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Declaration

I declare that all written work and use of expression is, unless cited, my own.

Abstract

This thesis is the first investigation to examine acting processes in contemporary British verbatim theatre. Proceeding by a case-study basis, I analyse three recent verbatim productions. In the introduction I note the curious absence of actors' testimony in current academic research, and suggest some of the reasons for this oversight. My work is thus a counter-narrative to the established scholarly convention which assumes that non-actors – directors, writers and academics – can represent actors. My thesis demonstrates how this ventriloquising for actors has led to confusion and ignorance about their approaches. I both uncover the actors' processes, and explore whether useful theoretical territories can be identified to better understand their work.

In order to rectify misunderstandings about the heritage of particular verbatim forms, and to contextualise the actors' work, each case-study features a detailed history and examination of the particular working methods. My examination of the actors' processes (based on new interview material with the casts) explores the use of different vocabularies. This thesis suggests that the current theoretical and analytical languages to analyse acting – particularly that of Stanislavski – are outdated and that the actors' processes are far more subtle and sophisticated than these vocabularies can encompass.