

<b>Institution: Newman University</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 29 – English Language and Literature</b>
<b>Title of case study: Edward Bond's 'Accident Time': the impact of a radical new aesthetic on Theatre in Education practice</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Dr Katafiasz's research followed Edward Bond's seventeen year collaboration with Big Brum Theatre in Education Company. Her doctoral thesis (University of Reading, 2011), publications, and workshops theorise and disseminate the aesthetic of Bond's nine 'Big Brum Plays'. This study assesses the impact of Dr Katafiasz's work on Big Brum's productions, as well as on a group of drama lecturers, theatre education students, and members of a community drama group. The study describes the specific impact of the work in 2012-13, when 7,233 people saw Big Brum perform in the UK, France, Malta, Hungary, Greece, Ireland, China, Sweden, and Slovenia.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Dr Katafiasz's research has helped Big Brum and others to establish an important distinction between Bondian and Brechtian aesthetics. Geoff Gillham directed Bond's first play for Big Brum in 1996. It was assumed at the time that Bond, along with other notable post-war British dramatists, wrote plays in Brecht's Epic tradition (see Reinelt's <i>After Brecht</i> and Eddershaw's <i>Performing Brecht</i>, each in 1996), but Bond disagreed with Gillham's Brechtian rehearsal methods, defining alienation in <i>The Hidden Plot</i> as 'the theatre of Auschwitz'.</p> <p>an audience is unsure whether a pause is involuntary (the actor has 'dried'), or intentional (staged) Bond arguably unleashes the real, or involuntary, more productively for audiences (i.e. without postdramatic confusion between fact and fiction), by exchanging what has been termed an 'aesthetics of undecidability', where an audience is unsure whether a pause is involuntary (the actor has 'dried'), or intentional (staged), with one of accidents. Dr Katafiasz draws upon philosophy, semiotic, and psychoanalytic theory to elucidate the radical nature of this approach. Bond's 'accident time' can enliven audiences by disturbing their vision; much as the masks and skenes of ancient Greek drama contrived gaps and disparities between signifiers and their objects. In one play, an immigrant is represented by a dummy and a dummy actor; in another, a young man shut out of sight in his bedroom, becomes so disturbed that we see his face and body coming through the wall. As actors perform these complex movements between coded and uncoded states they dramatise 'a state which is loosely referred to as some other reality' but which Bond asserts is 'not a dramatic abstract' but 'psychologically true.' (Bond 05/04/2013, unpublished email to Katafiasz). Dr Katafiasz's research argues that this state allows audiences to dispute the connections a culture routinely makes between bodies and languages, and in doing so, to subvert dominant performative discourses.</p> <p>The research underpinning this study then, points out hitherto unexplored associations between drama and accidents. Both are characterised by a state in which consciousness and physicality are out of step; both foreground and challenge our beliefs by destabilising relationships between signifiers and objects; both privilege physicality and force us to re-evaluate our ideas; and both can provoke involuntary comic and tragic responses. The research suggests that the notion of 'Accident Time' can reintroduce us to the innate democratic radicalism of ancient drama.</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b> (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>Katafiasz, K. (2004), 'The Wound on the Outside of the Bandage' in <i>The Journal for Drama in Education</i>, Volume 20 Issue 2 (p7-11)</p> <p>Katafiasz, K. (2005), 'Alienation is the Theatre of Auschwitz', in Davis, D. (Ed.) <i>Edward Bond and the Dramatic Child</i>, Stoke: Trentham</p>

Katafiasz, K. (2008), 'Quarrelling with Brecht: understanding Bond's post-structuralist political aesthetic', in *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, Volume 28 No. 3 pp237-251. Bristol: Intellect

Katafiasz, K. (2013), 'Staging Reality (beyond representation): a perplexing Bondian body', in *Journal of the German Society for Contemporary Drama and Theatre in English JCDE: Volume 1*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter

Katafiasz, K. (2013), 'Failed embodiment, silent speech, and ontological intermediality in Edward Bond's production of *The Under Room*, in *Body, Space & Technology* Volume 11 No. 2 [online] Available at <http://people.brunel.ac.uk/bst/vol1102/>

#### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

In addition to the research publications cited above, dissemination of research included:

- June 2008, 'Metaphor and Metonymy in Bond's plays', a practical workshop.
- November 2012, a paper on 'Bondian Accident Time' presented at the University of Warwick Symposium 'Bond@50'.
- January 2013, a practical workshop on 'The Edge' by Edward Bond, which was toured by Big Brum in 2012/13.

To assess impact, a range of audiences were invited to comment on how useful they had found the research and to what extent the research had impacted their practice. A combination of questionnaire and focus group methods were used to assess impact with the data being scrutinized using both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

All four Members of Big Brum, who are active in working with communities in acting and teaching roles, completed an open ended questionnaire. The artistic director (who also undertakes freelance director, trainer, workshop leader, and consultancy work in a variety of countries), and schools workshop leader (responsible for the theoretical and practical development of the Company's work), participated in a follow-up focus group discussion.

The participants agreed that Dr Katafiasz's workshop had helped them understand Bondian drama, which had a direct impact on their rehearsal preparation. From a directorial perspective, Dr Katafiasz's research added theoretical depth on the dramatic-enactive moment and this new thinking now underlies and informs how parts of the plays are approached and interpreted. The director said that he used what he had learnt about the 'underlying mechanics' of metaphor and metonymy to grasp how objects are viewed by an audience, and understand more about the structure of plays he later directed. Participants further commented that the research addresses questions which ordinarily create challenges for those involved with creating a meaningful theatrical experience. Dr Katafiasz's research is therefore a useful tool for actors who wish to engage with Bond's plays. The workshop had also highlighted useful connections between theatre and education, for use in schools workshops.

In terms of changed practice, the participants explained that an entire production (*Frankenstein*, 2011) had been defined around the concept of identity, and this could not have been achieved without a thorough grounding and understanding of Bondian concepts such as Accident Time, the Drama Event, and the Invisible Object provided by Dr Katafiasz. The company are especially keen to work with Dr Katafiasz because her research focuses particularly upon the plays which Bond has written specifically for Big Brum, as part of their sixteen year collaboration. Other academics have tended to focus on work from twenty-five years ago, or longer. They believe that by working together, they are breaking new ground. As a result of their collaboration with Dr Katafiasz, the Company has developed a unique approach to Bond's work, which will undoubtedly have had an effect on the audiences across the world that has seen their work.

Participants of Dr Katafiasz's workshop on 'The Edge' by Edward Bond, were invited to comment

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

on the value of the session through the medium of an open-ended questionnaire (n=35). Participants were drama lecturers, drama education students and members of a community theatre group. The workshop introduced semiotic theory as a useful approach to understanding the three dimensions of dramatic texts in general, and Bond's plays in particular. When asked "Would you say the workshop has developed your understanding of drama in any way?" 100% agreed. 57% indicated that the session had raised their awareness of semiotics and convinced them of the application and validity of semiotic analysis to drama practice. A further 31% commented that the session had given them new knowledge in addition to semiotic theory. 32 participants' comments indicated that the workshop had in some way brought about a change towards their own analytical approaches and interpretation of texts. For a minority (9%) this meant a clarification of semiotic theory, building on previous knowledge. Whilst others (49%) commented that the workshop had a direct impact on how they would analyse texts in future. In addition to the value of semiotic analysis, six participants (17%) commented that their analysis of stage direction would also change as a direct result of the workshop.

Authors Lynne Bradley (2010: 132-134), Sean Carney (2013: 303) and James Hudson (2013: 13) all cite Dr Katafiasz's research on Bond. They refer respectively to her work as 'an immensely useful study of Bond's technique'; to her 'recent analysis of Bond's critical distance from Brecht'; and to her understanding of Bond as a 'pioneering theoretician of the status of the body in performance'.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Questionnaires with Big Brum.
2. Focus group discussion with Big Brum.
3. Questionnaires from 'The Edge' workshop with drama lecturers, drama education students and members of a community theatre group.
4. Bradley, L. (2010) *Adapting King Lear for the Stage* Farnham: Ashgate.
5. Carney, S. (2013) *The Politics and Poetics of Contemporary English Tragedy* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
6. Hudson, J. (2013) 'Absent Friends: Edward Bond's Corporeal Ghosts', in *Platform*, Volume 7 No 1, Royal Holloway, University of London.