

# Barrie Kosky's *The Lost Echo*: rethinking tragic catharsis through affective emergenc(e)y

By Charlotte Farrell

A Kosky production is indelibly marked with an excess of bodily utterances.<sup>1</sup>

What is the relationship between affect and catharsis? This article approaches this question in reference to the theatrical productions of Australian-born director, Barrie Kosky, arguing that tragic catharsis needs to be rethought through the prism of affect. Such a rethinking expectorates catharsis from the sedimentarity of the 'viewing subject'. Rather, affective emergenc(e)y is something that happens in the entire performance field. This 'something that happens' – affective emergenc(e)y – departs from Aristotelian catharsis whereby the audience 'subject' and/or performance 'object' are no longer at the centre of experience nor discernible from each other. In other words, affective emergenc(e)y is relational. In Kosky's post-tragedies,<sup>2</sup> atmospheric textures of extreme feeling coalesce, rapidly deterritorialising notions of subjectivity and objectivity upon which Aristotelian tragedy and catharsis depend.<sup>3</sup>

As an example of affective emergenc(e)y's ontological leakiness, Kosky describes a moment from his *Grande Macabre*:

*Many years after my Dybbuk production, I staged Ligeti's Grande Macabre in Berlin. The climax of the opera occurs when a gigantic meteor crashes into the earth. This has been foretold by a mad prophet, Nekrotzar. In Berlin, he sat on a white plastic toilet while a never ending stream of brown excrement poured out of the toilet and over him. Ligeti's apocalyptically gorgeous music blasted out of the orchestra pit, as behind the toilet, half-dead hermaphroditic mermaids crawled across the stage, their glittering fins sadly flicking in the air as they desperately searched for water, rest or salvation. Many people in the audience found this scene offensive and tasteless. As if taste has anything to do with the theatre. The more radiant the music became, the more he ate and smeared. I was, however, delighted that many people found this scene not tasteless, shocking or grotesque, but beautiful. As it was intended to be. Mountains of excrement, dying hermaphroditic mermaids and a baritone sitting on a toilet singing Ligeti with shit all over his mouth may not be your average subscriber night at the opera, but something happened in the theatre at this moment. Something emerged.*<sup>4</sup>

Here, Kosky provides shimmering detail of a scene from his production of György Ligeti's *Grande Macabre*. It was performed in Berlin at the Komische Oper in 2003 where he has been appointed

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1) Fensham, Rachel. (2009). *To Watch Theatre: Essays on Genre and Corporeality*. Brussels, Belgium, Peter Lang, p. 86.

2) Post-tragedy is a concept I am developing for my Ph.D in light of Barrie Kosky's oeuvre. I approach the use of the prefix 'post' delicately, as in Karen Jürs-Munby's introduction to Hans-Thies Lehmann's *Post-dramatic Theatre* (2006). She writes, "post' here is to be understood... rather as a rupture and a beyond that continue to entertain relationships with drama and are in many ways an analysis and 'anamnesis' of drama" (2). I am indebted to Dr. Bryoni Trezise for suggesting this term to me in the first place and assisting me with its theoretical development.

3) Aristotle never provided a clear definition of tragic catharsis. Based on his *Poetics*, however, it can be surmounted that Aristotelian catharsis refers to processes whereby ritual/performance stimulates unpleasant emotions and impurities within the subject and/or spectator, purging them of their moral and emotional 'contaminants'.

4) Kosky, Barrie. (2008). *On Ecstasy*. Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, pp. 51-3.

chief director and intendant as of 2012. Kosky's detailed description provides a glimpse into the tensions between the seemingly tasteless, shocking and grotesquely beautiful elements of his praxis. The tensions of this adjective cocktail lie at the heart of what makes his work so affecting.

Kosky's theatre performances in Australia and abroad have been frequently labeled by audiences and theatre critics alike as 'distasteful', but, as he writes, "as if taste has anything to do with the theatre". Declaring himself disillusioned with the lack of innovation and risks taken in mainstream Australian theatres, and uneasy with the 'shock' discourse that his work continues to be placed in, Kosky has established a career in Europe since he moved there in 2001.<sup>5</sup> He was the artistic director of Vienna's Schauspielhaus from 2001-2005, returning to stage works in Australia intermittently, most memorably with his Sydney Theatre Company (STC) production of *The Lost Echo* in 2006.

Despite being on the other side of forty, Kosky is continually referred to as the *enfant terrible* of Australian theatre. His oeuvre consists of classic tragedies and operas used as generic formats, the boundaries of which he playfully transgresses using flickers of Artaudian and Meyerholdian performance methodologies. The director subsequently muddles traditional Kantian notions of beauty in a complex intermingling of affective dynamics. For example - as demonstrated in the instance of Nekrotzar in Kosky's *Grande Macabre* - not only was the mad prophet smearing what appeared to be faeces all over his mouth in the productions climactic moment, but also the repetition of his coprophagy intensified along with the music, and the movement of the mermaids. These seemingly incongruous elements - Ligeti, mermaids, a toilet overflowing with shit - in their concomitance and repetition created an experience where the director felt that *something emerged*. He 'intended' for the scene to be beautiful.

The repetition of Nekrotzar's action was an instance of uniform representation leaking, collapsing, exploding - characteristic of Kosky's Australian productions, most often involving the expulsion of bodily fluids. By layering and repeating heterogeneous signifiers in a conservative performance context, mimetic semiosis becomes disfigured. By engaging traditional theatre discourses in the first place, (i.e. by using mainstream performance venues, staging classic texts) Kosky allows for a more transformative affective-politics of performance. Meaning, the memories and expectations attached to the theatre space itself are not usually associated with such disruptive and intensely affecting performance modes. This in turn is exacerbated by the expulsion of such 'base' bodily waste on stage.

Stark differences between European and Australian theatrical styles are another central tension in the reception of Kosky's work in Australia. His approach to theatre engages European modes of performance, particularly Meyerhold's theatrical style of collision and montage, together with an outrageous revisioning of the classics. Traces of *Wiener Aktionismus* can also be seen in his work.<sup>6</sup> Such approaches have rarely been seen on the mainstream Australian stage.<sup>7</sup> Kosky has significantly influenced other Australian theatre directors, including Benedict Andrews and Simon

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- 5) While in Europe, Kosky's work has by no means been free from forms of 'shock' discourse. Most recently, his production of Jean-Phillipe Rameau's *Castor and Pollux* at London's Coliseum received bad reviews. Michael Tanner from *The Spectator* wrote, "For the production is a sheer disaster... What we actually get onstage is incomprehensible, a mix of sprinting, groping and convulsing. Knickers play a prominent part... Later on there is cross-dressing, nudity and a comprehensive abandonment of any relationship to Rameau's work." (November 5, 2011). This critique has much in common with conservative responses to Kosky's work in Australia.
  - 6) *Wiener Aktionismus* of 'post-fascist' Vienna was motivated by a desire to explode the body as an organized system, most often through the live excretion of bodily fluids.
  - 7) For a comprehensive and richly descriptive account of Twentieth Century theatre performance see McCallum, John. (2009) *Belonging: Australian Playwriting in the 20th Century*. Sydney, Currency Press.

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Stone, who employ a bricolage of theatre modes in their productions. They make up part of the small conglomerate of Australian theatre directors who have stepped outside the confines of narrative realism. Andrews and Stone, after Kosky, continue to explore and deconstruct traditional performance texts and styles using affect-driven approaches to acting and *mise-en-scène*.

In his novel, *Tender is the Night*, F. Scott Fitzgerald briefly touches upon the generative potential of affect's incipency (however, he uses the term 'emotion'). In reference to the character Rosemary Holt, he writes, "[a] strong current of emotion flowed through her, profound and unidentified. She did not know whether she was attracted or repelled, but only that she was deeply moved" (1995: 46-7).<sup>8</sup> There are thoroughly diverging theories of affect. I take up those informed by process-relational philosophy and radical empiricism. Along with Erin Manning et al., such an approach understands affect to be "that which grips me first in the moment of relation". Manning differentiates affect from emotion. Where affect is one's first moment of relation to the unknown, "emotion is the back-gridding of affect". In other words, "emotion is affect plus an awareness of that affect" (Manning 2007: xxi). Hence, the difficulty in writing affect: it is mobilised, as in the theatre of repetition, "with a language that speaks before words" (Deleuze, 1994: 12). In Fitzgerald's vocabulary, affect is profound, and unidentifiable with anything concrete. You do not know whether you are "attracted or repelled," only that affect moves *you*.

The affects of Kosky's theatre shift through various shades of intensity and are obviously contingent upon a multitude of environmental factors. I do not have an awareness of what the affect is, but it overwhelms 'my' body. I touch it and it touches me in a multiplicitous reciprocity. 'It' and 'me' become more-than the same. Affects are physiologically transformative. As Teresa Brennan writes, "The transmission of affect, if only for an instant, alters the biochemistry and neurology of the subject" (2004, 1). She surmises that, "this transmission of affect means that we are not self contained in our energies" (6). This is of interest to analyses of theatre performance because "the production of affect 'dissolves' the sight of the viewer into a 'transaction of texture', and the very fibre of the work is what impacts us sensorially, sentimentally" (2009, 6-7). Discourses of occularcentrism are dismantled, bringing the body into the affective swell of experience.<sup>9</sup>

I place Kosky's work in the trajectory of Australian theatre as taking a Deleuze and Guattarian 'line of flight' from the mainstream 'stage', departing from the dominant modes of Sydney theatre's over-coding machine.<sup>10</sup> These lines of flight cannot occur without risk or abrupt movement, nor can it occur without a vigorous touching: affective emergenc(e)y. Such risky mo(ve)ments are found in Kosky's *The Lost Echo*, which consisted of stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and included an adaptation of Euripides *Bacchae* performed in two acts and four parts, running for eight hours in total. Audience members had the choice to watch each half in isolation on separate days, or to go in for the long haul in one day. I went with the former, though Australian theatre critic John McCallum opted for the exhaustive latter, and said that it was "one of the most important and influential productions of the new century" (McCallum 2009, 329). The production had a cast of thirty five, including performers from the STC Actors' Company, second year NIDA (National Institute of Dramatic Art) acting students and guest artist Paul Capsis.

8) In another context, Sianne Ngai's notes, "the narrator is simultaneously attracted and repelled" (112) in her discussion of the affect she coins 'animatedness' (2005).

9) On occularcentrism, see Jay, Martin. (1993). *Downcast Eyes*. Los Angeles and London, University of California Press.

10) Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari conceptualise the overcoding machine as a mechanism that needs to be disrupted through techniques of asignification (1987).

Grotesque images - in the Meyerholdian sense<sup>11</sup> - were littered throughout. A Busby Berkeley-style chorus of drag queens sang Purcell's "Remember Me" following the tragic tale of the rape of Philomela (Deborah Mailman). Agave (Pamela Rabe) laid out strips of meat onstage - the massacred body of her son, Pentheus. Callisto (Amber McMahon), devastated by her unrequited love for the moon goddess, Diana (Paul Copsis) and after being horrifically raped by Jove (Peter Carroll), roamed about the stage wearing nothing but a cartoonish bear mask before being transformed into a star. These startling moments, plucked from a vast array from *The Lost Echo* are not properly contextualized here, yet these glimmers serve as a means to create a fragmentary picture of Kosky's auteur rendering of classical texts.<sup>12</sup>

McCallum, in his Philip Parson's memorial lecture at Belvoir Street theatre, 2012, spoke specifically about *The Lost Echo's* affective resonance:

At each of the three intervals in *The Lost Echo*, I walked out physically stunned, *dissociated from my sense of myself*. Great theatre, live in the space, has an affect-level that is so high that you feel it in your body. Great theatre doesn't happen on a stage, and it doesn't happen in our heads. *It happens in the whole room...*

Before it is understood or felt it is experienced in the body (my emphasis).<sup>13</sup>

*The Lost Echo's* affective excess undid the illusion of a preconstituted, contained subjectivity by reaching-towards touching bodies, often violently, to affect them to know that they are always becoming more than themselves.<sup>14</sup> To demonstrate this curiously sensual violence, I will now provide a thick scene description of Myrrha and the masturbating clowns from Act 2, Part I of *The Lost Echo*.

Myrrha, played by Hayley McElhinney, enters the stage dressed in a long black silk evening gown. As her monologue progresses, we become aware of her desperate sexual attraction to her father. She proceeds to tell of her seduction of him where they have sex each night without the lights on, the identity of his lover remaining concealed. She tells of approaching her father's bedroom for the first time. Her hands grip the sides of the chair that she sits on centre-stage. She spreads her legs open. Kosky plays the piano throughout, performing in a circular pit in the front of the stage, where his music score is dimly lit, making him visible. His role as auteur of the production was reinforced by this clear onstage presence throughout the eight-hour production.

Kosky accompanies her ensuing story, playing a piano reprise of Cole Porter's "I've Got You Under My Skin" underneath her monologue. As she describes climbing into bed with her father, she stands up in a squatting position above the chair, the piano increasing in volume and pace. She lifts her dress and grabs each side of her underwear with her hands and slowly slides off a brightly coloured pair of briefs. She pushes these down her parted legs, easing them slowly down her calves to her ankles.

Kosky plays "I've Got You under My Skin" at an increasingly loud volume and fast pace. When

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11) On the Theatre of the Grotesque, Meyerhold writes: "The grotesque does not recognise the *purely* debased or the *purely* exalted. The grotesque mixes opposites, consciously creating harsh incongruity, *playing entirely on its own originality*... The basis of the grotesque is the artist's constant desire to switch the spectator from the plane he has just reached to another which is totally unforeseen" (Meyerhold 1912, quoted in Braun 1969, 74).

12) Kosky's longtime creative partner, Tom Wright was responsible for the textual adaptation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for *The Lost Echo*.

13) McCallum, John. (2010) "Putting it Back Together and Getting it on the Road: Australian Theatre in the 21st Century" *Philip Parson's Memorial Lecture November*, 28. <http://www.belvoir.com.au/belvoir-news/philip-parsons-memorial-lecture-2010>

14) This terminology is gleaned from Erin Manning's *Politics of Touch* (2009). She writes, "The proposition is that touch - every act of reaching toward - enables the creation of worlds. This production is relational." (xv). Through a Derridean lens, Manning later notes that reaching out to touch circulates in a "general economy of violence" (51).

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Myrrha tells of her return to her father's bedroom the next night, she removes another pair of underwear. Myrrha repeats the action, after saying "and the next night", removing another pair of brightly coloured underwear. The song continues to build. She then removes another pair of underwear, and another, and another and another. With each pair, the action becomes faster and faster as she becomes more eager to remove them.

The music ceases abruptly after she slides off her last pair. All the underwear has gathered around her ankles. This initially erotic action became stylised through repetition. By pushing the thresholds of duration, the audiences' comfort was also threatened, forcing them to confront the horrific context behind an action that they found initially erotic, then comic and then disconcerting in its extension.

After a silence, Myrrha begins to speak again, with the underwear still around her ankles and her legs spread apart. She explains that her father lit a candle in the room in which they were having sex to see what his lover looked like, despite Myrrha's desperate plea for him not to. Abject now, she reveals that after her father discovered her, he threatened her with a knife and she fled into the forest. After crying this out she leans forward, releasing a moan like a dying animal.

In one of Kosky's most brilliantly confronting *coups de théâtre*, Myrrha remains slumped as the director begins to play Porter's majestic "Everytime We Say Goodbye" on the piano. She rises from her chair as if pulled by force, her head thrown back, waddling freakishly around the stage, with the pairs of underwear stretched between her ankles, inhibiting her movement. As she waddles away from the spotlight to stage right, the lights become brighter in the glass box, where venetian blinds hiding what is inside, slowly rise.

The glass box – a small room – is full of roughly twenty shirtless men. They wear light blue jeans and large phalluses protrude from their groins. They masturbate vigorously whilst singing the song in a beautiful, classical tone. The box is lit by internal fluorescent globes, so as the blinds rise, the stage is flooded by creepy, green light. The lighting is reminiscent of a public toilet, yet the seating reflects that of a classroom. The light colours the men's skin, giving them an alien-like glow. Their faces are painted with terrifying clown makeup. Myrrha continues to waddle about the stage, disheveled.

She now quietly, calmly speaks of the 'monster' now growing inside her womb. Her story concludes by her calmly telling of her giving birth to Adonis, her father's child. The Gods take pity upon her and transform her into a tree. At the conclusion of her story, a minor chord sounds and the piano launches back into playing the chorus of "I've Got You Under My Skin". The men in the glass box continue to sing and masturbate. Myrrha dances sexily as the song recommences. Her underwear is not restricting her movement any longer: she is free. The men, who had been seated, slowly begin to rise. Once standing, the men in the front row of the glass box spurt blood from their phalluses all over the glass wall in front of them. The deep red liquid dribbles down the glass. Their grand singing continues, as does Myrrha's movement around the space. She exists in apparent unrelation to the action in the glass box, and blind, like the prophet Teiresias, never acknowledges it.

Myrrha's body moved from the contained appearance of a classic *femme fatale*, to enunciating grunts and desires, becoming-woman, becoming-animal, becoming-tree, becoming-mother, becoming-father, all in the gathering creases and folds of the performative fabric.<sup>15</sup> This simultaneously coming-together and pulling-apart completely unravelled the Oedipal paradigm

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15) Becoming is not considered here as representational mimicry. Rather, in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, "becoming lacks a subject distinct from itself" and "always involves... a multiplicity" (1987, 238-9).

in a performance of the body, a body that was always-already in excess of itself: a Body without Organs (BwO).<sup>16</sup> The performance bodies (the play-text, music, performers, stage) could not contain their desires, transgressions or intensities, and the exploding blood of the clowns seemed to make this uncontainability literal. The music, the movements, the narrative transformations all folded into each other in affective symbiosis.

In Aristotle's *Poetics*, the philosopher outlines and categorises characteristics of classical Greek tragedy that resonate with the affect theories mentioned. Two key terms he raises in his definition of tragedy of interest to my engagement with this scene are astonishment and catharsis. I will now take up these concepts and rethink them through affect in order to assimilate a loose definition of affective emergenc(e)y.

Etymologically, the word astonish is traced back through middle English 'astonyen' and Old French 'estoner' and eventually back to Vulgar Latin 'extonāre.' The Latin word breaks down into 'ex' meaning "out" and 'tonare' meaning "to thunder." Literally this would translate into a word in English such as "Thunderstruck". (Wade, 2010)

This etymological reference reverberates across Kosky's directorial praxis. His performances quite literally demonstrate a thunderous approach to *mise en scene*, having astonishing effects. In his 2008 adaptation of Euripides' *Women of Troy* staged at STC, diegetic and non-diegetic uses of sound made the audience literally jump in their seats. The auditorium chairs rattled as loud gun shots inexorably sounded in what appeared to be in, around, underneath and outside the theatre space. The production was heavily laden with references to Abu Graib. In terms of light, at the beginning of his staging of Seneca's *Oedipus* (2000), the entire theatre was blacked out to the point of having the emergency exit signs switched off. These directorial choices suggest an interest in propelling sensing bodies to emerge with textures of extreme feeling through dissociation from familiar or comfortable experiences of space and time.

Aristotle defines catharsis as "effecting pity and fear" in the tragic spectator, subsequently 'purifying' them of such emotions (10). According to Aristotle, the tragic event needs to evoke pity or fear to qualify as a performance of tragedy. He argues that the effects of feeling pity and fear come about through astonishment. To be astonished is to be *impressed*, to be impressed upon, and surprised through interest. Walter Benjamin writes, "In one who is astonished, interest is born: interest in its primordial form" (2003, 4). Is affective emergenc(e)y the most thunderous affect, where astonishment thrusts us towards an experiential edge in the experience of Kosky's post-tragedies?

While I do not take up the classicist notion of tragedy being an imitation of a whole or complete action that possesses magnitude (Aristotle), astonishment in the context of live theatre performance is relevant when rethinking catharsis through affect. Whilst Plato, and to a lesser extent, Aristotle, were fearful of the primordial feelings stimulated in the atmosphere of the tragic theatre through what was 'represented' on stage, Kosky's reformulations of the classical tragic model is driven by affects that astonish. Kosky's post-tragedies cannot be considered solely in terms of representation, otherwise they would continue to circulate within discourses of shock. Affective emergenc(e)y liberates tragic catharsis from representational strictures, lifting it into non-representational affective fields of relation.<sup>17</sup>

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16) Body without Organs (BwO) is a concept taken up by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) after Antonin Artaud (1947).

17) See Thrift, Nigel. (2008). *Non Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect*. Oxon and New York, Routledge.

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Affective emergenc(e)y is the brittle edge of astonishing beauty; it is the texture of expression. Catharsis needs to be rethought through affect, for the latter allows for a consideration of the swell of pre-organised experience, before subject/object distinctions are designated, whereby feeling can be considered as not contained in a human subject, enabling a more leaky sense of self.<sup>18</sup> This opens bodies to the transformative potentialities of performance in consideration of theatre's atmospheric contagion.

In terms of affective contagion, Anna Gibbs writes,

*Bodies can catch feelings as easily as catch fire: affect leaps from one body to another, evoking tenderness, inciting shame, igniting rage, exciting fear – in short, communicable affect can inflame nerves and muscles in a conflagration of every conceivable kind of passion. (Gibbs, 2001, np.)*

Tragic catharsis becomes a more relational and affectively contagious phenomenon through the concept of affective emergenc(e)y. The affective contagion of the theatre's atmosphere generatively slices across bodies during the performance of post-tragedy, making them quiver. Brian Massumi's conceptualization of emergence is crucial to understanding affective emergenc(e)y's transformative potentialities.

In applying Massumi's words to Kosky's theatre, the Myrrha scene, as well as that described in this article's epigraph can be described as "a whole world captured at the moment of its emergence from the uniform" (2002: 173, my emphasis). In his book *Parables for the Virtual*, Massumi aligns emergence with a kind of potentiality where "the edge of the virtual...leaks into actual" and this "seeping edge" of emergence "is where potential, actually, is found." (43). 'Emergence' and 'emergency' etymologically stem from the verb 'emerge' which comes from the Latin *ēmergere* meaning "to rise up or out." 'Emerge' is often defined as coming out of liquid. In the context of Kosky's radical reformulations of classic tragedy, interesting correlation is drawn with 1) the etymology of catharsis as discharge,<sup>19</sup> 2) his staging of the abjection of bodily fluids and 3) Massumi's description of emergence, pertinent when linked with emergency, as a "seeping edge".

'Emergency' is an "unforeseen occurrence; [a] sudden need for action" (239). It is an event that rises and explodes messily, perhaps inducing shock. It requires immediate action and attention, often having medical connotations, where a sort of embodied estrangement from and violent transformation of spatio-temporal dynamics occurs. It suggests an affectual intensity that arouses a proliferation of surging sensations that merge, urgently, and through rupture are potentially transformative in their effect. As emergency often results in experiences of trauma and shock, it is not perceived as a particularly pleasant sensation.

Massumi's conceptualisation of emergence "is like a two-sided coin: one side in the virtual, the other in the actual" (Massumi, 2002: 35.)<sup>20</sup> The actual, as defined by Deleuze and further noted by Barbara Kennedy (2009) "is represented by space – quantitative differentiation, difference in degree and numerical difference," whereas the virtual is "pure duration, and is an internal multiplicity, fusion, heterogeneity, difference in kind". Kennedy says that "the affective is the hinge/blend/co-existence of the virtual and actual and as such explains a process of 'becoming'" (187). So,

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18) Manning, E. (2009). "What if it Didn't All Begin and End with Containment? Toward a Leaky Sense of Self." *Body and Society* 15 (3): 33-45.

19) Lear, Jonathan. (1988). "Katharsis." *Phronesis* 33 (3): 297-326.

20) This is an echo from Massumi's radical empiricist forebear, Whitehead who wrote, "the process of self-creation is the transformation of the potential into the actual" (1961: 13).

“bracketed by possibility” emergence and affect are becomings (Massumi 2002: xxxiii), located in the nonplace between the virtual and the actual. From this, it can be assumed that emergence is the event that happens in the bleed between the virtual and the actual – the seeping edge between two interconnected worlds, both of which, it is important to note, are not linear. As Manning succinctly puts it, “from the virtual to the actual... is not linear transport.” (2009: 126)

What, then, does it take to unlock this emergent space of potential to become a space of affective emergenc(e)y? In a performance context, when affect and emergence intensify concomitantly, affective emergenc(e)y becomes. The actual is violently pushed to reimagine itself as an always-unstable potential. In other words, the actual is pushed to reimagine itself as always-becoming-virtual, and the virtual as always-becoming-actual. In emergenc(e)y, what was imperceptible suddenly becomes an intensely felt affection. Is this the actual-virtual shock that is felt in Kosky’s performances - of being moved to feel the flesh of the thought, the thought of the flesh?<sup>21</sup> Is affective emergenc(e)y abruptly feeling the more-than of organisation, the more-than of representation where the body becomes leaky, literally, through tears?<sup>22</sup>

The elasticity of the emergent stretches itself to breaking point in Kosky’s theatre. Discursive skins burst, epistemological bones crack and textual adaptations are boiled down to an apparitional concentrate – performing a textual ghosting that becomes more concerned with bodies at the borders of themselves than with a true-to-the-original textual resurrection. Affective emergenc(e)y cannot occur through coming into contact with anything familiar. Something that was recognizable becomes estranged; changed; altered. It is immediate and hits bodies violently in their first moment of relation to the unknown. In effect, it is an astonishingly violent and transformative affect.

As demonstrated through my engagement Kosky’s *The Lost Echo* and *Grand Macabre*, Kosky’s performances’ overhauling of conservative theatrical spaces and styles, and the subsequent anxiety around these grids changing their directional positionality, demands that audience’s perceptions shift. Our own positionality on the grid must alter in order to enable us to reach-towards bodies that change. Emergency is the cruel apotheosis of provoking change. What emerges through Kosky’s affections is transformative, where in watching, one moves from being an organised body to become disorganised, then reorganised again, anew. Affective emergenc(e)y is a shock to thought.<sup>23</sup>

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21) In such an event, Artaud would say that you feel the “mind in the flesh but a mind quick as lightning” (1988: xlix).

22) The term ‘more-than’ is plucked from Erin Manning’s forthcoming book, *Always More Than One*.

23) Massumi, B. (ed.) (2002) *A Shock to Thought: Expression after Deleuze and Guattari*. London and New York, Routledge.



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### **Charlotte Farrell**

is Theatre and Performance Studies Ph.D candidate in the School of Media and the Arts at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), Sydney, Australia. She is writing her doctoral thesis on Barrie Kosky's post-tragedies and affective emergenc(e)y. Charlotte has also taught in Theatre and Performance and Media Studies at UNSW.