

Howard Lotker – Opponent for Meghana Telang’s Master’s Thesis

Play by My Rules

reflections on the relationship between audience and performer in Plan B/C/D/E

Department of Authorial Creativity and Pedagogy at DAMU Prague

January 30, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

I am happy say that I can give Meghana Telang’s master’s thesis a very good evaluation, I think it deserves the grade of B. Unfortunately, it falls short of an A grade because, although it is very strong thesis in most respects, it does not go deep enough in dealing with some of the problems discussed in the thesis, offer new solutions, or deep or surprising insights into the field.

First to the Thesis’ strengths: It is written in a very clear, strong, and effectively communicating voice. Meghana at the beginning tells us what she is going that the thesis is in the style of an autoethnography, and she fulfills this promise, you are taken on the journey in a personal, honest, and warm style, of her authorial project *Plan B/C/D/E*, from its accidental birth, to the development and rehearsal process, and finally to Meghana’s post project evaluations.

The citations in *Play by My Rules* were wide ranging and always appropriate to the topic at hand, Meghana cited philosophers, theater theorists, feminists, political scientists, theater creators/authors/devisors, directors, academics, creators from throughout the world, and those close to KATaP as well. At times I felt that there were too many citations in a section of the paper, and not enough space for Mehana’s own original thoughts, insights, and evaluations.

There are several areas that I think could have been developed further, for example: I feel that it would have been interesting to bring in more tools from Sociology and Anthropology from Meghana’s bachelors studies in the thesis. Meghana spends a lot of time discussing KATaP’s concept of “distance,” but ultimately decides that it must be dependent on the culture one is coming from and your own, so I am curious what does Indian “distance” look like, or Meghana’s personal distance?

I also liked the fact that she pointed out the problem in De Marini’s “open / closed performances” dichotomy. I think it would have been interesting and useful to go deeper into that, where are other mistakes in the concept, how can it be useful?

It also would be useful to go deeper into the solutions to problems of setting up the performances in a variety of particular spaces. How could you use the elements at a given location to create a more ideal space out of the locations you were given? What lessons can you draw from that?

The thesis *Play by My Rules* is a nice read, interesting, fun and clearly laid out, but ultimately it feels a bit too safe. It doesn't lead to a surprising or original conclusion, so that's why I believe it deserves a B.

If you have any questions or comments you can reach me as usual by email howardlotker@gmail.com or +420 777 303 289

Opponent Question for Meghana:

Please briefly discuss and deepen your evaluation two of the three issues here:

- 1) Create and defend your own personal and Indian definitions of "distance."
- 2) Go into the problematics of De Marini's Open / Closed Performances dichotomy and make a deeper evaluation of it..
- 3) Create some simple practical solutions to the spacing problems of the 3 Czech performances of *Plan A/B/C/D*. Think and speak about how elements in your control (set up of the space, audience, lights, sound, table, etc) be used to create an experience for the audience closer to your ideal.

Sincerely yours,

Howard Lotker

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