it is left hanging attached to the sacrament, which they have nailed to a post. The termination of this action is scripted in Jonathas' abrupt withdrawal from the given fictional location:

> There is no more; I must enduer!
> Now hastely to owr chamber lete us gon,
> Til I may get me sum recuer.
> And therfor [I] charge yow every-choon
> That it be counsell, that we have doon. 520–4

No stage direction clarifies how this withdrawal is physically represented, and it may be that only silence and physical stillness on the scaffold denote it in performance. Alternatively, a curtain may perhaps be drawn around the Jews. Either way, Coll's entry immediately after these lines functions as a scene division, to denote a new action, so that the audience experiences the two times as separate, alternate and mutually exclusive. Yet the conclusion to be drawn is not necessarily that disjunction is emphasised. The very exclusiveness of each time within its given and appropriate mode of playing may mean that the audience registers the sequence less as disjunction than as simple transition.

The imaginary line separating the two time-spaces, however, is violently crossed, and disjunction made emphatic, at the point where Coll, who up till now has claimed a time and place that are close to that of contemporary East Anglia, suddenly claims a familiarity with the play's central fiction, set in the notional Heraclea of 1461.[11] Master Brundiche, the doctor, asks Coll if he knows anyone 'about this plase' (626; the phrase calls attention again to the particular area of the playing space and the present time) that needs the help of a physician, and Coll directs him to the fictional character still (in both senses: that is, even now, and silent, 'not' performing)[12] on the scaffold:

> Here is a Jewe, hight Jonathas,
> Hath lost his right hond. 628–9

This forces a conjunction between the fictional and the present environment that we might designate *yoked time*. Fictional time and present time, which have seemed to function up to this point in the play by virtue of retaining their distinctness, while allowing an implicit relation to develop (between, for example, chronic ailments and violent injury, or

between being saved from physical death and saved from eternal death),[13] are here brought into explicit conjunction. Something similar can be seen at the point where the supposed baby in Mak and Gill's cradle is exposed as a sheep in the *Second Shepherds' Play*. Realisation is carefully paced through the Shepherds' slow recognition of its physical characteristics as sheep-like — 'He has a long snowte!' (585); 'He is merkyd amys' (586) — where an audience is required to see the sheep in a kind of double time, first exposed precisely as nothing more than a sheep, and secondly as the Lamb of God, about to be shown as the Christ-Child in his cradle a few lines further on (though both of these are also categories of real time to an audience of believers, as I will argue further below).

Things become more complicated in the *Croxton Play* when the play enacts a rejection of this brief to yoke the two times. The Doctor and his man, hitherto directed (traditionally and, one might even say, necessarily) to play in the place, attempt to climb the Jews' scaffold and are physically beaten away. Three stanzas script the following interaction: Coll directs his master to 'the gate' of Jonathas' house (presumably the point of access to the scaffold); the doctor greets Jonathas and offers his services; Jonathas warns him to leave if he does not wish to be punished; and when Coll persists, suggesting he pisses in a pot for the Doctor's inspection, Jonathas instructs his fellow Jews to

> Brushe them hens bothe, and that anon!
> Giff them there reward that they were gone! 651–2

and the stage direction explicitly adds the instruction: *Here shall the four Jewys bett away the leche and his man*. A question then arises: in what kind of time does this enactment of rejection take place? When the play seems to acknowledge that one time cannot infiltrate the other, and that the Jews and the Doctor must exist in separate times and separate areas of the performance space, how does that acknowledgement itself problematise the audience's experience of time? (And how far does the coherence of the space reduce their capacity to register the discrepancies in time?) Though it might be argued that this constitutes a separate category that would have to be called something like *dramaturgical time*, I am reluctant to construct it as such, since the term would seem to invite the category to become a melting-pot for all kinds of metatheatrical reference. While this moment in *Croxton* might seem to resemble the point in *Fulgens and Lucres* when A voices his fear that B will 'destroy all the play'[14] if he attempts to enter the fictional world by becoming a servant to one of the characters, the

experience of time is qualitatively different in each precisely because one does and the other does not mention the existence of the play. The voice of the dramatist, which is what we imagine we hear in an explicit reference to 'the play', has its own time, connecting both past (the moment of writing) and present (the audience position, from which they are asked to collude in stepping momentarily outside the illusion) in a specific and recognisable inflection. Because no explicit metatheatrical pointer is verbally scripted in *Croxton*, however, the audience experiences this sequence of action as happening somewhere in a clash of times *within* the play (though these in turn intersect with present time), not as the voice of the dramatist.

Once the Jews have dismissed the Doctor and his man the action returns immediately to constructing an experience of time which seems the more real now that it has asserted itself over another kind of action. It was partly recognising the emphasis on the heavily invested equation between *performance time* and *real time* in these nonetheless wholly fictional moments which led me to reject the proposition that the comic doctor episode can be taken as defining an audience's experience of *real time* in the play. There are different kinds of 'real' in the experience of time. The Doctor's offer to help in the matter of Jonathas's severed hand presents one kind of approach to injury that might be described as realistic in two senses; first, in the sense that in the contemporary world only a doctor, if anyone, would be likely to help with physical injury; and second, in the sense that it engages with materially present bodies and processes in terms of both performers' and spectators' bodies (it invites the audience to experience the physicality of their own bodies by calling to mind their ailments and — though, playfully — offers to treat them here and now). But this everyday reality is not the reality that is of dominant concern in a play concerned with testing the miraculous status of the sacred Host. Jonathas, in rejecting the Doctor, turns again to the severed hand, left nailed to the post throughout the comic interruption, and directs his fellow Jews to take a different kind of action:

> And take yowr pinsonys that ar so sure,
> And pluck owt the nailys, won and won;
> Also in a clothe ye it cure
> And throw it in the cawdron, and that anon.
> *Here shall Jason pluck owt the nailys and shake the hond into the cawdron.* 657–60

The sequence first carefully imagines the process of time moment by moment ('won by won') and then directs it to take effect precisely as imagine. The enactment of the fictional action takes place in precise real time, since it takes exactly as long to carry out each piece of action on stage as it would do in the offstage world. We might therefore call this *enactment time*.

It is worth digressing here for a moment to compare this proposed category of *enactment time* with Schechner's category of *symbolic time*. Schechner defines *symbolic time* as 'when the span of the activity represents another (longer or shorter) span of clock time. Or where time is considered differently, as in Christian notions of "the end of time"'. I have already indicated that I think putting this either/or into the category collapses too substantial a distinction. The first part of Schechner's category, where time is condensed or expanded, can be illustrated by distinguishing it from *enactment time*. If an actor raises a glass and drinks from it, and this action represents precisely that, the taking of one drink from a glass, then it exemplifies *enactment time*. If, on the other hand, the same actor raises a glass two or three times and the script claims that the character has taken a meal, or sat in the pub for an evening, then it operates differently, in a category that I would prefer to call *representative time*, in order to distinguish it from the possible mythic dimension suggested by the term *symbolic time*.

Two examples of characters eating and drinking in the *Croxton Play* may serve to illustrate how useful it is to have three categories of time, *enactment time*, *representative time*, and *mythic time*, to analyse what is happening on stage. Relatively early in the play, just after the merchant Aristorius has agreed to steal the Host from the church for Jonathas, Aristorius takes bread and wine with Sir Isidore, his chaplain. There is a tension in the scripting between *enactment time* and *representative time*. Though the taking of bread and wine over a duration of three stanzas seems on the one hand to represent a meal taken together, after which the priest retires to bed, there is on the other hand a deictic emphasis that foregrounds the taking of bread and wine as though it were happening in *enactment time*:

Clericus. Sir, here is a drawte of Romney Red —
There is no bettere in Aragon —
And a lofe of light bred;
It is [w]holesom, as sayeth the fesicion. 340–3

The effect of this, and the reason it is scripted in this way, is to remind the audience of the ritual of the Mass, which is central to the play's theological concerns. The Mass itself is a performance which in one sense takes place in *representative time*, in so far as it represents in condensed form a historical event, the Last Supper. Yet as ritual it also comes to have its own *enactment time* (the time it takes to bless the sacraments, drink from the cup, and distribute the consecrated wafers among the congregation) as well as participating in *mythic time* (in that because the event it calls to mind has accumulated sacramental meaning, it summons a perspective of eternity that seeks to obliterate earthly conceptions of linear time). The onstage action therefore invites the audience to experience time in a number of different ways simultaneously. It makes present two different time-scales for each of two events: taking brief food and drink (*enactment*) as against the duration of a meal (*representative*); and elevating the Host (*enactment*) as against the duration of the Mass (*representative*). The complexity of points of reference interwoven here through different time-scales goes some way towards explaining the richness, irony, and prophetic significance of this brief action.

Very soon after this, the Jews lay a cloth on another table on another scaffold. This time what they set down on the cloth is not 'Romney red' and 'a lofe of light bred', but the stolen Host. And this time the text scripts not the taking of bread and wine, but a direct account of that sacred meal from which the Mass takes its meaning, an account that seems to re-enact the commemorative function of the Mass itself.[15] A Jew is speaking, and speaking in the past tense by way of explaining the history of how the Blessed Host came to have special meaning for Christians; yet his speaking, interspersed with the actual words of Jesus in the Latin of the Vulgate Bible, seems to enact the moment again for the audience as the Mass enacts it for a congregation:

> On thes[e] wordys there law growndyd hath he,
> That he said on Shere-Thursday at his sopere:
> He brake the brede and said '*Accipite*',
> And gave his discyplys them for to chere.
> And more he said to them there
> While they were togethere all and sum,
> Sitting at the table soo cleere:
> 'Comedite, corpus meum'. 397–404[16]

There are no stage directions scripting gesture here, but the key to understanding how a medieval audience might have experienced the moment seems to me to lie in the way that it is constructed around enactment time. One possibility is that Jonathas raises the Host as he speaks the familiar words, with the Jews either surrounding him at the table as the disciples surrounded Christ, or standing before him as a congregation stands before a priest when he elevates the Host. Alternatively, despite the fact that the speech so clearly calls to mind both the Mass and the occasion it commemorates, Jonathas does not perform the action that traditionally accompanies the familiar words. The important point is that, whether or not the gesture happens, the careful pacing of the speech to follow the ritual of the Mass places it in *enactment time*. If the action reserved for ordained priests, and hence both holy and taboo, is actually performed by a transgressive figure (transgressive in both real and fictional time and place, as both Jew and actor), the moment is powerfully shocking (as it is even when a stage Virtue enacts the administration of a sacrament, as in the staged parts of Confession in *Mankind* or *Everyman*). If the gesture is not performed, then what is performed in *enactment time* is essentially a stunted enactment, ritual performative language without its accompanying ritual gesture, so that what is foregrounded is a failure to achieve plenitude. Staged in this way, the moment retains some of its power to shock because it comes so perilously near to mimicking, if not parodying, a climactic shaping moment for the Christian faith, but also appropriately empties that moment of its fullness.

Returning, then, to the moment when Jonathas ejects the Doctor and his man and directs his friends to take out the nails with their pincers and throw the hand into the cauldron, we see that its functioning within *enactment time* in one sense takes up precisely where that same kind of time left off before the comic action, since each of the torments perpetrated on the Host up to that point was equally carefully scripted, both verbally and through stage directions, with verbal text pacing physical action, as below:

> *Here shall the four Jewys prik their daggerys in four quarters, thus say[i]*ng:
>
> *Jason*: Have at it! Have at it, with all my might!
> *Jasdon*: And I shall with this blade so bright
> This othere side freshely afeze!

Masphat: And I yow plight I shall him not please,
For with this punche I shall him prike! 469–74

This is merely one extract from a much longer sequence which follows this pattern meticulously through the torments, so that the audience lives through every moment of the infliction of pain as it is carried out. The action resumes after the comic interruption is scripted in exactly the same way, but differs from what has gone before in the single respect that it follows the comic action. The comic episode, when it breaks in on the *platea*, taking attention away from the scaffold, may feel more 'real' than the fictional action for all the reasons discussed above (its topical reference, its contemporaneity, its creation of a sense of shared topography, its recognition of the audience's presence), and throughout its duration the Jews and the hanging severed hand on the scaffold have a presence that is iconic and static, 'out of time', lacking sheer energy and physical presence of the action in the *platea* (though simultaneously proclaiming a differently real status precisely by virtue of claiming that space 'out of time'). But when the Jews take control and force the comedians out, the status of their renewed attention to the detail of plucking out the nails and shaking the hand into the cauldron commands an intensity of focus even stronger than before as a result of its capacity to reassert itself over the comic contemporaneity it banishes. Now the audience, having seen the severed hand from a newly banalised perspective, but also having been reminded of its incurability in everyday terms by this very banality, looks with fresh eyes at the fictional crisis. The quasi-realistic solution of applying either quack or plausible remedies have been rejected, the fictional world follows the symbolic logic of plucking out the nails and throwing the hand into the cauldron, since it was the attempt to throw the Host (already pierced by 'woundys five' (458) made by the Jews) into the cauldron that first caused it to stick to the hand.

The renewal of *enactment time* following the irruption of *corporeal time* creates a new precision about space and objects (including body-parts as objects). By scripting attention to the specificity of *locus* and *platea*, to the way different performers and objects inhabit those spaces, and in particular to the way the non-comic performers fight to protect themselves and their objects against the assault of the comic, the play endows those non-comic performers, locations, and objects with a compelling power to engage and transfix the spectator, creating the proper receptiveness for miracle. At the core of miracle is transformation; and at the core of the miracle of the Eucharist is a transformation which involves both fixed seeing and fluid

seeing. The faithful congregation at Mass do not just glance at the Host, but fix their gaze on it, or press their eyes up against squints to catch sight of it, kneel to adore it, even rush from chapel to chapel to view it at the moment of elevation as often as possible. Yet that viewing, though physically fixed, even fixated, seeks to fix its gaze at the moment of elevation because that is the point when the wafer is transformed, fully and substantially, into the Body of Christ. The act of beholding, therefore, must see beyond what there is to be seen with the naked eye, apprehending the miracle of the object transformed through the very resistance of its visible texture. Miracle is about real object in real time and real space; it represents the intersection of the eternal and the daily through the specificity of a physical object apprehended in a special way in present time and physical space.

What the *Croxton Play* does is to create the same focused engagement on objects in space and time as the Mass does in relation to the visible sacraments, and to lead from that into the same enlarged sense of time and space ideally produced by the miracle of the Mass itself. It does this through a meticulously paced sequence, observable partly in the unusual length, frequency, and precision of the stage directions. From the carefully scripted enactment of torments, it moves through the challenge and contrast of the comic episode, to a renewed focus on objects and gestures in time: the cauldron boils, *appering to be as blood* (672); the fire is kindled to heat the oven; Jason goes to the cauldron to *take owt the [h]ost with his pinsonys, and cast it in the ovyn* (700); and *the ovyn must rive asundere and blede owt at the cranys, and an image appere owt with woundys bleding* (712).

The move from a narrow intensity of focus on objects in *enactment time* to the wider sense of time as simultaneously now and eternal begins with the introduction of Latin at the point where the image speaks to the Jews:

> O *mirabiles Judei, attendite et videte*
> *Si est dolor sicut dolor meus!*
> Oh ye merveylous Jewys,
> Why are ye to yowr king onkind,
> And [I] so bitterly bow[gh]t yow to my blisse? 717–801

Latin, as noted briefly above, in discussing lines 397–404, transforms the nature of an audience's engagement.[17] Here its sound and texture, deeply evocative of the church's authority and of sacred history as beyond earthly and linear conceptions of time, leads the audience into that sense of *mythic time* that helps them to understand both the narrative that is being played

out before them and their own insignificant lives as part of the same wider time-frame in which all earthly sinners wait for Doomsday. But the Latin also works to construct a further experience of time which is not itself mythic, though it intersects fruitfully with the mythic. As the Jews are moved to repentance, they too intersperse Latin with English, and an occasional phrase is very familiar. When Masphat, one of the Jews, prays '*miserere mei, Deus*' (757), his utterance invites the audience to experience the Jews' repentance as intersecting with their own acts of penance, their everyday lives as ordinary sinners rather than as spectators. It thus constructs their experience of the performance within what we might call *parallel time*. Despite its points of resemblance to categories already proposed, this seems to me to constitute a genuinely distinct category. It is different from *corporeal time* in that the sense of the real world it produces is not one that highlights awareness of spectatorship or of the here-and-now of the performance moment, nor does it implicitly call into question or problematise the fictional action. It also differs from *yoked time*, in that there is no violence or sense of incompatability about the conjunction it proposes. Rather it presents that conjunction as natural and right, as a fuller perspective rather than a disjunctive one. The Latin works to move the audience beyond the illusion that the fictional world is complete and self-contained (in such a world, in fifteenth-century Heraclea, Jews would not suddenly start speaking in Latin) into an awareness that the apparently separate worlds of historical Heraclea and East Anglia now are precisely not self-contained, but porous and related, separate examples of the Christian community united across time through shared belief. The Jews' conversion is proposed as having meaning equally for ordinary people in their everyday lives in the material time and place of the wider performance context (*parallel time*) and for their anticipated participation in eternal life (*mythic time*).[18]

Parallel time-awareness situates the audience on the border between spectatorship and participation, and in this respect it is therefore again different from, though preparatory to, the way time is experienced by the audience when they are actually asked to cross that border and become bodily participants in the drama of the historical Jews' conversion. The precise moment at which this happens in the play is debatable. The first point at which it arises as a possibility is when the bishop issues a command to 'all' the people who are 'here':

> Now, all my pepull, with me ye dresse
> For to goo see that swimfull sight.

> Now, all ye peple that here are,
> I commande yow, every man,
> On yowr feet for to goo, bare,
> In the devoutest wise that ye can. 808–13

David Bevington here supplies a stage direction *[They go in solemn procession to the Jew's house]*, together with a note: 'The language suggests an invitation to the audience to join in a procession'. Bevington's careful wording is exactly right. It is not possible to be certain that the audience moves at this point, just as it is not possible to be certain whether the church to which the procession moves next is a scaffold representing a church, or a real church outside which the play may be staged. It is certainly likely, at least in the Croxton location, and probably in many others, that the play was staged outside the church, and that processing into the church is therefore a reasonable possibility. The bishop's address undoubtedly constructs the audience as a congregation, and when the invitation to sing is added to the invitation to process, the likelihood that the audience is included in the same address seems to become even more emphatic:

> Now will I take this holy sacrament
> With humble hart and gret devocion,
> And all we will gon with on[e] consent
> And beare it to chirche with sole[m]pne procession.
> Now folow me, all and summe!
> And all tho that bene here, both more and lesse,
> This holy song, *O sacrum convivium*,
> Lett us sing all with grett swetnesse. 834–41

Certainly the audience is part of the congregation addressed by the bishop's preaching, and there seems little doubt that they are constructed to participate in singing the closing *Te Deum*. We can safely say, therefore, that as the play moves towards its conclusion the audience is increasingly made to experience not merely *parallel time* but *participatory time*. *Participatory time* is distinguished from *parallel time* primarily by the fact that it is not based on signs that prompt an audience to realise conceptually the conjunction between two or more times, but on making them enact it with their bodies, so that their sense of real time is anchored in the material world of the moment of performance as well as of the everyday. (There is of course a level at which audiences respond bodily throughout the performance, expressing tension, emotion, and

concentration through the body, but this differs in emphasis, visibility, and rhythm from the large, scripted, and collective movement of bodies obeying an instruction to move together in procession.) Where *parallel time*, I argued, was distinct from *corporeal time* partly by virtue of pointing up the wider context of the here and now rather than the performance moment, *participatory time* brings these two together through moving the body in actual time, but also situating it imaginatively within the fictional world. The audience feel their presence in their own world, as they tread quite literally on familiar ground, but also feel themselves to be part of another place and another time; and that sense of being part of another place and another time is also produced by the feeling of occasion elicited by both attendance at a play and the act of processing. Though we cannot know whether the play, in at least some performances, moved inside a real church for its final moments, we can say that if it did, such a move would have enhanced the sense of *participatory time* as well as the sense of occasion underpinning it. The sequence of events between the first call to procession and the concluding *Te Deum* is designed to point up the true authority of the Church against the blasphemy of imitation and parody. The stage direction scripting the baptism of the Jews seems to direct the action to be as much like the true sacrament as possible: *Here shall the bisshope cristen the Jewys with gret solempnité* (951). The onstage action is still, by definition, mimesis rather than the thing itself, yet at this point, in seeking to affirm the Church's authority, it must play down the audience's awareness of the gap between actuality and representation. *Participatory time* is one way of seeking to close the gap.

There is one further category of time that demands consideration in relation to the *Croxton Play*, one which is related to *mythic time*, but distinct from it in that the tie is not by definition a necessary one. In discussing the continuing presence of the severed hand on the Jews' scaffold while the comic doctor and his man play in the *platea*, I used the term *iconic* to describe the way in which the object is simultaneously visible in real time and yet charged with a stillness that distances it from moment-by-moment experience. (If the curtains are drawn around the Jews' scaffold so that hand is invisible, it of course ceases to represent an example of *iconic time*; but the category exists nevertheless.) There is a similar sense of time standing still when Jonathas pronounces the words of Jesus, *Comedite corpus meum*, and, while the sense of *iconic time* is intensified if he also raises the Host, the Latin words are sufficient to call the specific experience of time into being even without the elevation of the Host. This may seem, in

a religious play, inseparable from *mythic time*, but one only has to think of a moment such as Macbeth's address to the imaginary dagger he sees before him in order to see that they are not the same.

This of course prompts the question of how many other categories of performance time one might need to address if the investigation took in more than one play and looked at a selection of plays from different times and cultures. In using one play to propose several ways of experiencing real time in performance, I have done no more than suggest a beginning. The task remaining is broadly threefold: to examine how useful these categories are in analysing other plays in other cultural moments; to consider which other categories may need to be added to these to provide an adequate, but not top-heavy, framework for the analysis of performance time; and to explore the implications of plays and performances producing a diversity of times as against those that are (intentionally or unintentionally) limited in the time-functions they use. It is a task that waits upon yet another kind of real time.

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NOTES

1. Most theorists writing on matters of time in the theatre are more interested in dramatic or fictional time than I am or Schechner is, and concentrate largely on the relationship between fictional and actual time and the fit or non-fit between the two (stretching or slowing one in relation to the other, chronological and non-chronological sequence and so on). See, for example, the chapters on time in Ann Ubersfeld *Lire le Théâtre 4* (Éditions sociales, Paris, 1982); *École du Spectateur: Lire le Théâtre 2* (Éditions sociales, Paris, 1981); and Manfred Pfister *The Theory and Analysis of Drama* translated John Halliday (Cambridge UP, 1988). Ubersfeld, however, raises some important general questions with regard to what time is in the theatre and how it is experienced; see especially 126–7, 198–9.
2. *Performance Theory* (Routledge, New York and London, revised edition 1988) 6. All material from Schechner that follows in this paragraph is taken from just two pages of the subject, 6–7
3. Three difficulties in particular, beyond the conceptual and lexical problems inherently attaching to time itself, beset the project of trying to specify the audience's experience of performance time, as will become evident below. The first is that performance time is inseparably bound up with performance space, so that the one always constructs the other in particular ways; the second is that an audience's experience of performance time is predicated on their

subjectivities as culturally constructed outside the performance space as well as by the performance itself; and the third is that notions of the 'real' are both culturally and individually specific, so that generalising about how audiences understand the realities and artifices of performance at a specific cultural moment is fraught territory. Each of these areas constitutes a book-length subject in itself, but there is no avoiding them in an essay of this nature. Work in the field of phenomenology has an obvious and direct bearing on the primary issues of perception and the notional real underpinning the experiencing of time, but phenomenologists writing on theatre (Bert States or Stanton Garner, for example) have not paid extensive attention to time.

4. *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts and Analysis* translated Christine Shantz (University of Toronto Press, 1998) 410. Pavis, however, uses the term *temps scénique* (rendered by his English translator, Christine Shantz, as 'stage time') to mean what is called *real time* here, and the terms *temps extra-scénique* or *dramatique* (translated as 'off-stage' or 'dramatic' time) for what is here called *stage time*. One of the problems of performance theory, it may be noted in this as in so many instances, is the absence of an agreed terminology.
5. 'What Sacrament' *in European Medieval Drama 4 (2000): Selected papers from the Fourth International Conference on 'Aspects of European Medieval Drama' Camerino, 5-8 August 1999* edited André Lascombes and Sydney Higgins (Brepols, Turnhout, 2001). Hardin Craig argued in 1955 that its interpolation could be deduced from the fact that it was metrically distinct and written 'in a livelier style than the rest of the play' *English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1955) 326. Craig reads the fact that the Doctor and his man are beaten away as evidence of the pointlessness of the whole episode: 'It accomplishes nothing, and at the end the doctor and his boy are beaten away by the four Jews' (326–7). Later scholars who follow the argument that the episode is a later addition include, for example, Norman Davis, in the introduction to his edition of the play in *Non Cycle-Plays and Fragments*, *EETS SS 1* (1970) lxxv; and David Bevington, in his introduction to the play in his anthology *Medieval Drama* (Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1975) 755.
6. *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function* edited Robert Schwartz (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1978) especially 55–97. The aim of Weimann's work is to show how important an understanding of the place and scaffold distinction is for Shakespeare's theatre, as the inheritor of a medieval performance tradition; but his work also has implications for theorising the functioning of a variety of later performance spaces.
7. Quotations from the play are taken from David Bevington's edition in *Medieval Drama*, and quotations from other plays are from the same anthology unless otherwise specified.

8. *The Voice of Elizabethan Stage Directions: The Evolution of a Theatrical Code* (University of Delaware Press, Associated University Presses, Newark and London, 1999) 117–24.
9. *The Second Shepherds' Pageant* (Wakefield) lines 15–18.
10. As Gerard Genette concludes in the Afterword to his *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* translated Jane E. Lewin (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1980) 263, attempting to construct categories is a question 'of choosing between drawbacks', and any 'technology' of categorisation offered is necessarily ephemeral.
11. The boundary between the real and fictional is put under pressure in a way similar to the notion of real time. Though Coll addresses the audience in the apparent here and now, in East Anglia at a date fairly soon after 1461, the audience does not thereby understand him as 'real'. He remains a fictional character called Coll in a play about the Sacrament, and his reference to real time and place become part of a stage joke. Equally, though the play claims to document a 'real' miracle enacted in Heraclea in 1461, the story in fact has its origins in literary sources dating back to at least the thirteenth century.
12. Schechner's work on the status of the performers in rôle is relevant here. For his consideration of the actor who is simultaneously, for example, 'not Hamlet' but also 'not not Hamlet', see further Schechner's ground-breaking essay on 'Restoration of Behaviour' in *Between Theater and Anthropology* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1985) especially 109–13.
13. See, for example, Coll's ironic reference to a lady lately in the care of his master who is now 'full sure' (550). The joke, playing on the idea that the doctor's ministrations have in fact killed her rather than cured her, works by using the notion of 'safety' for both, and thereby also hints at the dual possibility inherent in death itself, which will make either salvation or damnation sure.
14. *Fulgens and Lucres* line 362, in *English Moral Interludes* edited Glynne Wickham (Dent, London and Melbourne, 1976).
15. I am not here implying a theology of the Mass which is purely commemorative. The point is that the Mass has a commemorative function in addition to its sacramental function.
16. Bevington emends to '*Comedite, [hoc est] corpus meum*' in order to make the quotation precise, but I think the emendation is unjustified and unnecessary.
17. The transformations of engagement offered by the insertion of Latin are discussed in more detail in my *Language and Stage in Medieval and Renaissance England* (Cambridge UP, 1998) *passim*.
18. At this point we may recall the shepherds who complain about their taxes and the weather in the *Second Shepherds' Play*. The experience of time they call up seems to me to come closest to this category, in that they simultaneously

remind the audience of the real world they inhabit beyond the playing space and also invoke a fellow feeling between peasants across the ages. Taxes and the weather are of course specific to time and place in a way that Christian worship seeks not to be; but the moment seeks to position the audience simultaneously inside and beyond that cultural specificity, and thus takes it places somewhere on a continuum between the categories of *yoked* and *parallel time*.