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Identifying (with) performance: Representations and Constructions of Cultural Identity in Contemporary Theatre Practice – Three Case Studies

By

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DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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SUMMARY

Identifying (with) performance: Representations and Constructions of Cultural Identity in Contemporary Theatre Practice – Three Case Studies discusses ways in which contemporary live performance affirms, challenges or constructs collective models of cultural identity by addressing the performative relationship through which identity is joined to the process of identification. The thesis argues that cultural identity is constructed within the process of identification, and that this process is articulated through performance. It examines strategies of intervening in this process by theatricalizing those cultural practices that establish and confirm our collective attachments.

The thesis explores these strategies through an in-depth case study of three exemplary artistic practices: Welsh theatre company Brith Gof; Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco, a Mexican and a Cuban-American performance artist based in the U.S.; and the Israeli Acco Theater Center. Using techniques of reiteration, reframing, decontextualization, emphasis, or exaggeration, these artists defamiliarize established patterns of cultural performance in order both to affirm or question the way in which these performances attach us to a collective identity. They utilize forms of interacting and counter-acting the processes of 'seeing' and 'feeling' in the identification of and with others in performance.

The thesis is composed of six chapters. Chapter One outlines recent theoretical debates on cultural identity and its relationship with identification, focusing in particular on anthropological and ethnographic approaches to performative cultural practices and on sociological and philosophical approaches to performative practices in the constitution of identity. Chapter Two scrutinizes three theatre historical models for a study of identity, and complements these with an account of the current debate on performance, theatre, performativity and theatricality. Chapter Three analyses Brith Gof's theatrical *œuvre* in reference to its articulation of spatial concerns. Chapter Four discusses Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's performance work in relation to its corporeal strategies. Chapter Five focuses on a discussion of the Acco Theater Center's seminal performance, *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*, in an investigation of its address to the temporal orders of biography, memory and history. Chapter Six concludes the thesis with a general look at the constitution of identification in theatre and performance.

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INTRODUCTION

> In a derelict vault beneath railway tracks, Israeli actors confront a German audience, separated by broken glass and barbed wire. 'When did you first hear about the Holocaust? What did your father do in World War II?' The children of the victims question the children of the murderers. Interrogation, interview, dialogue? – In a production about the bloodshed in former Yugoslavia, a Welsh theatre company divides the audience into two groups according to their cultural affiliation. A gap opens right in the middle of the theatrical space, separating people and cultures. There are no innocent bystanders, watching means participating. – "Please don't discover me" implores the writing on his chest in big letters. He calls himself the 'Aztec High Tech', a hybrid of American pop culture and Mexican folklore kitsch. In a mixture of Spanish and English, the Aztec announces the beginning of a new world order of cultural hybridity, propelling his audience into the vertiginous act of absorbing a radically different world.

Every intellectual project begins with a moment of being touched, being fascinated by something unfamiliar and desiring to understand it. Ten years ago I was working for a theatre festival in the German city of Hamburg, the kind of showcase of international theatre and dance work that had developed all over the Western half of the European continent in the wake of the relative wealth of the 1980s. The theatrical experiment had become a highly delectable commodity – audiences everywhere had been enjoying a theatre that was visually stunning, physically daring and that looked like it came from no specific geographical location in particular. Its true home was a pan-Euro-American urban culture, which was universally affected by economic globalization and technical development. But the fall of the Berlin Wall, the bloody break-up of former Yugoslavia, the unresolved conflict in the Middle East, the 'cultural wars' over multiculturalism in the U.S. all began to challenge the aesthetic formalism that had dominated European stages for over a decade. Three theatre works in particular, all presented at the Hamburg Festival between 1989 and 1994, for me epitomized this change. Welsh theatre company Brith Gof's large-scale, site-specific show, *Gododdin* (1988–9) depicted the heroic defeat of a small band of Celtic warriors against the overwhelming majority of invading Angles in sixth-century Britain – a thinly disguised celebration of political

resistance on behalf of a marginalized culture against the cultural impositions of its dominant neighbour. The German audience, however, saw in it an aesthetic glorification of war and sacrifice in the name of a national cause which triggered memories of German fascism. Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco, a Mexican and a Cuban-American performance artist based in the U.S., presented *The New World Border: Prophecies for the End of the Century* (1992–94), a dystopian fantasy which projected the process of 'balkanization' that Eastern Europe was undergoing onto the American continent. They prophesied a continent without borders, on which a myriad of micro-republics peopled by hybrid citizens would spring up everywhere to turn the ethnic hierarchy of US society upside down. But whilst Gómez-Peña and Fusco themselves proclaimed that a lack of comprehension and possible misunderstandings were both necessary elements of cross-cultural communication in a multicultural age, the German critics took their "Please don't discover me' literally and accused the two artists of wilful incomprehensibility. The Israeli Acco Theater Center's five-hour long *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* (1991–98) offered a self-critical portrayal of the Jewish identification with the traumatic legacy of the Holocaust and its influence on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Despite reservations expressed by some Israeli commentators that the cathartic effect which the performance offered would enable German audiences to salve their conscience by allowing an identification with their victims, the company brought the work to Germany, where too it initiated a debate about the role of Holocaust commemoration for post-war German identity. All three works demonstrated the dynamic nature of cultural identity, all three articulated the dilemma of negotiating identity across cultural differences, and all three highlighted the way in which cultural difference remains fundamental to aesthetic reception. It is in such borderline cases, which emphasize the gaps, conflicts and limits of intercultural dialogue, that cultural identity becomes visible. And it is through reflecting on these borders that one may also reflect on one's own identity – in my case the often troubled identity of a 'third generation' German brought up in a post-War, pre-Re-unification Western Germany, trying to come to terms with its fascist past and its multicultural future.

'Cultural identity' has emerged within the last two decades as a major preoccupation of aesthetic practice, theoretical debate and political activism alike. Recently, this discussion has focused on the question of performance and performativity. Models of cultural performance have addressed the need for an inclusive concept that brings together a wide range of cultural practices and behaviours, whilst taking account of the increasingly fragmentary nature of culture. Performativity has become the primary critical term for challenging normative assumptions of identity grounded in supposed natural categories of subjectivity. Performance artists and theorists of performance and performativity often share a common interest in exploring these areas. The marriage of analysis, activism and art that has developed in the wake of such convergences has motivated a theoretical and political investment into the making of performance art, which has led to new performance practices. A political commitment to cultural differences and identity politics results from this close exchange between the practice and the theory of performance.

Yet, performativity and performance are not always compatible. Judith Butler, whose ground-breaking *Gender Trouble* (Butler 1990a) introduced the concept of performativity to deconstruct notions of gender identity as ontological fixity, calls into question the capacity of live performance to subvert fixed identity categories: she argues that performa*tivity* focuses on the citationality of cultural norms and the prohibitive operations that regulate them, and thus can not be reduced to the 'theatrical' aspects of perform*ance* as an individual act (cf. Butler 1993). Yet, what occurs when performativity becomes actual in the spatial, corporeal and temporal act of live performance? How can such performance help to affirm, challenge or construct collective models of cultural identity?

This study explores different ways in which live performance addresses collective models of cultural identity by re-articulating the performative relationship through which identity is joined to the process of identification. I shall argue that cultural identity is constructed within the process of identification, and that this process is articulated through performance. The focus will be on strategies of intervening in the

performative relation between cultural identity and identification by theatricalizing those cultural practices that establish and confirm our collective attachments. The three case studies I shall be discussing in this context are exemplary on many levels. Politically, they represent three of the main arenas of struggle over questions of identity: a European nationalist, geo-political discourse (Brith Gof, Wales); American identity politics (Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco, USA); and the Israeli-Palestinian-German relationship in the aftermath of the Holocaust (Acco Theater Center, Israel). All three address problems of identity by reworking established forms of cultural performance and their concomitant modes of identification through translating these into the realm of the theatrical. This strategy not only transforms cultural performance, it also changes the theatrical apparatus in return. All three artistic practices have attempted to explore the relationship between identity and identification by thus questioning the work of theatrical representation, drawing a link between a specific mode of identification in theatre and the workings of the theatrical-representational apparatus. They also point to the limits of representational practice in relation to the issues at stake: the exclusion of otherness for which there is no theatrical (and political) representation; the fixing of the stereotyped body of the 'Other', who is positioned as the object of a unidirectional gaze, performing prescribed roles; and the impossibility of re-presenting those who will remain forever absent, the victims of genocide. In all three cases the theatrical-representational apparatus is also addressed in its cultural specificity. Indeed, the general question arises whether 'identity', 'theatre' and 'performance' present useful cross-cultural concepts. An account of the current debate on performance and theatre, performativity and theatricality will help to identify the different genealogies, geographies and politics of the terms and their implications.

The focus in all three analyses is not on the *actual* way in which individuals have formed an identification with the work in question – this would be the object of an empirical audience research. I shall relate to individual reactions to the pieces discussed only in those limit cases when things 'don't work' to throw a light on their working. Instead, the emphasis will be placed on the manner in which theatre and performance

construct potential subject positions to which individuals can attach themselves in identification. This study treats live performance and theatre as discourses, in Foucault's sense of the term (Foucault 1989 (1972)), which construct subject positions through their particular rules of formation and 'modalities of enunciation'. The question of the psychic investment in such positions, that is, why certain individuals occupy some positions rather than others, will here be mentioned in passing.

I shall focus the analysis of each of the three practices on a different aspect of the theatre-as-discourse: namely space, body and time. Brith Gof's work will be looked at in reference to its articulation of spatial concerns, Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's work will be discussed in relation to its corporeal strategies, and the discussion of the Acco Theater Center will focus on its investigation of the temporal orders of biography, memory and history. This does not imply that Brith Gof *only* work with theatrical space, Gómez-Peña and Fusco are exclusively interested in the body, and the interests of the Acco Theater Center are limited to the issue of history. On the contrary, the three companies share a use of non-conventional theatrical spaces, the prominent role they ascribe to the body of the performer as a primary means of signification, and a development of unconventional narratives. Yet, they each place a stronger emphasis on one of these elements, and their particular preference will be related to the wider cultural significance that these possess: the affective space of the nation; the racial body; the trauma of the Shoah – without implying that the issues of nationalism, racism or genocide are ultimately the same. Neither are space, body and time equivalent categories of experience, but together the form a coordinate system within which identities are formed.

The analyses will build on a form of discourse analysis, connecting 'textual' analysis with social experience (cf. Foucault 1989 (1972)), using documentary material of individual performances (books, scripts, videos, photos, reviews, and my own memories as a spectator) and essays, pamphlets and other published writings by the artists themselves for its argument. The methodological shortcomings involved in representing performance's presence in documentation have been eloquently explored by

Peggy Phelan (Phelan 1993: 146) and many others and need not be reiterated here. By using the reflections of the artists on their own work, I do not mean to stress the consideration of the *intention* of art over that of its *effect* – rather, I shall attempt to measure the complex relationship between intention and effect in performative practices that are not only theoretically sophisticated, but have developed their own theorization. In the case studies of Brith Gof and Guillermo Gómez-Peña & Coco Fusco, a strong emphasis will be placed on an understanding of the development of the work in its negotiation of the issues at stake, identifying different evolutionary stages in these artists' practice. In the case of the Acco Theater Center, I shall concentrate on the complexity of issues that can arise from one single production.

All the works under consideration were created in the 1980s and 1990s, a period in which the convergence of theory, politics and aesthetic practice in the investigation of matters of identity was particularly fruitful. Many of the theoretical, political and artistic issues raised are still of relevance today. Some of the historical and personal circumstances have changed, however: in a devolved Great Britain, Wales has now got a (albeit restricted) form of self-government, which has altered the discourse of nationalism; America has experienced a right-wing backlash against the politics of multiculturalism; and the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has again taken a bloody turn. Brith Gof and the Acco Theater Center have both split, and Gómez-Peña and Fusco have parted ways to work with different collaborators. But their work has continued to evolve along the lines explored here: Mike Pearson, former artistic director of Brith Gof, has recently turned his interest in the exploration of cultural space to landscape[1]; Gómez-Peña is developing his work on stereotypical images of otherness and the body as given-to-be-seen in a series of diorama pieces[2]; and the Acco Theater Center has taken their investigation into remembrance further by exploring the memories of the physical body.[3]

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[1] Pearson and Shanks 2001.
[2] Gómez-Peña 2000a; Gómez-Peña and Sifuentes 1996b; Wolford 1998.
[3] Acco Theater Center 1994..

Terry Eagleton has pointed out that '[w]hat links pre-modern and postmodern orders is that for both, though for quite different reasons, culture is a dominant level of social life. [...] In the postmodern world, culture and social life are once again closely allied [...]' (Eagleton 2000: 30). He describes the manifestations of this alliance of culture and social life in postmodernism with a critical undertone: 'the aesthetics of the commodity, the spectacularization of politics, the consumerism of life-style, the centrality of the image, and the final integration of culture into commodity production in general' (Eagleton 2000: 30). This description evokes Frederic Jameson's famous critique of postmodernism: 'the dissolution of an autonomous sphere of culture is rather to be imagined in terms of an explosion: a prodigious expansion of culture throughout the social realm, to the point at which everything in our social life – from economic value and state power to practices and to the very structure of the psyche itself – can be said to have become "cultural" in some original and untheorized sense' (Jameson 1991: 48). Does postmodernism reduce all social problems to issues of representation? Scott Lash has responded to criticisms of this kind by distinguishing modernism as the process of differentiation of cultural practices from postmodernism as a process of *de*-differentiation. According to Lash, this includes the de-differentiation of the relationship between the cultural and the social: 'Therefore the postmodern artist's primary "responsibility" is not only toward the question of artistic representation, it is toward the question of social and political representation as well.' (Houston 1998: 267). All of the artists here discussed take on this responsibility.

Postmodernism has also alerted us to the fact that we are always implicated in the objects of our studies. The trauma of the Holocaust has been a part of my personal history by way of birth. Welsh nationalism and Welsh cultural identity are now through choice part of my everyday experience. Many aspects of Mexican and American culture have remained strange to me. Such points of recognition and difference are at the centre of this study.

CHAPTER ONE

PERFORMING IDENTITY

I IDENTITY'S CURRENCY

> There has been a veritable discursive explosion in recent years around the concept of 'identity', at the same moment as it has been subjected to a searching critique. How is this paradoxical development to be explained? And where does it leave us with respect to the concept? The deconstruction has been conducted within a variety of disciplinary areas, all of them, in one way or another critical of the notion of an integral, originary and unified identity. [...] What, then, is the need for a further debate on 'identity'? Who needs it?
>
> (Hall 1996b: 1)

Over the last two decades 'identity' has become a, if not *the*, key concept in analysing the contemporary world. Yet, as German philosopher Odo Marquard predicted in 1979, the inflationary use of the term has created identity problems for identity itself.[1] A multitude of theoretical debates and political movements have laid claim to it: philosophy, social psychology, sociology, cultural studies and anthropology on the one hand, multiculturalism, postcolonialism, identity politics, neo-nationalism and ethnic warfare on the other have all produced multiple, sometimes overlapping, often contradictory definitions and usages of the term.

Furthermore, as Hall has pointed out, the popularity of identity as a topic for theoretical inquiry has developed in spite of a profound critique of the same. This critique has been targeted primarily at the concept of identity that lies at the heart of modernity[2]: identity is the attribute that enables the modern individual to identify him- or herself as a singular, selfsame, unified subject, unique amongst others and stable

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1 'Das Thema "Identität" hat Identitätsschwierigkeiten: die gegenwärtige inflationäre Entwicklung seiner Diskussion bringt nicht nur Ergebnisse, sondern auch Verwirrungen. In wachsendem Maße gilt gerade bei der Identität: alles fließt. So werden die Konturen des Identitätsproblems unscharf; es entwickelt sich zur Problemwolke mit Nebelwirkung: Identitätsdiskussionen werden – mit erhöhtem Kollisionsrisiko – zum Blindflug.' (Marquard and Stierle 1979a: 347)

2 A full discussion of the term 'modernity' would exceed the scope of this study. The term has been variously equated with the birth of the sovereign subject in Cartesian philosophy (Lyotard), with the project of enlightenment (Habermas), or with the aesthetic modernism of the late nineteenth century. Equally, its contemporary pendant appears as either 'late modernity' (Habermas), 'postmodernism' (Lyotard) or 'liquid modernity' (Bauman). For an overview over definitions of modernity and postmodernism see Welsch 1991. Here modernity refers to the modern age of individualism, born between the Renaissance humanism of the sixteenth century and the age of enlightenment, see Hall 1994.

despite the changing of time, and at the origin and centre of reason, language, action, experience, power and desire. A series of 'ruptures' (Hall 1994) within the development of twentieth-century thinking has helped to 'de-centre' this subject and with it the concept of identity. In short[3]: Marxism prepared the ground for abolishing the notion of the individual subject as the agent of history by declaring the primacy of social conditions to be the driving force behind historical change. In his 'anti-humanist' reappraisal of Marx, Althusser defined the subject as being subjected to ideology (a process he termed 'interpellation'), which provides the individual with the identity necessary to adapt to the governing capitalist system, and which in turn stabilizes the system and guarantees its functioning.[4] Classical psychoanalysis laid the foundation for an understanding of the subject as being ruled by unconscious desire. 'Returning to Freud', Lacan defined desire as being founded on loss and therefore, rather than confirming the subject in its identity, revealing the subject to be deeply divided. The image of the self as a unified whole is learnt by the child only with great difficulty through encountering its own image in the mirror – thus looking at itself from the place of the Other.[5] This moment of imaginary self-recognition in the look of the other is for Lacan also the moment of the child's entry into the symbolic order of language, in which the individual is constituted as a subject. Structural linguistics had already positioned the subject within the rules of language and meaning, rather than at their source. The Saussurian theory of the arbitrary relation between signifier and signified, and the notion of language as a differential network of meaning, in which every signifier acquires its meaning only in distinction to other signifiers within the same system, also influenced Derrida and his critique of the 'logic of identity' that governs Western metaphysics. For Derrida, meaning is always deferred by the continuous play of difference – or *différance*[6] – at work in signification. The result is language's inability to define a stable

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[3] For a full discussion of these 'ruptures' see Hall 1994.
[4] See above all Althusser's essay 'Ideology and ideological state apparatuses' in Althusser 1971, pp. 121–73.
[5] See above all Lacan's essay 'The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I', in Lacan 1977: 294–324.
[6] Derrida's neologism *différance* consciously shifts between difference and deference, see Norris 1982: 31.

identity: any idea of 'identity' is already inscribed in the differential structure of meaning.[7] Finally, Foucault undertook a 'radical historicization of the category of the subject' (Hall 1996b: 10) by studying how the very idea of the human subject is a discursive construction that emerged at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The subject for Foucault is thus constituted 'as an effect' in specific discursive practices and placed within a field of power-knowledge.[8] As a result of these 'ruptures', the individual is no longer the sovereign subject at the source of action, desire, language, meaning or history – on the contrary, it is subjected by them. Similarly, identity is no longer regarded as the property of a subject whose existence precedes it, but rather presents a point of 'temporary attachment to the subject positions [e.g. race, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, etc.] which discursive practices construct for us' (Hall 1996b: 6). As such, identity is no longer selfsame, stable and unique, but fragmented, contradictory, open and unfinished. This is identity's first paradox: it has come to signify the exact opposite of what was once its semiotic identity (from Latin *idem*, the same).

Its second paradox has been identified by Hall with regard to the current debate about identity: rather than making identity disappear as a concept, the critique has instead led to its proliferation, only now in a deeply problematized appearance. For sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, however, this problematic status of identity is part of its very nature: 'at no time did identity "become" a problem; it was a "problem" from its birth – was *born as a problem* (that is, as something one needs do something about – as a task), could exist only as a problem' (Bauman 1996: 18–19). According to Bauman, the problem of identity that dominated modernity was 'how to construct an identity and keep it solid and stable', whereas the contemporary problem of identity – which he terms 'postmodern' – can be summarized as 'how to avoid fixation and keep the options open' (Bauman 1996: 18). The post-structuralist 'de-centring' of subjectivity has joined force with the postmodern scepticism regarding the foundational 'metanarratives' of

[7] See above all Derrida 1978.
[8] See for example Foucault 1970.

culture, nation, class etc[9], and a feminist and postcolonial critique[10] of the gender and ethnic bias of modern concepts of subjectivity and identity. As a consequence, where once the modern problem of identity was defined in negative terms as role conflict, alienation or 'identity crisis', today's postmodern, post-structuralist and postcolonial theorists talk about fractured, multiple and hybrid identities in positive terms as possible sites of resistance.[11] In response to Hall's question: 'What, then, is the need for a further debate on "identity"?', he himself provides two answers: theoretically, identity is a concept 'which cannot be thought of in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all' (Hall 1996b: 2); and politically, 'the answer lies in its centrality to the question of agency and politics' (Hall 1996b: 2).[12]

If contemporary concepts of identity are inherently paradoxical, then concepts of 'cultural identity' are doubly so. Translating the distinction made above between a 'centred' and a 'de-centred' model of identity for the concept of 'cultural identity', cultural identity in its first manifestation appears as the property of a member of a culture who acquires it by means of this membership alone. In reverse, cultural identity can also refer to the identity of one, shared culture, which all its members hold in common. However, this notion of a given, collective identity, generally referred to as an 'essentialist' model, is not a modern, but a pre-modern concept, which was replaced by the modern notion that identity is the task of an individual, acquired precisely through breaking with the

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9 This scepticism is expressed most prominently by Lyotard: 'I define *postmodern* as incredulity toward metanarratives' (Lyotard 1984: xxiv). These 'metanarratives' make claims outside of their own sphere of competence. Lyotard here refers to the narrative archetypes of modernity such as the emancipation of humanity and the speculative unity of knowledge, which for him are no longer appropriate for a description of the 'postmodern condition'.

10 Homi Bhabha has argued that the founding moment of modernity was the moment of colonialism: 'I think we need to draw attention to the fact that the advent of Western modernity, located as it generally is in the 18th and 19th centuries, was the moment when certain master narratives of the state, the citizen, cultural value, art, science, *the novel*, when these major cultural discourses and identities came to define the "Enlightenment" of Western society and the critical rationality of Western personhood. The time at which these things were happening was the same time at which the West was producing another history of itself through its colonial possessions and relations.' (Bhabha 1990a: 218)

11 See for example Bhabha 1994, Gilroy 1993, Hall and du Gay 1996a, Rutherford 1990.

12 Angelika Bammer has identified a 'recent shift among certain circles within the humanities from deconstructive critiques of the metaphysics of presence to critical analyses of the politics of identity. This shift in attention and emphasis, which in recent academic practice has not infrequently coincided with a shift in (or at least expansion of) institutional affiliation from literature and philosophy to history and anthropology, is manifested in the surge of interest of late in issues of identity and difference.' (Bammer 1994: xiv)

bonds that tie him to a community.[13] Yet if, as Bauman claims, 'identity as such is a modern invention' (Bauman 1996: 18), then cultural identity as a pre-modern phenomenon could only have appeared *ex post facto*: after it had vanished. In its postmodern and 'non-essentialist' guise, on the other hand, cultural identity generally refers to not one, but multiple attachments that are constructed by culture(s). 'Cultural identities are the points of identification, [...] which are made, within the discourses of history and culture.' (Hall 1990: 226) As such, cultural identity is a matter of becoming rather than being: 'it appears only in the future tense' (Bauman 1996: 19). Does cultural identity, therefore, have no presence in the present? Is it a mere phantasm?

To adapt Hall's dictum: theoretically, cultural identity is a concept without which certain key questions of the present could not be thought at all; and politically, cultural identity is central to contemporary politics. Hall himself mentions two political movements that are both formed around issues of cultural identity: 'the politics of location' and 'identity politics' (Hall 1996b: 2). A 'politics of location' commonly refers to geopolitical struggles, such as neo-nationalism or regionalism, which locate cultural (ethnic, national or territorial) identity within a given geographical space to which the struggle lays claim.[14] 'Identity politics', on the other hand, has become the widely accepted term for the subaltern struggles over symbolic representation since the 1960s (e.g. civil rights, students' or women's movement), which are often organized around what Kobena Mercer has called 'the mantra of race, class and gender' (Mercer 1992: 34).[15] Both movements can be traced back to the same contradictory forces that shape our contemporary world: on the one hand, economic globalization has led to a growing uniformity of cultural experience, transforming difference into indifference; on the other hand, we are faced with an ongoing social fragmentation based on cultural, ethnic or class distinctions, which clash as never before, leading to a radical relativism of values. These contradictory forces of uniformation and pluralization, which make up the 'pathology of

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[13] The concept of modernity is here again linked to individualism (see above). For a description of the pre-modern notion of the individual as fixed within a given and unchangeable 'chain of being', see Hall 1994: 119.

[14] See Carter, Donald and Squires 1993a; Kirby 1982.

[15] See Hall and du Gay 1996a; Rutherford 1990.

modernity' (Welsch 1991)[16], have motivated attempts to either assert or establish markers of difference: 'We struggle to preserve distinctions that, for some, can no longer be taken for granted, and, for others, appear for the first time to be within reach.' (Fusco 1995a: 26)

The following does not present an attempt to reiterate the debate on 'cultural identity', which is well-documented (see Hall and du Gay 1996a, Rutherford 1990). Instead I will take a look at a number of binary concepts that have dominated the discussion. Without pre-empting what is to follow, a provisional definition of 'cultural identity' reveals the semantic field in which they are placed:

> Identity is about both similarity and difference. It is about how subjects see themselves in representation, and about how they construct differences within that representation and between it and the representation of others. Identity is about both correspondence and dissimilarity. Principally, identity is articulated through the relationship between belonging, recognition or identification and difference.
> (Hetherington 1998: 15)

Any theory of cultural identity has revolved around the relationship between the concepts of identity and difference, essence (or centred identity) and non-essence (or de-centred identity), individuality and community. It is in the attempt to overcome these dualisms and locate identity in their 'in-between' where the concept of performance or performativity will take hold.

There are a number of theoretical frameworks in which this investigation could be undertaken: philosophical, psychoanalytical, sociological, and so on, some of which have been sketched above. My approach will be through cultural studies, a discipline that has devoted itself almost exclusively to the discussion of identity matters[17], most notably in the works of Stuart Hall (Hall 1990; Hall 1994; Hall 1996b). I have chosen this approach for two reasons: for Hall, identity is always both a critical concept and a

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[16] The German original is 'Pathologien der Moderne'.

[17] Grossberg offers a critical view on this: 'There are many surprising aspects of the current success of cultural studies. I want here to focus on one of the most puzzling: namely, that even as the space of cultural studies seems to encompass an expanding range of theoretical positions, disciplinary matrices and geographical traditions, cultural studies itself seems to be identified with a shrinking set of theoretical and political issues. There is a noticeable tendency to equate cultural studies with the theory and politics of identity and difference' (Grossberg 1996: 87).

political concern[18]. His model of cultural identity is based on an integration of a post-structuralist critique of identity and identification with a postcolonial political practice, which also forms the backdrop for the three case studies I shall be discussing. Furthermore, Hall places the construction of cultural identity firmly within the realm of (aesthetic) representation.

II CULTURAL IDENTITY'S IN-BETWEEN

II.I CULTURAL IDENTITY – BETWEEN ESSENCE AND NON-ESSENCE

The current debate on cultural identity typically distinguishes between two models for its formation: the essentialist and the non-essentialist (or anti-essentialist) position. Stuart Hall offers a definition of both, commencing:

> The first position defines 'cultural identity' in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history.
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> (Hall 1990: 223)

The first position thus assumes the existence of an 'essence' at the heart of cultural identity that is defined by either a common origin or a common structure of experience or both. This essence has traditionally been articulated in reference to a particular territory, history or language (as, for example, in models of 'national identity'). Yet, at the same time it is believed to be a 'truth' that transcends the contingencies of place, time and cultural practice. It serves as the foundation for identification and the establishment of difference, for a sense of belonging to one community and being different from another. It is based on incorporating difference within (intracultural similarities), but

[18] Hall presents a notable attempt to bring together two discourses which have often been regarded as mutually exclusive: French poststructuralism and its fundamental critique of the concept of identity, and an Anglo-American focus on the historical, political and multicultural imperatives inherent in matters of identity.

excluding difference without (intercultural difference). Similarly, since the 1960s the debate on 'identity politics' has proposed essentialized views of the difference of gender or race. As in all other identities articulated politically in an essentialized manner, such gender or racial identity is based on a presumed internal unity of its subject and an exclusion of difference.

Hall contrasts this concept with a 'non-essentialist' view of cultural identity:

> This second position recognises that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather 'what we have become'. We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity', without acknowledging its other side – the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute, precisely, [a culture's] uniqueness. Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power.
> (Hall 1990: 225).

This second model thus refutes the existence of homogeneous identities founded on a communally shared origin or experience. Instead, non-essential cultural identities are thought of as positional, temporary and relational. They too are defined by the process of identification and the establishment of difference, but this definition is unstable and ever-changing. They emphasize the multiplicity of differences both within and without and the connections between them, rather than a singularity of identity *vis-á-vis* difference.

As Grossberg has pointed out, 'it is important to recognize that Hall offers this, not as a theoretical distinction, although it certainly can be mapped on to the dispute between essentialists and anti-essentialists, but as a historical and strategic distinction.' (Grossberg 1996: 89) Both models refer to different forms of political struggle over cultural identities. There has been much criticism of identity politics that are based on foundational notions of essentialized identities, such as 'class', 'gender', 'race', 'culture' or 'nation'. They are seen as inherently contradictory, as the notion of a unified identity around which they organize themselves is usually constructed through the exclusion or

suppression of difference. Rather than seek emancipation from them, they thus reproduce the very structures of power that marginalized them in the first place on the grounds of their difference.[19] Hall, however, stresses the strategic importance of such essentialist models of cultural identity for the emancipatory struggles of subaltern communities.[20] These struggle have attempted to contest the often stigmatized identity of a marginalized group with a positive identity, based on a supposed cultural essence:

> In post-colonial societies, the rediscovery of this identity is often the object of what Frantz Fanon once called a 'passionate research... directed by the secret hope of discovering beyond the misery of today [...] some very beautiful and splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves and in regard to others.' [...] We should not, for a moment, underestimate or neglect the importance of the act of imaginative rediscovery which this conception of a rediscovered, essential identity entails. 'Hidden histories' have played a critical role in the emergence of many of the most important social movements of our time – feminist, anti-colonial and anti-racist.
> (Hall 1990: 224)

To understand the particular emancipatory power of an essentialist conception of cultural identity that Hall hints at here it is important to distinguish it from another identity model based on an essentialist premise: that of modernity, which centres on the notion of the individual as a singular, self-same, unified subject explored above. Modernity too links this model of identity to an ideal of its emancipation based on culture. Habermas (Habermas 1988 (1980 has provided a contemporary articulation of this ideal: for him, modernity begins when the idea of a unified culture (based on a mythical or religious world-view) that characterizes pre-modern times is differentiated

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[19] This is by now a well-rehearsed argument, particularly within recent feminism, which has put forward a critique of an essentialized notion of 'woman' as being exclusive of the differences of race, class or sexual orientation, see Putnam Tong 1998. This critique has been taken one step further by Judith Butler, who examines the category of gender and its discursive construction as divided from an essentialized concept of 'sex' as rooted in bodies: 'gender, naively (rather than critically) confused with sex, serves as a unifying principle of the embodied self and maintains that unity over and against an "opposite sex" whose structure is presumed to maintain a parallel but oppositional internal coherence among sex, gender, and desire. [...] Hence, one is one's gender to the extent that one is not the other gender, a formulation that presupposes and enforces the restriction of gender within that binary pair.' (Butler 1990a: 22) As Hall remarks, 'Butler makes a powerful case that all identities operate through exclusion, through the discursive construction of a constitutive outside and the production of abjected and marginalized subjects, apparently outside the field of the symbolic, the representable, [...] which then returns to trouble and unsettle the foreclosures which we prematurely call "identities"'. (Hall 1996b: 15) I shall return to Butler's resulting notion of the performativity of identities below.

[20] Gayatri Spivak has coined the much-quoted term 'strategic essentialism', a critical position that validates identity as politically necessary but not unchangeable, in reference to the 'Subaltern Studies' group, whose work on the history of colonial India she characterizes as the '*strategic* use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest' (Spivak 1996 (1985): 214).

into three 'cultural value spheres' – the theoretical (science), the practical (morality) and the aesthetic (art) – and developed as independent discourses and 'rationality complexes', with their own institutional basis and looked after by experts. The 'project of modernity' hoped to use the cognitive potential of objective science, universal morality and autonomous art to inform and enrich the realm of the everyday, or 'life-world'. This life-world for Habermas is the birth-place of emancipation, where an autonomous, self-reflective and universal subject can acquire freedom through rational communicative action based on consensus and a universal moral consciousness, and untouched by the imperatives of the system (e.g., the economy) for profit, control and efficiency (Habermas 1987). Habermas recognises that the 'project of modernity' is far from complete. For him, the current 'crisis' of modernity has come about because of an intrusion of the 'system' into the 'life-world'.[21] Identity politics (or, to use Habermas' term, 'new social movements' (Habermas 1981)) are a response to this colonisation. According to Habermas, however, only feminism is a truly emancipatory movement, as it is built on his ideal of communicative rationality. Other movements, such as the struggles for cultural or regional autonomy, are in their affective defence of a particular lifestyle and identity retreatist and anti-modern.

Terry Eagleton offers a useful distinction between two concepts of culture, which he differentiates as 'Culture' and 'culture', that helps to distinguish Habermas' position from that of Hall's essentialist cultural identity: 'Traditionally, culture [i.e. 'Culture'] was a way in which we could sink our petty particularisms in some more capacious, all inclusive medium. As a form of universal subjecthood, it signified those virtues which we shared simply by virtue of our common humanity. [...] Since the 1960s, however, the world "culture" has veered upon its axis to mean exactly the opposite. It now means

[21] Habermas argues that the life-world is now dominated by economic (i.e. empirical-theoretical or cognitive-instrumental) rationality brought about by capitalist modernisation, rather than the communicative rationality based on the cultural value spheres that he envisioned. This intrusion was prepared by the fact that, far from enriching everyday life, the cultural value spheres had increasingly distanced themselves from the life-world. For Habermas, however, the answer to this crisis is not to abolish the project of modernity altogether, as in his eyes postmodernism has done by a one-sided emphasis on aesthetic experience. Instead, he declares the project to be 'incomplete' and pleads for its completion through an appropriation of expert culture from the point of view of the life world in all three spheres of art, science and morality, see Habermas 1988 (1980).

the affirmation of a specific identity – national, sexual, ethnic, regional – rather than the transcendence of it.' (Eagleton 2000: 38) In contrast to the humanist essentialism of modernity and its notion of culture as a universal attribute, traces of which can be found in Habermas' model, the essentialist position on cultural identity described by Hall is an articulation of 'culture' rather than 'Culture', an expression of cultural relativism or, as Eagleton terms it, 'cultural particularity'. 'Culture as identity is averse to both universality and individuality; instead, it values collective particularity. From the viewpoint of Culture, culture perversely seizes upon the accidental particulars of existence – gender, ethnicity, nationality, social origin, sexual tendency and the like – and converts them into the bearers of necessity.' (Eagleton 2000: 54–5) In contrast to a notion of collective identity based on the particularity of culture(s), Culture universalizes the individual, and in doing so believes to realize its 'true' identity. Yet, as Eagleton points out, there is often a hidden ethnocentric bias to the idea of the universal: 'In fact, what the universal commonly does is seize upon the historically particular and project it as an eternal truth. A contingent history – that of the West – becomes the history of humanity as such.' (Eagleton 2000: 57)

A politics based on an essentialist notion of cultural identity can thus be identified as an expression of resistance against the universalization of particularities hidden in the modern idea of a humanist essentialism. Such a position of resistance has been articulated by Lyotard, Habermas' 'postmodern' adversary. Lyotard too diagnoses the history of modernity as a process of differentiation. But whilst Habermas attempts to resolve this process into a rational politics of communicative consensus, for Lyotard 'such consensus does violence to the heterogeneity of language games[22]. And invention is always born of dissension.' (Lyotard 1984: xxv) Lyotard opposes any attempt to reduce multiplicity to unity and (in Hegelian terms) raise the particular to the universal, as it violates the 'incommensurability' of difference. Difference for him is a radical

[22] Lyotard borrows his theory of 'language games' from Wittgenstein. The term 'language game' signifies that various categories of utterances, much like a game of chess, can be defined in terms of rules that are arbitrary, complete and agonistic. Knowledge for Lyotard can no longer be legitimized by 'meta narratives', but is part of such a language game. Instead of scientific knowledge, which claims to know its object, Lyotard proposes a 'narrative knowledge', which is constituted in the telling of the story of judging the object. See Lyotard 1984.

'differend' that cannot be adjudicated through common communicative or legal procedures (Lyotard 1988). Consequently, Lyotard declares the modern idea of universal emancipation to be 'now barely credible' (Lyotard 1989: 318), as the very basis of each of the great narratives of emancipation [i.e. Christianity, Enlightenment, Marxism, Capitalism] has been invalidated in the twentieth century through the experience of terror and trauma (Auschwitz, Stalinism, economic crisis) (Lyotard 1989).He too draws a link between the decline of an idea of 'universal history' and the resurgence of cultural difference: 'I wonder if the defaillancy of modernity [...] might not have to be related to resistance [...] on the part of the insurmountable diversity of cultures' (Lyotard 1989: 319) However, struggles for emancipation based on an essentialized notion of cultural identity are subjected to the same 'defaillancy': they throw off tyranny only to reproduce it by again raising the particular to the universal: 'Proud struggles for independence end in young, reactionary states.' (Lyotard 1988: 181)[23]

Hall offers a defence of the historical legitimacy of an identity politics against the charges of both modernism – for which identity politics presents a regressive emphasis on the particular that goes back to pre-modern, traditional societies – and postmodernism – with its scepticism about the values of communality, tradition and stability of identity. For Hall, an emphasis on cultural identity is an articulation of resistance to the forces that have affected and still affect identity, such as racism, colonialism or patriarchy, and that have kept groups of people from controlling their own symbolic representation. But he too regards the concept of an 'authentic essentialist cultural identity', with its notion of a common origin and historical unity, as inherently contradictory, as it is unable to resolve the contradictions in the very material from which it is created: the traumatic character 'of the colonial experience' (Hall 1990: 225) (and, we may add, that of patriarchy, racism, etc.). Trauma creates ruptures in the

[23] Lyotard does not take an 'anti-emancipatory' stance, as some of his critics have suggested. On the contrary, he too attempts to rethink the project of modernity and propose a postmodern version of the idea of a universal history of humanity, led by the 'Idea of a humanity, which is not the master of "its" ends (a metaphysical illusion), but which is sensitive to the heterogeneous ends implied in the various known and unknown genres of discourse, and capable of pursuing them as much as possible, maintain itself.' (Lyotard 1988: 178).

historical memory of a culture: 'cultural identity [...] has its histories – and histories have their real, material and symbolic effects. The past continues to speak to us. But it no longer addresses us as a simple, factual 'past', since our relation to it [...] is always-already 'after the break'. It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth.' (Hall 1990: 226) It is in response to the trauma of colonialism that Hall proposes his second, non-essentialist mode of cultural identity: 'The ways in which black people, black experiences, were positioned and subject-ed in the dominant regimes of representation were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalisation. [...] They had the power to make us see and experience *ourselves* as 'Other'. [...] This inner expropriation of cultural identity cripples and deforms. [...T]his idea of otherness as an inner compulsion changes our conception of "cultural identity". In this perspective, cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all [...].' (Hall 1990: 225–6)

But how is identity formed if it is not a quality that derives from either our being human or from fixed social relations? As sociologist Hetherington points out, an identity thought of in non-essentialist terms 'can only "exist" in a space between, in relation to something else, across an uncertain gap between identity and non-identity and in the recognition of that gap' (Hetherington 1998: 25). Hall offers such a model for the formation of identity: 'We might think of black Caribbean identities as "framed" by two axes or vectors, simultaneously operative: the vector of similarity and continuity; and the vector of difference and rupture. Caribbean identities always have to be thought of in terms of the dialogic relationship between these two axes. The one gives us some grounding in, some continuity with, the past. The second reminds us that what we share is precisely the experience of a profound discontinuity [i.e. slavery, colonisation, migration, etc.].' (Hall 1990: 226–7). Identities are defined by marking differences, but the boundaries of difference are continually positioned and repositioned in relation to different points of reference. (Martinique is different from Jamaica, but vis-à-vis the developed West both are very much the 'same'.) Identity is thus formed around a Derridean 'play of difference' (Hall 1990: 228) within identity 'positions' that are articulated through a dialogue between their constituent parts: Hall demonstrates how

Caribbean cultural identities are formed through an ongoing negotiation between at least three 'presences' – *Présence Africaine, Présence Européenne, Présence Americain* (Hall 1990: 230). In short, non-essentialist identity is not located in a stable essence, but in the changing connections and articulations between its constituent parts. Hall's use of the metaphor of 'play' in this context is to be taken literally: 'I use the word "play" because the double meaning of the metaphor is important. It suggests, on the one hand, the instability, the permanent unsettlement, the lack of any final resolution. On the other hand, it reminds us that the place where this "doubleness" is most powerfully to be heard is "playing" within the varieties of Caribbean musics.' (Hall 1990: 228) This notion of 'play' as both an operation that unsettles fixed identities and a representational practice that constitutes new kinds of identity is precisely what recent cultural theory has termed 'performance.'

II.II CULTURAL IDENTITY – BETWEEN IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE

The distinction between an essentialist and a non-essentialist model for the formation of cultural identity, as we have seen, lies in the way in which each of them conceptualizes the role of difference in the constitution of identity. In fact, most debates about cultural identity today are in truth debates about cultural difference. The proliferation of concepts such as hybridity, multiplicity, dispersal, fragmentation, ambivalence are evidence for this shift.[24] Equally, identity politics are in truth politics of difference, concerned with the struggle of subaltern, marginalized and dominated identities vis-á-vis the forces of domination. Whereas traditionally such social movements would be striving for a state of equality that would ultimately eliminate their difference, these new struggles aim for a situation in which their difference would be fully recognized.

> This is what has become known as identity in the postmodern world. [...] This is the world of identity as difference and as recognition; dominant identities which defined

[24] See, for example, the most prominent theorists of cultural difference: Bhabha 1994; Hall 1990; Hall and du Gay 1996a; Rutherford 1990; Said 1978.

themselves against a host of Others, whose Otherness was something dangerous and marginal, have lost their hegemony. Power and inequality still exist; they continue to be seen in areas of economic and cultural life, in social policy and state practices, and still proliferate in some of the racist, misogynist, homophobic stories of those who cling to an idea of essentialism [...]. However, difference does not just exist at the boundaries and beyond the city walls, it prevails and is everywhere, having become, if not hegemonic, then at least something that has to be taken into account: a powerful place from which the vestiges of old but seriously weakening authority of essentialism is challenged.

(Hetherington 1998: 25)

The binary of identity and difference that dominates the debate on cultural identity is already inscribed in the term 'identity' itself. The word is derived from the Latin *idem*, meaning 'the same'. A dictionary of philosophy offers the following definition: 'a relation of complete and absolute sameness or resemblance between two things.' (Angeles 1992: 137) In traditional Western metaphysics[25] the 'problem of identity' was thus identified as distinguishing a relation of sameness from one of difference: 'things within a class are all different, yet something about them can be classed as being similar. There is difference yet at the same time sameness. There is sameness yet at the same time difference. What is it that is the *same* among the differences?' (Angeles 1992: 137). As literary scholar Linda Charnes remarks, 'there is a paradox built into the term, since it is also always citational, insofar as it depends upon comparison: to render something "the same as" something else. I wish to evoke the paradoxical and contradictory nature of a concept that etymologically collapses into two – that takes two terms of a comparison and makes them *the same thing*.' (Charnes 1993: 8) To say that "x" (having a specific quality) is identical with "y" (in respect of the same quality) is to constitute an identity between two differences. Identity therefore implies by its very definition the exclusion of difference at the same time as it is dependent upon it: this paradox became the starting point for a fundamental critique of the concept.

The most far-reaching investigation into the paradoxical nature of identity has been undertaken by Derrida as part of his project to 'deconstruct' the nature of the Western

[25] For an overview over philosophical theories of identity see Angeles 1992.

metaphysical tradition and its dependence on the 'logic of identity'[26] (Derrida 1967). At the centre of the project is his theory of *différance*, which I have already mentioned in passing. Derrida builds on Saussure's notion of language as a differential network in which every element acquires its meaning only in relation to other elements in the same system: '*in language [langue] there are only differences.* Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language, there are only differences *without positive terms*' (Saussure 1974: 120). With his neologism *différance*, Derrida attempts to distinguish the common usage of the term 'difference' that Saussure alludes to here, for which difference is either an identity itself or the difference between two identities[27], from a concept of difference that is no longer a part of the logic of identity. *Différance*

> remains suspended between the two French verbs 'to differ' and 'to defer' (postpone), both of which contribute to its textual force but neither of which can fully capture its meaning. Language depends on difference, as Saussure showed [...], the structure of distinctive propositions which make up its basic economy. Where Derrida breaks new ground [...] is in the extent to which 'differ' shades into 'defer' [...], the idea that meaning is always deferred, perhaps to this point of an endless supplementarity, by the play of signification.
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> (Norris 1982: 32)

Within this potentially limitless play of infinitely postponed meaning, identity, according to Hall, is constituted through a 'necessary and temporary "break" in the infinite semiosis of language', a 'cut' or '*positioning*' (Hall 1990: 230), which makes meaning possible, yet remains contingent, temporary, strategic and arbitrary. In Western metaphysical tradition, the play of signification is stabilised through a system of categorical oppositions, a constitutive relation of negativity which ascribes value to one

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[26] The 'logic of identity' is based on the 'Law of Identity', one of the three 'laws of thought', which go back to Plato and Aritstotle. The 'Law of Identity' states '[...] If a thing A is A, then it is A. A is A. Everything is what it is (and cannot, at the time it is what it is, be something else).' (Angeles 1992: 167) The other two laws of thought are 'the Law of Noncontradition' and 'the Law of Excluded Middle'. These 'laws' not only assume logical coherence, but they are also regarded as '*ontologically real* (describing the ultimate features of reality)' (Angeles 1992: 167), thus presuming that there is an essential reality to which they refer.

[27] 'We say, for instance, that "x" (having a specific quality) is different from "y" (which has another specific quality), and we usually mean that it is possible to enumerate the qualities which make up this difference. This, however, is to give difference *positive* terms' (Lechte 1994: 107).

term of the opposition and denies it to the other. Laclau is concerned with the political implications of Derrida's theory of *différance*:[28]

> Derrida has shown how an identity's constitution is always based on excluding something and establishing a violent hierarchy between the two resultant poles – man/woman, etc. What is peculiar to the second term is thus reduced to the function of an accident as opposed to the essentiality of the first. It is the same with the black-white relationship, in which white, of course, is equivalent to 'human being'. 'Women' and 'black' are thus 'marks' (i.e. marked terms) in contrast to the unmarked terms of 'man' and 'white'.
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> (Laclau 1990: 33)

Social identity for Laclau is constituted as an act of power, as it manages to affirm itself only by repressing that which threatens it. Identity thus produces an 'Other' – that which it is not – which remains at its margins and becomes a force of destabilization within it. Grossberg distinguishes two variants of this figure:

> notions of the 'supplement' locate the other outside of the field of subjectivity as it were, as pure excess; notions of 'negativity' locate the other within the field of subjectivity as a constitutive exotic other. In the former, the subaltern constitutes the boundaries of the very possibility of subjectivity; in the latter, the subaltern may be granted an incomprehensible subjectivity.
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> (Grossberg 1996: 90)

Grossberg cites different examples for the use of these two figures within contemporary theories of identity: 'Lyotard sees 'the Jews' as that which European culture cannot identify because its exclusion, its unnameability, is itself constitutive of European identity. Similarly, Bhabha's notion of mimicry as an intentional misappropriation of the dominant discourse locates the power of the subaltern in a kind of textual insurrection in which the subaltern is defined only by its internal negation of the colonizer. [...] Finally, there is a common reading of Said's Orientalism in which the dominant power necessarily constructs its other as a repressed and desired difference.' (Grossberg 1996: 91) Grossberg contests such theories as, for him, they 'remain within the strategic forms

[28] The political implications of Derrida's theory have been widely discussed, mainly with regards to the system of opposition as evidence for a relationship of oppression, and with regards to the ideology of 'essence' as a social mechanism for eliminating the threat of difference. See Boyne 1990: pp. 123ff. for a discussion of Derrida's influence on feminism and anti-racism. Derrida himself has recently turned to a discussion of racism and the limits of difference in his work on South African apartheid, see Boyne 1990: pp. 152ff.

of modern logic' – a logic that he terms, contrary to its common description as the 'logic of identity', the 'logic of difference'. The logic governing modernity for him relies on the constitutive relationship between identity and difference described above, for which identity is constructed through, not outside, difference. This presents an insurmountable paradox for conceptualizing a counter-modern politics: 'If difference is irrevocable, then modernity is inescapable.' (Grossberg 1996: 93). Grossberg instead proposes a different model: 'the modern transforms all relations of identity into relations of difference. Thus the modern constitutes not identity out of difference but difference out of identity.' (Grossberg 1996: 93) As a consequence, 'a counter-modern politics has to elude the logic of difference, and to (re-)capture the possibility of a politics of otherness' (Grossberg 1996: 93). Grossberg offers a distinction between 'difference' and 'otherness': whilst for Derrida and his followers difference is 'part of the economy out of which identities are produced', a theory of otherness, building on Michel Foucault[29], assumes 'that difference is itself an historically produced economy, imposed in modern structures of power' (Grossberg 1996: 94), and therefore not fundamentally constitutive. The Other therefore exists not as a negativity, produced as an effect of the exclusionary power of identity and only discernible in difference to it, but as a positivity, 'based on the notions of effectivity, belonging and, as Paul Gilroy describes it, the "changing same"' (Grossberg 1996: 97).

Grossberg is not alone in his criticism of the way in which Derrida's concept of *différance* has been adapted for an often a-historical and generalized celebration of (postmodern) difference: 'There is nothing remotely groovy about diversity and

[29] The dispute between Foucault and Derrida is rooted in their different conceptualizations of the nature of otherness. Grossberg elucidates the difference between Derrida's and Foucault's position with the help of their different readings of Descartes: 'Derrida argues that Descartes's exclusion of madness from reason itself constituted the possibility and identity of reason. The relation between reason and madness is, then, an originary structure of difference in the sense that, once again, difference always exists at the centre of identity. [...] For Foucault, on the other hand, Descartes's exclusion of madness was a philosophical representation of a real historical event; the exclusion was material and spatial as much as discursive. While this exclusion was necessary to establish the status of reason and to naturalize the identification of reason and subjectivity, it is not itself constitutive, either of reason or of madness.' (Grossberg 1996: 94). It is above all in later works such as *The Use of Pleasure* (Foucault 1987) that Foucault puts forward an understanding of otherness as the political-economic product of a particular sociohistoric development. According to Grossberg, '[m]uch of the contemporary work on identity can be seen as a struggle taking place in the space between Derrida and Foucault.' (Grossberg 1996: 94) For attempts to reconcile Derrida's and Foucault's positions see Laclau and Mouffe 1985, and Boyne 1990.

difference as political problems [...] The management of diversity and difference through the bureaucratic mantra of race, class and gender encouraged the divisive rhetoric of being more marginal, more oppressed.' (Mercer 1992: 33) Furthermore, differences are advanced not merely by subaltern communities in search for self-representation, but also by the logic of the market: 'Cultural differences are, moreover, being promoted as touristic and cultural commodities at every point on the scale.' (Lyotard 1989: 323) Yet a theory of otherness is not without its own aporias. Otherness conceptualized as outside of the order of identity and difference poses the ethical question of how one can relate to the Other without violating its radical otherness.[30] A similar ethical question, however, presents itself also to the theorists of difference. 'How to respond to various kinds of difference is a question that has recently been on many intellectual and political agendas, and the familiar "mantra" of race, class, and gender should not lead one to think that the problems signaled by these terms are themselves hackneyed or unworthy of sustained attention. Among these problems is how to distinguish among kinds of difference rather than to engage in an indiscriminate celebration of difference *per se*.' (LaCapra 1998: 192) The ethical possibilities of dealing with difference are explored by Lyotard from the perspective of what he terms 'the differend': 'a differend [*différend*] would be a case of conflict, between (at least) two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgement applicable to both arguments.' (Lyotard 1988: xi) The basis of his postmodern conception of justice is the proposition of the radical heterogeneity or 'incommensurability' of difference. LaCapra, a theorist concerned with the Holocaust, argues that this radical incommensurability presents a 'limit-case' by pointing to its problematic side if an intolerant dominant group asserts the radical

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[30] The primacy of otherness (alterity), which is independent of the order of the 'same', and its consequence for ethics as the relationship of one to an other has been put forward by Emmanuel Levinas (Hand 1989). Cultural otherness and its consequences for communication have been theorized by Slavoj Zizek: 'What makes communication between different cultures possible, so Zizek argues, is the fact that the limit which prevents our full access to the Other is *ontological*, not merely epistemological. [...] Zizek's point is that what makes the Other difficult of access is the fact that he or she is never complete in the first place, never wholly determined by the context but always to some extent "open" and "floating". [...] It is at the point where the Other is dislocated in itself, not wholly bound by its context, that we can encounter it most deeply, since this self-opaqueness is also true of ourselves. [...] As Zizek puts it: "The dimension of the Universal thus emerges when the two lacks – mine and that of the Other – overlap."' (Eagleton 2000: 96–7) See Zizek 1997.

difference of a marginalized one (the Nazis with respect to the Jews, for example)[31]. He proposes instead a modified understanding of incommensurability: 'It implies that there is no metalanguage or higher-order normative structure into which differences may be translated or in terms of which they may be resolved. But it does not eliminate the possibility of mutual translatability or normative argument and adjudication, with the risks of both understanding and misunderstanding such an exchange engenders.' (LaCapra 1998: 194) Incommensurability for LaCapra builds on the respect for differences, yet also allows for a possibility of sharing.

Such a notion of mutual translatability opens a liminal space of 'in-between', a space which has been conceptualized by post-colonial theorist Homi Bhabha as a 'third space' of cultural hybridity (Bhabha 1990a). For Bhabha too cultural differences are incommensurable, but a translation between them is possible because all forms of culture are symbolic activities and thus in some way related to each. This does not suppose the existence of an essence that can be translated, however – on the contrary, in order to be translatable, a culture can never be fully transparent to itself: 'in order to objectify cultural meaning, there always has to be a process of alienation and of secondariness *in relation to itself*. In that sense there is no "in itself" and "for itself" in cultures because they are always subject to intrinsic forms of translation' (Bhabha 1990a: 210)[32] Bhabha concludes that if 'the act of cultural translation (both as representation and as reproduction) denies the essentialism of a prior given original or originary culture, then we see that all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the

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[31] Lyotard too, however, takes Auschwitz as his starting point for his theory of the 'differend'. He cites the example of revisionist historians of the Holocaust, who refuse to accept the existence of the gas chamber because the only acceptable witness who could testify to its existence would be someone who had been killed in it. Rather than pointing merely to the moral perversity of the argument, Lyotard goes further in questioning the very linguistic and philosophical foundations on which such an argument could be made. 'I would like to call a *differend [différend]* the case where the plaintiff is divested of the means to argue and becomes for that reason a victim.' (Lyotard 1988: 9)

[32] Bhabha's theory of cultural translation, which is informed by Walter Benjamin's observations on the task of the translator, as the possibility of a relationship based on a mutual dislocation shows similarities to Zizek's model of cultural communication across otherness, see above. For a discussion of Benjamin's theory of translation in reference to cultural theory see also Clifford and Marcus 1986a. For a full discussion of the problem of cultural translation as a metaphor for anthropological practice and its contemporary reconsideration see Hastrup 1995: 22ff.

third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge.' (Bhabha 1990a: 211) As a space of emergence the 'third space' of hybridity is not so much identity as 'identification' (Bhabha 1990a: 211). The term 'identification' is used here not in the traditional sense of either being identified as the same or identifying with sameness, but as a 'a process of identifying with and through [...] an object of otherness, at which point the agency of identification – the subject – is itself always ambivalent' (Bhabha 1990a: 211). As a result of the process of identification the subject is always 'decentred' through the structuring present of otherness.

Bhabha's notion of identification highlights the fact that differences must be negotiated not only when they appear as cultural differences between communities (in the manner LaCapra suggests), but that differences manifest themselves on the level of the subject as overlapping or competing subject-positions, 'in-between which or in excess of which identity is formed' (Bhabha 1994: 4). As Hetherington remarks in reference to Bhabha: 'Difference, therefore, is not always an uncomplicated location. [...] While many of the positions we occupy as subjects may be privileged in some ways – as men, as middle class, as White; as Westerners, as young, and so on – it is also possible to occupy marginal positions at the same time. A young, White, affluent, Western man might still be marginal in terms of his sexual orientation or in terms of some disability that he may have.' (Hetherington 1998: 25) The result of such negotiations between different subject-positions has come to be known as 'hyphenated' identities. According to Bhabha,

> [h]ybrid hyphenations emphasize the incommensurable elements – the stubborn chunks – as the basis of cultural identifications. What is at issue is the performative nature of differential identities: the regulation and negotiation of those spaces that are continually, *contingently*, 'opening out', remaking the boundaries, exposing the limits of any claim to a singular or autonomous sign of difference – be it class, gender or race. Such assignations of social differences – where difference is neither One nor the Other but *something else besides, in-between* – find their agency in a form of the 'future' where the past is not originary, where the present is not simply transitory.
> (Bhabha 1994: 219)

It is in response to such an attempt to rethink questions of identity, social agency and communal affiliation from an interstitial perspective that a theory of performance and performativity entered the debate on identity.

II.III CULTURAL IDENTITY – BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY

As shown above, a non-essentialist, differential theory of identity defines it as a 'temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us' (Hall 1996b: 6). Identity is therefore not reducible to an autonomous individual, but neither can it be equated with a social structure of discursive practices. According to Laclau and Mouffe (Laclau and Mouffe 1985), identity is the product of a contradictory relation between the social structure (necessity) and individual autonomy (contingency). It is thus produced within a complex negotiation between the social and the individual.

This model highlights an ambivalence hidden in many identity theories: the term 'identity' has been used to refer to both an individual and a social or communal property, often without differentiation. This ambivalence is prominent in models of cultural identity, where it often left unclear who or what the subject of cultural identity is, a collective or an individual member of that collective. It is manifested most obviously in essentialist definitions of cultural identity: to recall Hall's definition, essentialism assumes the existence of 'a sort of collective "one true self", hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed "selves", which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common.' (Hall 1990: 223) Within the parameters of this model, to speak of the cultural identity of an individual only makes sense if one presumes the existence of cultural identity on a communal level. An individual can only 'have' a cultural identity in so far as it is shared with other members of the same community, a community defined precisely by this common identity. It is a small step from presuming a communal model of selfhood, in which all members of the collective partake, to assuming a collective subject and attributing it with an existence prior to and beyond its individual materializations. In its most problematic manifestations, the

assumption of a collective subject can be found in theoretical models of pre-modern societies as well as in anti-modern political movements (e.g. fascism).[33] It has also left its traces in the foundationalist premises of identity politics: early feminism, for example, was based on the presumed existence of a universal and unified category of 'woman' as its subject.

The assumption of a collective subject of cultural identity may be most obvious in relation to communally defined types of identity such as national, ethnic or gender identity, but it is not inherent to them. Non-essentialist, differential models have attempted to redefine such identities as subject-positions without presuming the existence of a collective subject to which they are attributed. In fact, the assumption of such an existence relies not on a collective but an individualist premise: the inability to think identity without presuming it to be the attribute of a singular, selfsame, unified subject that is the origin of experience, knowledge and action. This inability is intrinsically linked to the modern, individualist understanding of identity, for which identity is the property of such a subject. There appear to be deep structural similarities between the tendency to reduce cultural identity to a collective subject and the desire to reduce it to an individual subject. Both can be traced back to what Grossberg has termed the 'logic of individuality', which has 'equated the various processes of individuation and thus collapsed the various planes of effectivity through which individuality is constituted into a single and simple structure' (Grossberg 1996: 97). Grossberg identifies three such planes:

> (1) the subject as the position defining the possibility and the source of experience and, by extension, of knowledge; (2) the agent as the position of activity; and (3) the self as the mark of a social identity.
>
> (Grossberg 1996: 97–8)

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[33] Nineteenth century cultural theory and anthropology went as far as claiming the existence of an 'authentic modal personality' – an abstract personality type that incorporated the characteristics common to a community. It was a small step from the identification of such a common cultural denominator to ethnic and racial stereotyping. Models of cultural personality types, however, have lived on in the shape of 'cultural roles' in more recent theories of cultural anthropology. For a full discussion see Greverus 1978: 235-236.

For Grossberg, the conflation of these three planes is paradigmatic for modernity, which has collapsed them into the ideal of the modern individual as the subject of experience and knowledge, the agent of action and the carrier of identity.[34] This individualist model is generally distinguished from a collective model, which in turn is regarded as typical for pre-, anti- or postmodern concepts of communally defined identities. Habermas has proposed such a distinction (Habermas 1974): pre-modern societies, which are defined by their stable, communal social order, produce collective identities that are attributed to each member of the community by virtue of this membership alone. In what Habermas calls the 'complex societies' of modernity, identity must be acquired by the individual as the result of a complex negotiation between the various processes of differentiation that characterize modern societies.[35] This individual acquisition is not to be mistaken for an unrestrained individualism: the identify-formation of an individual takes place in communication with the social order of which he is a member. A successful (for Habermas 'rational') identity enables the individual to participate fully in the communicative processes of the life-world, and thereby become an autonomous, self-reflective and emancipated subject.[36]

This notion of identity as an individual task is implied in the very concept of identity as a social category rather than an ontological one. It was given prominence in the twentieth century by the development of social psychology, which replaced traditional philosophical models of identity: for the latter, identity, whether referring to that which is the same with itself or the same with an other, is a given attribute. It makes no sense to speak of acquiring or losing one's identity – identity philosophy attributes identity to a thing simply because of it being what it is. Social psychology, one the other hand, defines identity as an attribute that an individual does not possess per se, but can obtain

[34] One of the results of the 'logic of individuality' has certainly been the often indiscriminate employment of terms such as subject, individual, self, I, person, personality, character, mind, persona, role, etc., in the debate on identity.

[35] Following social psychological models (see below), Habermas distinguishes collective identity from individual 'ego-identity' ('Ich-Identität' (Habermas 1974: 27)).

[36] 'Die neue Identität einer staatenübergreifenden Gesellschaft [...] ist heute nur noch in reflexiver Gestalt denkbar, nämlich so, daß sie im Bewußtsein allgemeiner und gleicher Chancen der Teilnahme an solchen Kommunikationsprozessen begründet ist, in denen Identitätsbildung als kontinuierlicher Lernprozeß stattfindet.' (Habermas 1974: 66)

by balancing its individual needs with the social expectations of the collective. This balance, however, is not always successful in the way Habermas anticipated: it also opens the possibility of conflict, stigma, alienation or identity crisis.[37] A theory of individual identify-formation allows for a crisis to be presented as the failure of the individual, rather than the product of possible contradictions between the social and the individual. Bauman has argued that the modern model of individual identity is therefore a merely compensatory concept to conceal a social dilemma: 'Identity entered modern mind and practice dressed from the start as an individual task. It was up to the individual to find escape from uncertainty. Not for the first and not for the last time, socially created problems were to be resolved by individual efforts, and collective maladies healed by private medicine.' (Bauman 1996: 19) The ideal of forming a balanced identity shifted the responsibility for solving social contradictions on to the individual. For a postmodern sceptic like Bauman, the modern ideal of an autonomous and emancipated individual identity is thus a mere smoke-screen that covers a similar determinist structure to the pre-modern, essentialist model of a collective identity: a concept of identity that fixes both of its components, the individual and the social or communal, into place and declares the former as being determined by the latter.

The 'ruptures' of twentieth-century critical theory explored above have helped to displace both the 'logic of individuality' and the determinant relation between the social and the individual by questioning the equation of individual, subject, agency and self. For a non-essentialist, differential theory of identity, 'cultural identity' has no subject, rather it refers, to reiterate Hall, to an attachment to a plurality of subject positions:

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[37] Erikson, who achieved wider recognition for the term 'identity' within the social sciences, uses the term to refer to a defined 'I' within a social reality that has learned to reconcile a feeling of individual uniqueness with a sense of belonging to a collective, or, in Eriksson's terms, an 'ego identity' with a 'group identity' (Erikson 1983 (1968): 45ff.) Similarly, Mead, who does not use the term 'identity' but addresses related questions in this theory of the 'self', distinguishes between two authorities that the individual has to learn to balance in order to form a 'self': the 'Me' (the 'organized set of social attitudes in the individual' (Mead 1965 (1934): 175)) and the 'I' (the 'response of the biological individual to the "Me"' (Mead 1965 (1934): 175–6)). Goffman too differentiates between personal identity, which contains the uniqueness of a person, and social identity, which contains the sum of social expectations, institutionalized in social 'rôles'. Both aspects of identity are integrated into the 'ego-identity', cf. Goffman 1963. For a survey of identity models in social psychology and developmental psychology see Bosma, Graafsma, Grotevant et al. 1994.

> I use 'identity' to refer to the meeting point, the point of suture, between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to 'interpellate', speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be 'spoken'.[38]
>
> (Hall 1996b: 5–6)

The question that a non-essentialist, differential model of identity gives rise to is how are such identities constituted and, more importantly, maintained? How is the subject not only hailed to a certain subject-position, but how does it invest in the position, how is its 'attachment' formed? And what precisely is the relation between the social structure (necessity) and individual autonomy (contingency) in the formation of identity?

For Grossberg, the non-essentialist model suggests another question, or paradox, which for him reveals its continuing dependence from the modern logic of individuality: 'The paradox is, quite simply, how can the individual be both cause and effect (an old question), both subject and subjected? Or in other words, how and where does one locate agency?' (Grossberg 1996: 98). According to Grossberg, non-essentialist theories of identity have mainly focused on problematizing the equation of subject and identity (or 'self', in Grossberg's terminology) within essentialist theories of individual identity, leaving out the third aspect of individuality, the question of agency. He proposes to uncouple the problem of agency from that of the subject and identity. The 'subject', according to Grossberg, 'describes a position within a field of subjectivity or within a phenomenological field', which, as everyone experiences the world, 'must be a universal value', and allows the subject 'some access to experience, to some knowledge about themselves and their world' (Grossberg 1996: 98). Social identities are defined by the way in which subjectivity as an abstract value 'is always inscribed or distributed within cultural codes of differences'. The self is 'the material embodiment of identities, the material points at which codes of difference and distinction are inscribed upon the

[38] Subjects can speak and be spoken, or, to use the Lacanian model on which Hall bases his theory (Lacan 1977: 294–324), the individual (the 'I') is both the subject of enunciation and subjected to enunciation (i.e. the subject of the enoncé). For Lacan the subject of enunciation is always more than the subject of the enunciated.

socius' (Grossberg 1996: 99). Agency, on the other hand, 'involves relations of participation and access, the possibilities of moving into particular sites of activity and power, and of belonging to them in such a way as to be able to enact their powers' (Grossberg 1996: 99). Grossberg concludes: 'this suggests that agency as a political problem cannot be conflated with issues of cultural identity or of epistemological possibilities.' (Grossberg 1996: 100)

The attempt to separate identity from agency calls into question the very foundation of both modern ideals of emancipation and the emancipatory aspirations of identity politics. Whether cultural particularism or humanist universalism (see above), both rely on an essentialist model of identity and its implicit link to agency.[39] Lyotard has located this conflation of identity and agency in the use of the first person plural pronoun, 'we':

> As the first person plural pronoun indicates, it refers to a community of subjects: you and I or they and I, depending on whether the speaker is addressing other members of the community (you/I) or a third party (you/they and I) for whom the other members it represents are designated by the third person (they). [...] Within the tradition of modernity, the movement towards emancipation is a movement whereby a third party, who is initially outside the *we* of the emancipating avant-garde, eventually becomes part of the community of real (first person) or potential (second person) speakers. Eventually, there will be only a *we* made up of *you* and *I*. Within this tradition, the position of the first person is in fact marked as being that of the mastery of speech and meaning; let the people have a political voice, the worker a social voice, the poor an economic voice [...]. It follows that, being torn between the present minority situation in which parties count for a great deal and in which you and I count for little, and the future unanimity in which third parties will, by definition, be banished, the *we* [...] reproduces the very tension humanity must experience because of its vocation for emancipation, the tension between the singularity, contingency and opacity of its present, and the universality, self-determination and transparence of the future it is promised.
>
> (Lyotard 1989: 316)

Like the modern individual (the first person singular pronoun, 'I'), the 'we' of modernity is the product of the same modern logic of individuality, which places it as the subject of experience and knowledge, the agent of action and the carrier of identity. And it is subject to the same paradox: it is both the agent of modernity and created by it.

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[39] Laclau and Mouffe have identified such a relation between an essentialist model of identity and a notion of agency in the case of Marxism: Marxism is an essentialism because 'socialist intellectuals *read* in the working class its objective destiny' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 85), and thereby invested it with an essentialist status as the origin of political agency.

Abandoning the idea of universal emancipation must therefore have consequences for the status of the *we*: 'It seems that it is condemned (but it is only in the eyes of modernity that this is a condemnation) to remain particular, to remain (perhaps) *you* and *I* [...]' (Lyotard 1989: 316).

The question that a non-essentialist, differential model of agency gives rise to is how is a politics to be conceived that respect the difference between *you* and *I*, yet allows for the development of solidarity and alliance in a (however provisional and temporary) communality on which all political practice is based? And what precisely is the relation between the social structure (necessity) and individual autonomy (contingency) in the political articulation of identity?[40]

The question of formation and maintenance and the question of agency in relation to non-essentialist, differential identities has been addressed by the concept of 'identification': 'Thus, rather than speaking of identities as a finished thing, we should speak of identification, and see it as an ongoing process.' (Hall 1990: 122) As mentioned above, the term 'identification' is used here precisely not in the common sense of either being identified as the same or identifying with sameness, 'constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation' (Hall 1996b: 2), in which the term has been used in essentialist models to denote the formation of identity an individual's identification with a given collective identity. Hall proposes a second, discursive approach which 'sees identification as a construct, a process never completed – always "in process".' (Hall 1996b: 2-3) For Hall, '[i]dentification is, then, a process of articulation, a suturing'. (Hall

[40] Grossberg proposes a slightly different model of an 'agency without identity', which, instead of abolishing the idea of identity altogether as this model suggests, devises a new model of identity based on a theory of singularity and belonging that displays many similarities with Hall's model of identification. Grossberg builds his argument on Giorgio Agamben's concept of singularity as a mode of existence which is neither universal nor particular, and which thus allows for a conceptualization of community as based on a singularity of belonging (being there, together, in specific place), rather than a common identity. '[I]n specific contexts, identity can become a marker of people's abiding in such a singular community, where the community defines an abode marking people's ways of belonging within the structured mobilities of contemporary life. That would be an identity worth struggling to create.' (Grossberg 1996: 105)

1996b: 3) It focuses the attention on

> what the mechanisms are by which individuals as subjects identify (or do not identify) with the 'positions' to which they are summoned; as well as how they fashion, stylize, produce and 'perform' these positions, and why they never do so completely, for once and all time, and some never do, or are in a constant, agonistic process of struggling with, resisting, negotiating and accommodating the normative or regulative rules with which they confront and regulate themselves.
>
> (Hall 1994: 14)

The concept of identification also suggests a less determinist model of the relation between the social and the individual, and thereby for the possibility of agency: 'Though not without its determinate conditions of existence, including the material and symbolic resources required to sustain it, identification is in the end conditional, lodged in contingency'. (Hall 1996b: 2-3) As Laclau (Laclau 1990) has argued, it is only the fact that identity is partially determined and partially contingent that makes it an ongoing political (and theoretical) issue. The nature of identification thus marks both the possibility of identity politics and its limits. As Judith Butler has remarked:

> identifications belong to the imaginary; they are phantasmatic efforts of alignment, loyalty, ambiguous and cross-corporeal cohabitations, they unsettle the I; they are the sedimentation of the 'we' in the constitution of any I, the structuring present of alterity in the very formulation of the I. Identifications are thus never fully and finally made; they are incessantly reconstituted, and, as such, are subject to the volatile logic of iterability.
>
> (Butler 1993: 105)

It is in relation to such questions of identity formation, agency and identification that Butler introduces her concept of performativity into the debate on identity.

III PERFORMING CULTURE/ IDENTITY

III.I THE PERFORMANCE OF CULTURE

If 'identity' is a term with a varied history and an equally confusing present, then the term 'culture' is even more so. Raymond Williams, writing in the early 1950s[41], opens his explication of 'culture' as a keyword of Western intellectual and social history with the following remark:

> Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. This is so partly because of its intricate historical development, in several European languages, but mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought.
>
> (Williams 1988: 87)[42]

Despite these confusions, Williams goes on to distinguish two major contemporary usages of the term, which he attributes to two different disciplinary areas (Williams 1988: 91): culture as a 'signifying or symbolic system', which according to him was the predominant concern of history and cultural studies at the time, and culture as a 'material production', which was the object of archaeology and cultural anthropology. This distinction corresponds with similar binary models of culture that have dominated, and are still dominating, both the academic debate and the common sense usage of the term. Although these binaries are not necessarily totally synonymous, they all differentiate between two main aspects of culture: civilization versus culture, art versus the everyday, the universal versus the particular, 'culture' versus 'a culture' (Geoffrey Hartman, as quoted in Eagleton 2000: 37–8), or Culture versus culture (Eagleton 2000, see above)[43]. Williams links the history of this distinction to the development of

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41 Although published in 1976, '[i]t is interesting to note that Williams had completed much of the work on his entry on culture in this volume as early as [...] 1953 [...].' (Eagleton 2000: 132)

42 Subsequently, Williams himself defined 'culture' in his works variously as 'standard of perfection, a habit of mind, the arts, general intellectual development, a whole way of life, a signifying system, a structure of feeling, the interrelation of elements in a way of life, and everything from economic production and the family to political institutions' (Eagleton 2000: 36).

43 For an overview of different models of culture see Eagleton 2000.

modernity, which in the wake of the Enlightenment and fuelled by capitalist rationality uncoupled the symbolic aspects of culture from its material production. As a result, culture came to refer to 'a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development' (Williams 1988: 90), related to the ideal of a universal, rational and emancipated humanity. Later in the nineteenth century, its usage was more commonly restricted to the outcome of this process, the works and practices of artistic activity ('high art'), which were regarded as expressions of this humanity. At the same time, a second meaning of culture was taking shape, which was both particular and encompassing, referring to a 'particular way of life' (Williams 1988: 90) in the sense of a group's total body of behaviour.[44] In contrast to the first concept, for which culture existed only in the singular as a synonym for 'civilization', the second concept acknowledged the plurality of cultures. However, these cultures were generally regarded as defined by the 'regressive attachments which prevented us from entering upon our citizenship of the world' (Eagleton 2000: 31), and associated with the (inferior) practices of folk art, popular or mass culture, or the 'exotic' cultures of other peoples, which an emerging ethnography had begun to discover in the wake of colonialism.[45] Today the term 'culture' is predominantly used in the second sense to signify all forms of organized behaviour and symbolic practice which constitute the way of life of a specific group, whether in 'traditional' or highly industrialized cultures, including those practices generally referred to as 'art'. As Stuart Hall puts it, cultural practices 'are interwoven with all social practice; and those practices, in turn, [with] sensuous human praxis, the activity through which men and women make their own history' (as quoted in Diamond 1996b: 6).[46] As we have seen, this extended understanding of culture has put the question of 'cultural identity' firmly on the agenda.

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[44] For a full discussion of the distinction between an 'elitist singular version' and a 'plural, lower-case concept' of culture and their joint 'bias toward wholeness, continuity and growth' see Clifford 1988: 337–9.

[45] Anti-modernist movements have consequently often highlighted the value of these cultures. See, for example, romanticism's interest in folk-culture (Williams 1988: 89ff.), or the role of non-Western, 'primitive' cultures for the development of the twentieth-century avant-garde (Clifford 1988).

[46] For a discussion of the relationship between social practice and cultural practice see Bauman 1999; Bourdieu 1977; de Certeau 1988; de Certeau 1997.

There is a third aspect of culture that Hall alludes to and that also materializes in Raymond Williams's exploration of the term. This aspect developed alongside that of culture as art and a way of life: culture as critique. When Williams devotes his own work to an attempt to forge a new relationship between material and symbolic production in culture from the point of view of a 'cultural materialism'[47], then this attempt is intrinsically linked to the idea that cultural production may be both the site and the instrument of political struggle, a concept that clearly has its antecedents in Marxism, but also, as Eagleton (Eagleton 2000: 20) has pointed out, in the history of modernity and its ideal of emancipation through culture[48]. The merger of all three aspects of culture from a materialist position became Williams's legacy for 'cultural studies'[49]: the discipline today is no longer devoted to a study of signifying practices alone, but to the (often interdisciplinary) exploration of art and the everyday as inextricably linked cultural practices and possible sites for political intervention. This development has also reconciled the different disciplinary concerns of cultural studies and cultural anthropology: after an initial focus on class, cultural studies has now fully embraced the formerly anthropological concerns of ethnicity and interculturalism, and cultural anthropology in turn has focused its attention also to the study of industrialized societies.

The three aspects of culture as an aesthetic practice, a social practice and a site for political struggle correspond significantly with various definitions that the term 'performance' has enjoyed over the past thirty years: performance described as an artistic event, a cultural act or a political intervention (cf.Carlson 1996). As performance scholar Elin Diamond has pointed out, '[i]t is no coincidence that debates about cultural

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47 See, for example, Williams 1981.

48 'One might see this current of thought as struggling to connect various meanings of culture which are gradually floating apart: culture (in the sense of the arts) defines a quality of fine living (culture as civility) which it is the task of political change to realize in culture (in the sense of social life) as a whole. The aesthetic and anthropological are thus reunited. [...] What is it that connects culture as utopian critique, culture as a way of life and culture as artistic creation? The answer is surely a negative one: all three are in different ways reactions to the failure of culture as actual civilization – as the grand narrative of human self-development.' (Eagleton 2000: 20)

49 British cultural studies emerged from the University of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Culture in the mid-1960s. The work of its protagonists Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, John Fiske, and Angela McRobbie was avowedly political, founded on the Marxist premise that culture is the site of struggle in class-bound industrial societies. See Grossberg, Nelson and Treichler 1992.

studies arise at about the same time that "performance" gains critical currency; indeed performance in all its hybridity would seem to make the best case for interdisciplinary thinking. [...Yet] the early texts of cultural studies [...] generally blindside performance as a slightly less significant cultural practice.' (Diamond 1996b: 7). The main locus for an exploration of the relationship between culture and performance has been within cultural anthropology. Performative events such as rituals and rites have always been the object of anthropological inquiry. But it was in the 1960s that 'performance' became one of the dominant critical concepts for a study of cultural practices.[50] The history of the term's application in anthropology and ethnography is well-documented[51], as is its influence on the development of theatre and performance studies.[52] What is of interest in the context of this study is the anthropological approach to performative practices in the constitution of cultural identification and identity formation.

Anthropologist Milton Singer coined the term 'cultural performance' to describe events such as concerts, recitations, religious festivals or weddings as 'particular instances of cultural organization' through which a culture presents itself to its own members (Singer 1959). For Erika Fischer-Lichte, who has applied his model to a study of theatrical performance as an instance of cultural performance, 'Singer discovered the performative as a constitutive function of culture and provided another convincing argument for the importance of the performative mode in culture.' (Fischer-Lichte 1997: 236). Against the prevailing consensus at the time that culture expressed itself in

[50] See, for example, Clifford 1988; Clifford 1997; Clifford and Marcus 1986a; Fabian 1990; Geertz 1973; Geertz 1983; Hastrup 1995; Singer 1959; Turner 1982a. As a result, it has been suggested that anthropology as a discipline is moving towards a 'theatrical paradigm' (Hastrup 1995: 140) – accompanying the shift towards anthropology that Bammer has identified for the humanities in general, see Bammer 1994: xiv.
It is no coincidence that the discussion refers to a predominantly American and British discourse. The focus of this study does not allow a detailed examination why the debate on culture and performance has mainly been taking place within the Anglo-American world, but one may speculate on some of its causes: there is no equivalent term to 'performance' in the French, German or Spanish language, for example; and the Anglo-American tradition of empirical cultural anthropology has always put a stronger emphasis on the performative rather than the structural aspects of culture.
[51] See Carlson 1996.
[52] 'Performance studies' itself was born out of a liaison between anthropology and theatre studies, which began with the interdisciplinary collaboration between theatre theorist and artist Richard Schechner and anthropologist Victor Turner in the 1960s. Schechner claimed in 1985: 'Just as theatre is anthropologizing itself, so anthropology is being theatricalized.' (Schechner 1985: 33). See Schechner 1977; Schechner 1985; Schechner and Schuman 1976, Turner 1982a. For an account of the mutual influences on both disciplines see Carlson 1996.

artifacts, he 'drew attention to the fact that culture is also produced and manifested in performances.' (Fischer-Lichte 1997: 235–6). Yet, as Marvin Carlson has argued in his survey of anthropological approaches to performance, Singer's 'view of performance as a discrete concretization of cultural assumptions significantly contributed to what might be categorized as the conservative interpretation of performance's role in culture' (Carlson 1996: 16). According to Singer, culture expresses itself in performances, which in turn reiterate its values and reaffirm its community. The notion of 'performance' was thus first introduced into the study of culture not as a destabilizing and contesting force, as which it appears in many contemporary theories of performance, but as a means of stabilizing and strengthening a culture's identity and a community's identification with it.

Anthropologist Victor Turner agreed with Singer on the importance of performance as a means by which cultures enunciate themselves, yet he turned his focus away from the temporal and spatial framing of cultural performances that interested Singer to their deeper organizational structure. His theory is indebted to Arnold van Gennep's theory of 'rites of passage', which refer to those rituals with which a society organises problematic social transitions. But whilst van Gennep concentrated mainly on the study of the social management of individual change (e.g. the marking of the transition from childhood to adulthood in puberty rites) – which has an obvious link to questions of identity formation and affirmation – Turner extended van Gennep's scope to the consideration of any event structured in a similar manner and aimed at the management of transition.[53] According to Turner, social life 'is characteristically "pregnant" with social dramas', which for him are an expression of the 'primordial and perennial agonistic mode' of social life (Turner 1982a: 11). Whether small-scale conflicts in traditional societies or large-scale crises in world politics, all social dramas follow the same pattern, which bears a structural resemblance to traditional dramatic action: 'a public breach has occurred', '*breach* slides into *crisis*', followed by an 'attempt to apply *redressive machinery*', and concluding in 'either the reconciliation of the contending parties or their

[53] For a discussion of van Gennep's influence on Turner see Turner 1982a: 24ff.

agreement to differ' (Turner 1982a: 10).[54] One of Turner's central concepts, 'liminality', refers to the transitory middle phase of social drama: the 'limen' or threshold, the point at which the normative structure of society is temporarily put into 'a sort of social limbo which has few [...] of the attributes of either the preceding or subsequent profane social statuses or cultural states' (Turner 1982a: 24). This liminal state is characterized by a feeling of 'communitas', which is described as an affectual state of togetherness, associated with experiences of solidarity, ecstacy, spontaneity (as, for example, in the transgressive event of carnival). Communitas is constituted on an individual level through 'flow experiences', which include 'the experience of merging action and awareness' between group and actor (Turner 1982a: 56) and 'loss of ego' (Turner 1982a: 57).

Hetherington has discussed the consequences of Turner's theory of liminality for a broader consideration of 'the significance of issues of transgression and marginality to the process of identity formation within cultural studies' (Hetherington 1998: 18). It is above all Turner's focus on the affectual and expressive aspects of identification in his concept of communitas, and on the ritual performances through which these identifications are constituted that have influenced Hetherington and other cultural theorists in their consideration of identity formation.[55] However, the strict functionalism of Turner's structural analysis and his emphasis on the affirmative, rather than subversive, function of liminal activity has met with an equal amount of criticism. Although Turner defines liminal rituals as 'anti-structure' (Turner 1982a: 44), which challenge the existing social order by producing intensely affective alternative forms of sociality, their role is primarily to mark and manage the transition from one social structure to another, thus either affirming or renewing it: '*liminal* phases of tribal society

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[54] Schechner adapted Turner's four-phase model for a description of the fundamental structure of all theatre. He also discussed the relationship between social drama and aesthetic drama as mutually influential (Schechner 1977: 140-156). Turner, on the other hand, located aesthetic drama within the third phase of social drama, the phase of 'redress' (Turner 1982a: 73–4).

[55] For a discussion of Turner's influence on cultural studies see Hetherington 1998. Hetherington is also interested in the spatial aspects of Turner's theory, the symbolic properties of spaces associated with liminality and their role in identity formation. For a discussion of the spatial aspects of identification and cultural identity see below.

invert but do not usually subvert the *status quo*, the structural form of society' (Turner 1982a: 41), as subversions would create chaos and thus endanger the social order.

Turner thereby continued the position first expressed by Singer that in traditional, small-scale societies performance remains a culturally conservative activity that reproduces or renews accepted forms of cultural identity, rather than introducing new ones. Turner's concept of performance as a transgressive activity, as a margin, threshold or site of negotiation, however, would in due course contribute to the undermining of its own theoretical premises by suggesting the subversive potential of the 'anti-structural'. Turner himself developed his theory further to anticipate the inclusion of the innovative functions of performance. With regards to more complex and differentiated industrial societies, in which communal social affirmation through liminal performance is more difficult to achieve, he introduced the notion of 'liminoid' activities, which resemble liminal rituals, but are individual products rather than collective ones, socially marginal rather than integrated, acquired rather than ascribed, and more playful and less socially binding [e.g. leisure activities, political protests, or art] (Turner 1982a: 53–5). Whereas liminal rituals elicit feelings of group loyalty, liminoid activities often rely on contractual and commodified relations between people (Turner 1982a: 55)[56]. Being thus more open, liminoid activities have the potential to develop new social structures, and are more likely to be subversive.[57] Hetherington has again evaluated their role for the formation of identity:

> [i]n liminoid conditions, the emphasis shifts some way towards process as freed from the functionalism of structural constraints. Anti-structure in the occasions, festivals and protests of liminoid 'initiands' do not reintegrate the structure of

[56] Turner bases his model on Durkheim's theory of 'solidarity': '*Liminal phenomena* tend to predominate in tribal and early agrarian societies possessing what Durkheim has called "mechanical solidarity" [...]. *Liminoid phenomena* flourish in societies with "organic solidarity", bonded reciprocally by "contractual" relations, and generated by and following the industrial revolution [...]. The *liminoid* is more like a commodity – indeed, often *is* a commodity, which one selects and pays for – than the *liminal*, which elicits loyalty and is bound up with one's membership or desired membership in some highly corporate group.' (Turner 1982a: 53, 55) For a discussion of Durkheim's' influence on Turner see Hetherington 1998: 49ff.

[57] It is often overlooked that according to Turner, liminal activities may also allow for the development of new social structures: '*Liminal phenomena* [...] appear at what may be called "natural breaks", natural disjunctions in the flow of natural and social processes. They are thus enforced by sociocultural "necessity", but they contain *in nuce* "freedom" and the potentiality for the formation of new ideas, symbols, models, beliefs.' (Turner 1982a: 54).

society, but they do have the effect of producing alternate orderings of identity for those who challenge what they see their society standing for.

(Hetherington 1998: 113)

Although thereby allowing for the possibility of cultural change through performative actions[58], Turner remained committed to the prevalent anthropological discourse of his time, which conceptualized culture as a coherent 'way of life': an organic wholeness with a continuity of history and identity. This model has become the object of recent critique within the discipline.[59] Contemporary ethnographer James Clifford has articulated this criticism most succinctly: 'Culture is not an object to be described, neither is it a unified corpus of symbols and meanings that can be definitively interpreted. Culture is contested, temporal, and emergent' (Clifford 1986b: 19). He no longer refers to performances as events that are set apart from (Singer) or in-between (Turner) consistent cultural structures, but instead stresses the essentially *performative* nature of all cultural practice: as temporality, contestation – and invention.

Dwight Conquergood has proposed a distinction between the various theoretical approaches to cultural performance. He summarizes their genealogy as the movement from an understanding of performance as *mimesis*, to one of *poiesis*, and finally to one of *kinesis*, or as the distinction between performance as imitation, construction and dynamism (Conquergood, forthcoming: 12–13)[60]. A recent emphasis on the *kinetic* forces of performance have focused on its capacities as an agent of movement, struggle and disruption. Embracing both the post-structuralist emphasis on difference and the

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[58] The question of the relationship between performance and cultural critique remains to be much debated in anthropological theory. Clifford Geertz has proposed a model of two kinds of cultural performances that resembles Turner's theory: 'deep play' and 'shallow play'. In contrast to Turner, however, for Geertz it is the 'deep play' that has the potential to induce cultural change. See Geertz 1973; Geertz 1983.

[59] Anthropologist Kirsten Hastrup sums up the debate: 'While previously, performative anthropology gave preeminence to cultural and social expressions, or eruptions, and made us keenly aware of the dramatic representations of culture, [contemporary ethnography] wants to draw our attention to the fact that [...] most cultural knowledge is stored in action rather than words. The methodological consequence is that we cannot hope for a coherent logical structure determining the meaningful in any one culture but have to comprehend meaning as it emerges in practice.' (Hastrup 1995: 82). She refers to Fabian, who in his study of performance and culture claims that 'about large areas and important aspects of culture no one, not even the native, has information that can simply be called up and expressed in discursive statements' (Fabian 1990: 82).

[60] Conquergood cites Goffman as an example for a mimetic model, Turner as an example for a poietic model and Bhabha as a representative of a kinetic model of performance.

postmodern scepticism about master-narratives, Clifford puts forward a non-essentialist, differential, kinetic model of culture and identity that bears similar features to that of Stuart Hall and other cultural theorists explored above. And like Hall, for whom identity is a concept 'which cannot be thought of in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all' (Hall 1996b: 2), Clifford both critiques and redefines a concept of 'culture': he stresses that '[c]ulture is a deeply compromised idea I cannot yet do without' (Clifford 1988: 10) and searches for 'a concept that can preserve culture's differentiating functions while conceiving of collective identity as a hybrid, often discontinuous inventive process' (Clifford 1988: 10). Clifford's version of this concept is informed by his own practice of ethnography, which is a discipline that both theorizes and produces inter-cultural encounters.[61] Encounters of this kind, whether brought about by science, travel or inter-ethnic relations, have for him always subverted the idea of a cultural purity by emphasizing 'the need to stage authenticity in *opposition to* external, often dominating alternatives' (Clifford 1988: 12). As a consequence, if 'authenticity is relational, there can be no essence except as a political, cultural invention, a local tactics' (Clifford 1988: 12), or as 'strategic' essentialism. This fundamental relatedness and syncretism of all cultures is amplified today by the 'truly global space of cultural connections and dissolutions' of postmodernity, in which 'local authenticities meet and merge in transient urban and suburban settings' (Clifford 1988: 4). Identity is thus always 'conjunctural, not essential' (Clifford 1988: 11).

By breaking with the traditional concept of culture as wholeness, continuity, growth, stability and tradition and replacing it with ideas of fragmentation, discontinuity, rupture, instability, appropriation and invention, Clifford attempts to present a

[61] 'Performance' has become a vital trope in articulating anthropology's and ethnography's self-criticism as a discipline. Hastrup speaks of the 'performative paradox' of the discipline: 'the claim to objective, historical scholarship, including the criticism of imperialism, is at odds with the implications of the anthropological practice of studying the others by way of engagement.' (Hastrup 1995: 4). Similarly, in an attempt to draw attention to 'the historical predicament of ethnography, the fact that it is always caught up in the invention, not the representation of cultures' (Clifford 1986b: 2), Clifford develops a poetics of ethnographic writing which incorporates its 'evocative, performative elements' (Clifford 1986b: 12). Turner too discussed the challenge of performance to the practice of a 'reflexive anthropology, above all in reference to its pedagogy, see Turner 1982a: 89ff., and Turner and Turner 1982b.

challenge to Western versions of modernity, but also to the 'nostalgic' sentiment of '"modernity" ruining some essence of source' (Clifford 1988: 4). Whilst acknowledging the violent, destructive and homogenizing effects of modernization, colonialism and a global economic and cultural order, there are no 'organic cultures' prior to their suppression or disappearance through Western 'civilization' that could or should be salvaged. 'Something more ambiguous and historically complex has occurred, requiring that we perceive *both* the end of certain orders of diversity and the creation or translation of others.' (Clifford 1988: 16) Like Hall or Bhabha, Clifford ascribes value to appropriation, compromise, subversion, invention, not as acts that would compromise a culture's 'true' essence, but as ways in which cultures have managed to develop, making and remaking themselves 'through specific alliances, negotiations, and struggles.' (Clifford 1988: 338–9). He argues that culture is an 'inventive process or creolized "interculture"' (Clifford 1988:15), and identity 'an ongoing process, politically contested and historically unfinished' (Clifford 1988: 9), a model similar to Hall's 'Caribbean identity' or Bhabha's hybridity. These new, differential identities require 'other ways of telling: [...] hybrid and subversive forms of cultural representation, forms that prefigure an inventive future' (Clifford 1988: 17).[62]

Clifford's model puts into flux the equation of culture and identity and their relation to performance. In the postmodern world of intercultures, 'identities no longer presuppose continuous cultures or traditions. Everywhere individuals and groups improvise local performances from (re)collected pasts, drawing on foreign media, symbols, and languages.' (Clifford 1988: 14)[63] Performances of identity for Clifford are

[62] Carlson has pointed to the omnipresence of such a model in contemporary anthropology and ethnography. Summarizing an essay by Geertz, he states that 'traditional anthropological concerns with continuous traditions, singular and stable cultures, coherent structures, and stable identities have been largely replaced by a concept of "identity" and "culture" as constructed, relational, and in constant flux, with the porous or contested borders replacing centers as the focus of interest.' (Carlson 1996)

[63] Walter Benn Michaels has criticized Clifford for what he regards as a paradoxical take on cultural identity: 'Clifford rejects culture as a mark of identity because culture tolerates no discontinuities. But he himself can tolerate discontinuity only if it is grounded in a continuity that runs much deeper than culture [...].' 'The point of "remembered" as opposed to discovered (or of "reinvented" as opposed to invented) is to identify the traditions in question as appropriate to (already in some sense belonging to) the person who (re)involves himself in them. It is a mistake, then, to think that there is no appeal here to either "continuity" or "survival".' (Michaels 1992: 681, 680–1)

Zarrilli has highlighted another point of criticism: 'Although twentieth-century identities no longer necessarily *presuppose* continuous cultures or traditions, there are nevertheless many contexts within

improvised rather than structured, syncretic rather than authentic, and inventive rather than simply reflective. Turner too had theorized the role of performative acts in the formation of identity, but these acts were interpreted as either affirming cultural orderings of identity or suggesting alternatives for them. In Clifford's model these orderings are constructed reflexively through performance, without assuming the existence of an identity outside such practices. To clarify how this constitution in performance is achieved, I would like to draw attention to a trope that has acquired recent prominence in the debate on the formation of cultural identity: that of theatre, or theatricality, versus performance. Clifford alludes to this distinction: 'Once cultures are no longer prefigured visually – as objects, theatres, texts – it becomes possible to think of a cultural poetics that is an interplay of voices, of positioned utterances'. (Clifford 1986b: 12) Joseph Roach expands on this distinction:

> The concept of performance engages 'The Politics of Theater' through its implicit critique of the culturally coded meaning of the word *theater*. Derived from the Greek word for seeing and sight, *theater*, like *theory*, is a limiting term for a certain kind of spectatorial participation in a certain kind of event. *Performance*, by contrast, though it frequently makes reference to theatricality as the most fecund metaphor for the social dimensions of cultural production, embraces a much wider range of human behaviors. Such behaviors may include what Michel de Certeau calls the 'practice of everyday life', in which the role of spectator expands into that of participant.
> (Roach 1993: 46)

Within culture as theatre, identification is constituted through a (mediated and distanced) form of spectacular and specular participation, whilst in performance identification is acquired directly through (corporeal) participation in the act itself.

As a result of the debate in cultural anthropology and ethnography, and its echo in performance studies, the role of performance as an important component of culture, if not its most important characteristic, is now widely accepted[64]: performance scholar

which either "the world" or at least some more framed and circumscribed arenas of experience are imagined as continuous, and where tradition is cast in the role of maintaining and authorizing a particular form of continuity within that particular experiential arena.' (Zarrilli 1992: 17)

[64] Carlson has evaluated the influence of the performance paradigm on anthropology and ethnography in reference to an essay by Conquergood, who has identified a shift towards 'viewing the world as performance' in the discipline, which for him results in five areas of questioning: cultural process, research praxis, the hermeneutics of knowledge, scholarly representation and politics. For a full discussion see Carlson 1996: 191–3.

Phillip B. Zarrilli has argued that '[i]t has become commonplace to assume that "culture" is both reflected within and simultaneously invented by the webs of signification knit into the performative moment.' (Zarrilli 1992: 16) He concludes that '[p]erformance as a mode of cultural action is not a simple reflection of some essentialized, fixed attributes of a static monolithic culture but an arena for the constant process of renegotiating experiences and meanings that constitute culture.' (Zarrilli 1992: 16) Despite Zarrilli's assertion, however, the function of performance remains contested: as Carlson has pointed out, '[w]hether performance within a culture serves most importantly to reinforce the assumptions of that culture or to provide a possible site of alternative assumptions is an ongoing debate [...]' (Carlson 1996: 15). The dynamics of affirmation versus subversion, reflection versus invention, reinforcement versus negotiation that structure the debate are indeed already inherent in the very concept of 'performance'. The anthropological discourse has alerted us to the fact that all performance is iteration[65]: every performance contains elements of previous performances, of cultural conventions, histories and traditions. Yet exact repetition is impossible: no action may be performed the same way twice, repetition is already an act of recreating and reinvention.[66] Diamond has highlighted this double aspect of the iterative nature of performance:

> a performance embeds traces of other performances, it also produces experiences whose interpretation only partially depends on previous experiences. This creates the terminology of 're' in discussions of performance, as in *re*embody, *re*inscribe, *re*configure, *re*signify. 'Re' acknowledges the pre-existing discursive field, the repetition – and the desire to repeat – within the performative present, while 'embody', 'configure', 'inscribe', 'signify' assert the possibility of materializing something that exceeds our knowledge, that alters the shape of sites and imagines other as yet unsuspected modes of being.
>
> (Diamond 1996b: 2)

[65] Richard Schechner has coined the influential phrase 'twice-behaved behavior' or 'restored behavior' to define performance, see Schechner 1985: 35ff.

[66] The impossibility of an exact repetition was first formulated by Kierkegaard: 'The only thing repeated was the impossibility of repetition' (Kierkegaard 1941: 75). Post-structuralist thought has highlighted the role of difference in repetition – see above all Deleuze's discussion of the play of repetition and difference in Deleuze 1969. Others have discussed the political possibility it opens for transformation through recapitulation, see for example Gates 1986, and Butler 1990a; Butler 1993 – for a full discussion of Butler see below. Phelan has discussed repetition in reference to performance: 'Performance occurs over a time which will not be repeated. It can be performed again, but this repetition itself marks it as "different".' (Phelan 1993: 146)

The tension between repeating a pre-existing oppressive cultural category and putting this category into a potentially disruptive 'play' has been theorized by Judith Butler in reference to the constitution of identity. I shall look at her model in more detail.

III.II THE PERFORMANCE OF IDENTITY

A second locus for the proliferation of 'performance' as a critical concept has been the exploration of identity formation in sociology and social-psychology.[67] Again, the history of the term's application in these disciplines is well-documented[68], as is its influence on theatre and performance studies.[69] What is of interest in the context of this study is the sociological approach to performative practices in the constitution of identity formation and identification. Recently the debate on the relationship between identity and performance has moved from social-psychology back to philosophy, and from discussion of the ways in which identities are formed through the performative nature of social interaction to that of the performativity of identity itself as an ontological category. The debate in both fields has been structured around similar motifs to that in cultural anthropology: performance as representational practice, social practice and political intervention; affirmation versus subversion; distanced participation versus corporeal involvement; singularity versus citationality; performance or performativity versus theatre or theatricality.

The early sociological and social-psychological contributions to the debate on identity maintained a much closer link to theatricality – rather than performativity – as a metaphor for social behaviour than their anthropological counterpart. The vocabulary employed by these theories was to a large extent derived from the field of theatre: role,

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[67] See, for example, Goffman 1963; Goffman 1971 (1959); Goffman 1974; Wilshire 1982.
[68] See Carlson 1996: 34–55.
[69] See, for example, Schechner 1985.

person, character, mask[70]. The recognition that social life has a theatrical quality, that social behaviour is a form of performance and that society is organised in institutionalized roles has a long tradition, and has indeed been the central concern for theatre itself since at least the Renaissance.[71] Sociology and social-psychology in the 1940s and 1950s began to explore the implications of this recognition and apply the theatrical notion of role-play to social behaviour in general, and social identity formation in particular.[72]

Although not explicitly referring to a theatrical model, one of the most influential social-psychologists, George H. Mead, had a preference for the closely related concept of 'play' to describe the formation of individual identity within a social context, or, in Mead's parlance, 'the social conditions under which the self arises as an object' (Mead 1965 (1934): 152): '[...] the child who plays in a game must be ready to take the attitude of everyone else involved in that game, and that these different rôles must have a definite relationship to each other' (Mead 1965 (1934): 151).

> The individual experiences himself as such, not directly, but only indirectly, from the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same social group, or from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs. For he enters his own experience as a self or individual, not directly or immediately, not by becoming a subject to himself, but only in so far as he first becomes an object to himself just as other individuals are objects to him or in his experience [...].
>
> (Mead 1965 (1934): 138)

Mead's model of acquiring identity in social interaction through processes of self-objectification – 'playfully' enacted in childhood games – is paradigmatic for a social-psychological approach: whilst in philosophy identity is regarded as self-sameness and therefore the opposite of self-distance, social-psychology has anchored its understanding of identity formation precisely within in the negotiation of this distance. Before one can become a subject or identity, one must have been an object to oneself. The structural similarities between this model and the theatre as a social institution in

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70 Marquard and Stierle 1979a: 386.

71 For an in-depth analysis of the motif of the 'theatrum mundi', or 'All the world's a stage', and the importance of role-play in dramatic literature see Fischer-Lichte 1990b..

72 For an overview see Carlson 1996: 34–55.

which a society experiences itself as an object through 'mirroring' itself on stage are self-evident.[73]

A shift from a consideration of the structural affinities between the *dispositif* of identity and theatre to the structural similarities between the process of identity formation and theatrical 'performance' was undertaken most prominently in the works of Erving Goffman. Goffman argues that persons 'present' themselves in everyday life in a performative manner, not to deceive, but to provide others with information about themselves and the situation they find themselves in, and thereby to sustain a sense of self and a social reality. In his own words, Goffman explores 'the way in which the individual in ordinary work situations presents himself and his activity to others, the way in which he guides and controls the impressions they form of him, and the kinds of things he may and may not do while sustaining his performance before them' (Goffman 1971 (1959): 9). The individual is divided into two aspects: the 'performer', 'a harried fabricator of impressions involved in the all-too-human task of staging a performance', and the 'character', who is the impression 'that the performance was designed to evoke' (Goffman 1974: 244). Other important terms of theatrical origin in Goffman's model are[74]: 'part', the 'pre-established pattern of action which is unfolded during a performance' (Goffman 1974: 27); 'role', the 'enactment of rights and duties attached to a given status' and involving 'one or more parts' (Goffman 1974: 27), and 'front', 'that part of an individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance' (Goffman 1974: 32). It is through parts, roles and fronts that performers form characters, and observers are able to

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[73] Fischer-Lichte takes this structural similarity as the starting point for her analysis of theatre as a medium for social identity formation (Fischer-Lichte 1990b). Previously, Fischer-Lichte had referred explicitly to Mead's model of identity to describe the way in which an audience ascribes an 'identity' to a character on stage (Fischer-Lichte 1992: 64–6; German original published in 1988). For a more detailed discussion of Fischer-Lichte's analysis of the relationship between theatre and identity see below.

[74] Goffman himself gives an account of his use of theatrical vocabulary: 'I spoke of performers and audiences; of routines and parts; of performances coming off or falling flat; of cues, stage settings and backstage; of dramaturgical needs, dramaturgical skills, and dramaturgical strategies.' (Goffman 1971 (1959): 246). He regards the analogy between theatre and social life primarily as 'in part a rhetoric and a manoeuvre' (Goffman 1971 (1959): 246), yet regards it an 'apt terminology' for describing the structural similarities between the 'staging' of a fictional character and that of a social character: 'the *successful* staging of either of these types of false figures involves use of *real* techniques – the same techniques by which everyday persons sustain their real social situations' (Goffman 1971 (1959): 247).

determine them – and thereby identity is constituted. This is not necessarily a fully conscious action on the part of the performer: Goffman speaks of performances as forms of expressive, but often involuntary communication through non-verbal means (Goffman 1971 (1959) 16). Whether voluntary or involuntary, however, the origin of the performance is always a person, 'a real self' (cf. Goffman 1974: 298), with a capacity for self-reflexivity, choice and intentionality. Although Goffman does not pass a judgement on the ethical implications of role-play[75] – '[w]hatever a participant "really is", is not really the issue' (Goffman 1974: 298) – this does not lead Goffman to altogether question the existence of a 'real self' behind the performance: Hetherington argues that 'in its concern with interactions, face work and the setting in which they take place, the dramaturgical references are often used metaphorically in order to suggest that, although people assume personae and roles and take part in performances, there is a real and inaccessible self existing outside such practices – the real identity of the "I".' (Hetherington 1998: 150–1).

Yet Goffman's main interest does not belong to the self of the performer or the self performed, but to the consequences of this performance for social interaction in particular and society in general. He defines performance as 'all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers' (Goffman 1971 (1959): 32). Carlson has suggested that this definition reveals Goffman's emphasis to be less on the activities of the performer than on 'how social performance is recognized by society and how it functions within society' (Carlson 1996: 38). According to Goffman, the social function of performance is above all concerned with the stabilizing influences of crisis management: as a regulation of social interaction it assures society's equilibrium on the one hand, and the successful integration of an individual into society on the other.[76] Consequently, performance 'disruption' has

[75] A suspicion about theatrical performance as a mimetic activity that would deny or subvert a 'true' self goes back to Plato, and has reappeared in many guises throughout the history of anti-theatrical prejudice in Western thinking, see Barish 1981.

[76] Goffman is quick to point out that his theory is not 'culture-free or applicable in the same areas of social life in non-Western societies' (Goffman 1971 (1959): 23). 'Culture' for Goffman regulates values and norms and thus belongs to four orders of influence on the social: the technical, the political, the structural

serious repercussions on three levels: the individual personality[77], social interaction, and society[78] (Goffman 1971 (1959): 234).

In an early essay, 'On Facework', Goffman had elaborated on the structure of such disruptions. Carlson has identified parallels between Goffman's model and that of Turner discussed above: 'Both describe an event structure in which the orderly flow of normal interaction, social or cultural, is disrupted by an incident, some breach of social or cultural norms. This precipitates a crisis and sets in motion [...] a "corrective interchange". The normal phases of this crisis and redressive action are labelled by Goffman as challenge, offering, acceptance, and thanks, and through their operations the equilibrium is established', either as a 'return to the old order' or 'an accommodation to a permanently changed new one' (Carlson 1996: 37). Like Turner, Goffman is more concerned with the structural aspects of social performance than its improvisational and potentially subversive elements, although, like Turner, Goffman too allows for a possible transformative function of performance, which he theorizes in his concept of 'keying'. This concept is built on the premise of the 'frame'[79] (Goffman 1974), an organizing principle that helps to set apart events and thus provide them with social significance. Any ongoing stream of behaviour can be culturally 'framed' as a 'strip of experience': 'The term "strip" will be used to refer to any arbitrary slice or cut from the stream of ongoing activity [...]. A strip is not meant to reflect a natural division [...] or an analytical division [...]; it will be used only to refer to any raw batch of occurrences (of whatever status in reality) that one wants to draw attention to as a starting point for analysis.' (Goffman 1974: 10). 'Keying' refers to 'the set of conventions by which a given activity, one already meaningful in terms of some primary framework, is transformed into something patterned on this activity but seen by the participants to be

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and the cultural (Goffman 1971 (1959): 232–4). The cultural influences social interaction above all on the levels of 'feeling': 'The cultural values of an establishment will determine in detail how the participants are to feel about many matters' (Goffman 1971 (1959): 234). It is here where the affective enters the process of identity formation.

77 Goffman investigated disruptions in individual identity formation in more detail under the aspect of stigmatization in Goffman 1963.

78 Societies for Goffman are defined as 'relatively closed systems' (Goffman 1963: 232).

79 Goffman builds his theory on Bateson's use of the term 'frame', see Goffman 1974: 10–11.
Carlson has pointed to the similarities between Goffman's theory of 'framing' and Eco's model of 'ostension', see Carlson 1996: 39.

something quite else' (Goffman 1974: 43–4). Activities that are thus recontextualized and transformed to acquire a different meaning are potentially transformative as they are more open and playful than other social behaviour: Goffman counts amongst them also theatrical performance (Goffman 1974: 124ff.).

'Framing' is thus a cognitive device that helps to separate the order of social performance from that of theatrical performance. The differences between the two, however, are differences of degree, not kind.[80] This conflation of the social and the aesthetic has become the object of criticism, articulated most succinctly in phenomenologist Bruce Wilshire's exploration of the limits of theatrical metaphors (Wilshire 1982). Wilshire emphasises what he regards as the unresolved aspects of Goffman's model: the unclear relation between the appearance created by a performer and the 'real' person behind it, and the unresolved relationship between a 'keyed' activity and the 'reality' it is reiterating, a reality that Goffman conceptualizes as the existence of a 'primary perspective' (Goffman 1974: 46) that is not framing or keying and is thus located at their origin. For Wilshire, the problem with Goffman's model lies in the blurring of the distinction between performance and reality, or 'onstage' and 'offstage' activities: 'The analogy blurs the distinction [...] between those behaviors fabricated for the moment and those that are integral, habitual, appropriate, sanctioned, and perceived by all to be so – those constitutive of who I am.' (Wilshire 1982: 280). According to Wilshire, transformative acts, which he terms 'creative or spontaneous', are not the result of the repeatable or enactable patterns of social roles, but are transformative precisely because they fall outside their matrix, as does 'any repetition of the presocial limb coordinations and self-mimeses "built into" the body perhaps before any social–mimetic acts were' (Wilshire 1982: 280). There are thus levels of the 'pre-social' (the body) and the 'supersocial' (morality) that for Wilshire are essentially not social-mimetic, and

[80] After Schechner 1985: 37. Goffman himself identifies eight transcription practices that render theatrical interaction 'systematically different' from its real-life model (Goffman 1974: 124–144). But for Schechner these practices do not constitute a fundamental distinction between theatre and the everyday – see his discussion of the implications of Goffman's theory for an analysis of theatrical behaviour in detail in Schechner 1985: 35–116. Schechner's own model of 'restored behavior' in performance is described as the iteration of a 'strip of behaviour' (Schechner 1985: 35), a model that is obviously closely related to Goffman's 'keying' of a 'strip of experience'.

therefore outside the realm of the performative. This for him has major moral implications: 'I am responsible for my behavior offstage in fundamentally different ways from my behavior onstage. Ethical responsibility is a condition of the identity of the self; I *am* the being and *no* other, who is responsible for behavior, the consequences and parameters of which cannot be confined to the frame of a work of art.' (Wilshire 1982: 280)

The problematic relationship between mimetic iteration, transformation, ethical responsibility and the role of the body within this scenario that Wilshire touches on here were to become the central concerns for a different model of identity as performance, but one starting from the opposite premise of Wilshire's critique: the boundaries between 'onstage' and 'offstage' behaviour can be regarded as obsolete altogether when social performance itself is seen as part of the continuous framing of meaning in cultural – not pre-social – corporeality.

This, the third, locus of investigation into performance as a critical concept, namely the recent philosophical discourse on identity[81], developed from an altogether different genealogy: it owes its thinking about performance more to linguistic approaches to the subject[82] than theatrical models. Most influential among these approaches has been J.L. Austin's work on the performative aspects of language, which has been critically reworked by Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler and many others as part of a continuing post-structural critique of subjectivity, agency, and identity. In a series of lectures, aptly entitled 'How to do things with words' (Austin 1962), Austin defines 'performative utterances' as those enunciations that do not refer to an extra-linguistic reality but enact or produce that to which they refer (i.e. 'I promise', 'I bequeath', 'I do [marry]'). 'In these examples it seems clear that to utter the sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstances) is not to *describe* my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it.' (Austin 1962: 6).[83]

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[81] See, for example, Butler 1990a; Butler 1990b; Butler 1993; Derrida 1982.

[82] For a full discussion of the 'performance' paradigm in linguistics see Carlson 1996: 56–75.

[83] Austin distinguishes performative utterances from 'constative' utterances, whose role it is to make an assertion or describe some state of affairs, see Austin 1962. Whilst the 'success' of a constative statement must be judged on the basis of their truth or falsity, performative utterances for Austin are 'not indeed false, but in general *unhappy*' (Austin 1962: 14). Later Austin declared all constatives to be implicitly

Interestingly, Austin wanted to exclude theatrical utterances from his consideration of performatives: 'a performative utterance will, for example, be *in a peculiar way* hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage or if introduced in a poem, or spoken in soliloquy. [...] Language in such circumstances is in special ways – intelligibly – used not seriously, but in ways *parasitic* upon its normal use – ways which fall under the doctrine of the *etiolations*[84] of language.' (Austin 1962: 22) This passage forms the centre of Derrida's critique of Austin[85]: 'is not what Austin excludes as anomalous, exceptional, "nonserious", that is *citation* (on the stage, in a poem, or in a soliloquy), the determined modification of a general citationality – or rather, a general iterability – without which there would not even be a "successful" performative?' (Derrida 1982: 325). Derrida insists that the very condition of language is iterability as all utterances iterate a prior linguistic structure, which makes theatrical utterances not an exception but an instance of this condition. However, citation is never exact, as any citation 'can break with every given context, and engender infinitely new contexts in an absolutely nonsaturable fashion' (Derrida 1982: 320). Iteration thus does not guarantee the reiteration of previous conditions, but rather, through placing the utterance in a new context, constitutes deviance from them – and thereby also the possibility of a subversive re-articulation.

Nealon has evaluated the influence of Derrida's critique of Austin on Judith Butler's project to recover possibilities for agency and resistance through subversion after the post-structural critique of the subject and the postmodern rejection of foundational discourses:

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performative as they could all be rephrased as 'I assert', etc.: 'they are speech acts no less than all these other speech acts that we have been mentioning and talking about as performative' (Austin, as quoted in Carlson 1996: 60). In his critique of Austin, Derrida shows that Austin's argument implies that all signification is thus essentially performative, and that therefore all meaning is haunted by the possibility of its subversive reiterations, see Derrida 1982.

[84] Parker and Sedgwick have pointed to the anti-theatrical politics of Austin's theory by analysing his use of the verb 'etiolate' (to weaken, to make pale and sickly): 'What's so surprising, in a thinker otherwise strongly resistant to moralism, is to discover the pervasiveness with which the excluded theatrical is hereby linked with the perverted, the artificial, the unnatural, the abnormal, the decadent, the effete, the diseased.' (Parker and Sedgwick 1993b: 5)

[85] Derrida's criticism of Austin presents part of his wider critique of the 'metaphysics of presence', which he sees operative in the privileging of spoken language over writing in most of linguistics in general (e.g. Saussure, see Derrida 1967) and speech act theory in particular (e.g. Austin, John. R. Searle).

> if meaning and identity are always context-bound [...] then any particular meaning or identity carries with it the necessary, structural possibility of its own subversion by other recontextualizations or reinscriptions. In other words, it is from within the very logic of contextual meaning that it becomes (im)possible for there to be a meta-context, a context outside of or not subject to the law of context. And from this, the possibility of *subversion* (as reinscription of existing contexts) is engendered.
> (Nealon 1998: 21)

In her first major study on identity, *Gender Trouble – Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Butler's engagement with Derrida's concept of citationality and subversion is still 'muted when compared to her more sustained and foregrounded engagement with Foucauldian questions concerning power and the disciplinary interpellation of bodies' (Nealon 1998: 21). *Gender Trouble* brings together Foucault and Lacan in an investigation of the complex transactions between subject, body and identity. Butler argues that not only are the subject, or gender as a 'subject position', the effects of discourses and social practices, but the body itself is such an effect. There is no 'naturalness' about dividing anatomical bodies into two different sexes: 'this construct called "sex" is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all' (Butler 1990a: 7). Gender is thus not the given attribute of sex, but

> the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. Hence, within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed.[86]
> (Butler 1990a: 24–5)

As Elin Diamond has pointed out in her discussion of Butler's use of performance as a critical trope, '[t]his anti-essentialism pushes past constructionism. It's not just that gender is culturally determined and historically contingent, but rather that "it" doesn't exist until it's done' (Diamond 1996b: 4). The performance of gender is an iteration: in an often-quoted paragraph from an essay published at the same time as *Gender Trouble*,

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[86] Butler here refers to Nietzsche's claim in *On the Genealogy of Morals* that 'there is no "being" behind doing, effecting, becoming; "the doer" is merely a fiction added to the deed – the deed is everything' (Nietzsche, as quoted in Butler 1990a: 25).

Butler defines gender as a '*stylized repetition of acts* [...] which are internally discontinuous [... so that] the *appearance of substance*[87] is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief' (Butler 1990b270–1). In the same way that performative utterances refer back to social norms, the performance of gender iterates pre-existing cultural ideologies, which Butler likens to 'scripts': 'The act that one does, the act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene. Hence, gender is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again'. (Butler 1990b: 657). These scripts impose a 'violent' disciplinary conformity on the bodies that perform them, supporting fictions of gender hierarchy and 'compulsory heterosexuality'. The concept of an interior essence of the 'self' is an illusion that is only maintained in order to preclude 'an analysis of the political constitution of the gendered subject' (Butler 1990a: 136). Yet, once the category of gender is uncoupled from its dependence on the essentialist notion of anatomical 'sex' and regarded as the effect of a performance or iteration, a new possibility for agency evolves. Butler argues that 'the subject is not determined by the rules through which it is generated because signification is *not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition*' (Butler 1990a: 145), and concludes, '"agency", then, is to be located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition' (Butler 1990a: 145).

> If the rules governing signification not only restrict, but enable the assertion of alternative domains of cultural intelligibility, i.e., new possibilities for gender that contest the rigid codes of hierarchical binarisms, then it is only *within* the practices of repetitive signifying that a subversion of identity becomes possible.
>
> (Butler 1990a: 145)[88]

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[87] The difference of this model to Goffman's concept of identity performance as well as its critique by Wilshire is self-evident: There is no 'real' self behind the appearances, as in Goffman, nor does the self integrate how it appears to others, as Wilshire claims (Wilshire 1982: 279).

[88] Butler looks to the example of 'drag' as a subversive performance that 'effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of true gender identity' (Butler 1990a: 137). This aspect of Butler's work has been much debated. Queer theorist Sedgwick has warned against an easy reduction of Butler's model to the question of whether individual acts of imitative parody really subvert or reinforce existing identities: 'The bottom line is generally the same: kinda subversive, kinda hegemonic. I see this as a sadly premature domestication of a conceptual tool whose powers we really have barely yet begun to

Diamond summarizes this position as follows: '(g)ender then, is both a doing – a performance that puts a conventional gender attributes into possible disruptive play – and a thing done - a pre-existing oppressive category. It is a cultural apparatus that coerces certain social acts and excludes others' (Diamond 1996b: 4-5). The political application of Butler's model has been broadly discussed. Following Butler, there is no longer a coherence identity category of *woman* that could serve as a point of identification and a foundation for political action. This, however, does not undermine the possibility of politics altogether – *Gender Trouble* ends on a rather optimistic note: 'if identities were no longer fixed as the premises of a political syllogism, and politics no longer understood as a set of practices derived from the alleged interests that belong to a set of ready-made subjects, a new configuration of politics would surely emerge from the ruins of the old' (Butler 1990a: 149).

It is, though, exactly the question of agency that lead to a common 'misreading' of Butler's model. In her follow-up study, *Bodies That Matter*, Butler notes that her notion of gender performance may have suggested a subject at its origin who could choose gender and perform it, reducing the possibility of social change to individual acts of subversive imitation. In order to confront such reductionism, she reconsiders her work in terms of Derrida's performative citationality. Performa*tivity* focuses on the citationality of cultural norms and the prohibitive operations that regulate them, and thus can no longer be reduced to the 'theatrical'[89] aspects of perform*ance* as an individual act: 'for it

explore.' (Kosovsky Sedgwick, as quoted in Diamond 1996a: 16). In *Bodies that Matter* (Butler 1993: 121–40) Butler herself expanded on her concept of subversion in reference to *Paris Is Burning*, Jennie Livingston's film about black and Latino 'voguers'. The film forms the centre of a debate between Butler and critic bell hooks, who analysed the film under the aspect of its portrayal of ethnicity. hooks emphasized that the portrait of the drag queens in the film reiterated an image of gender identity that is drawn from white ideals of female beauty, an argument that for Butler was caught up in essentialist notions of gender (for a summary of the debate see Fusco 1995: 71–4). Cultural critic Coco Fusco defends hooks's position: 'To suggest, as Butler does, that the possibility of a white lesbian director's gender-bending desire for a black transvestite in and of itself subverts ethnographic convention because it introduces ambiguity does not engage with a history of racial exploitation that crosses genders and sexualities.[...] Livingston's alleged feminization of her black subject may subvert gender identity for Butler, but it also recalls a long history of white women's power to subjugate black men and thus keep the racial order of things in check' (Fusco 1995: 73).

89 Although critical of 'theatricality', Butler also allows for a 'convergence of theatrical work with theatrical activism' with regard to queer politics (Butler 1990a: 233). The implications of Butler's theory of performativity for theatre and performance studies have been, and still are, widely discussed. See, for example, the work on the performative gendered and sexed body by feminist and queer performance

is always a reiteration of a norm or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition. Moreover, this act is not primarily theatrical [...]' (Butler 1993: 12). Reiteration constitutes gender, sex, and even the body itself in its materiality:

> 'sex' not only functions as a norm, but is part of a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs, that is, whose regulatory force is made clear as a kind of productive power, the power to produce – demarcate, circulate, differentiate, the bodies it controls. [...] '[S]ex' is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time.
>
> (Butler 1993: 1)

Materialization for Butler is an effect of the power of iteration. As Nealon has pointed out,

> this insistence on the imbrication of the material and theoretical – the actual and the possible – within bodily agency is precisely the reason why performativity comprises a privileged thread to open and keep open the question of ethics and ethical response. For Butler, although it is certainly important and productive to think Foucault and Derrida together by pointing out that "sex is social construction" that emerges and is subverted through iterable performances and practices, it is another matter altogether to account for the ways in which "remainder" subjectivities are actually produced in specific historico-cultural situations *as* abjected, produced as by-products of the violent exclusions that secure normative identities.
>
> (Nealon 1998: 28)

For Butler, 'the point has never been that "everything is discursively constructed", that point [...] refuses the constitutive force of exclusion, erasure, violent foreclosure, abjection, and its disruptive return within the very terms of discursive legitimacy' (Butler 1993: 8). Discourse constructs a 'constitutive "outside", that 'which can only be thought when it can – in relation to that discourse, at and as its most tenuous borders' (Butler 1993: 8). All identities operate through such discursive exclusion, erasure, foreclosure, which makes one identity possible, while preventing another. This for Butler puts the question not of identity, but of *identification* on the agenda, 'and with it the discursive means by which the heterosexual imperative enables certain sexed identifications and forecloses and/or disavows other identification' (Butler 1993: 3).

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scholars such as Sue-Ellen Case, Jill Dolan, Lynda Hart, Peggy Phelan, Rebecca Schneider. See also Diamond 1996a , and Jones and Stephenson 1999.

CHAPTER TWO

IDENTIFYING PERFORMANCE

I ON THE THEATRICALITY OF IDENTITY - PERSPECTIVES OF THEATRE HISTORY -

Responding to the assertion made by Erving Goffman that the widespread use of theatrical vocabulary in the sociological and social psychological discussion on identity was 'in part a rhetoric and a manoeuvre' (Goffman 1971 (1959): 246), philosopher Odo Marquard proposes to take the manoeuvre literally – for him the 'pact'[1] that the sociology of identity made with the poetics of theatre indicates that the aesthetic articulation of the experience of identity is an essential part of its history.[2] I propose an even more literal reading of Goffman's rhetoric: it is the theatrical articulation of the experience of identity that forms an essential part of its history – and, by implication, it is the experience of identity, articulated through theatrical means, that forms an essential part of the history of theatre.[3]

A number of theatre and drama historians have examined the close relationship between historical models for identity – or historical subject positions – and their theatrical articulation. These studies have focused, for example, on Greek tragedy (Lehmann 1991), English Renaissance drama (Belsey 1985, Charnes 1993, Starks 1993), Modernist theatre (Finter 1990), or the entire canon of European drama from ancient Greece to the present day (Fischer-Lichte 1990b).[4] The different historical

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[1] '[D]ie Identitätssoziologie paktiert mit der Poetik des Theaters' (Marquard 1979b: 368) ('Identity sociology has entered into a pact with the poetics of theatre.' [My translation])

[2] 'Dabei zeigt sich, daß die ästhetische Artikulation der Identitätserfahrung ein wesentliches Moment ihrer Geschichte selbst ist' (Marquard and Stierle 1979a: 12) ('This manifests that the aesthetic articulation of the experience of identity is an essential part of its history.' [My translation])

[3] See also Elizabeth Burn's (Burns 1972) attempt to explore the significance and meaning of Goffman's analogy in her discussion of 'theatricality' as a 'double relationship between theatre and social life' (Burns 1972: 3).

[4] This selection of studies is representative for the wider debate with regard to their focus on historical eras in which a change in the dominant social model of identity is seen to have taken place: ancient Greece as the birthplace of the Western subject, the Renaissance as the time of the emergence of the modern individual, and modernism as the period of its crisis. The concentration on European drama manifests not only the historical, but also the geographical and cultural perimeters of the identity models that these studies are based upon.

manifestations of identity are here of lesser importance than the conceptualizations of identity and its relationship to theatre that these studies propose. In what way do they point beyond the theatrical articulation of identity to the theatricality of identity itself? I shall concentrate on three exemplary models: Erika Fischer-Lichte's study of European drama, which is based on the social psychological concept of identity as social role play that possesses a structural affinity with theatre; Catherine Belsey's study of Renaissance drama, which refers to a model of the subject as positioned within discourse; and Hans-Thies Lehmann's study of Greek tragedy, which extends this model beyond a consideration of dramatic writing toward a discussion of theatricality as a discourse in its own right.

Erika Fischer-Lichte opens her study of the history of European drama by suggesting that this history may be most appropriately reconstructed as a history of identity.[5]. She declines, however, to provide a definition for the term 'identity', claiming instead that the concept has undergone continuous re-definitions throughout its history, and that therefore only a 'very general notion' of identity could be of use for the purpose of her project.[6] This 'general notion' circumscribes identity as:

> alle Elemente, Aspekte und Faktoren [...], die es einer Person ermöglichen, 'ich' zu sagen, die ihr ein Bewußtsein von sich selbst und in diesem Sinne ein Selbstbewußtsein vermitteln – sei es als Mitglied einer Kultur, eines Volkes, einer Religionsgemeinschaft, einer sozialen Schicht oder Gruppe, einer Familie oder als ein Individuum.
>
> (Fischer-Lichte 1990b: 5)[7]

The condition that allows a person to develop self-consciousness is what Fischer-Lichte terms the 'conditio humana'[8]: the ability of man[9] to distance himself from himself

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[5] 'Die Geschichte des europäischen Dramas läßt sich am angemessensten als Identitätsgeschichte rekonstruieren' (Fischer-Lichte 1990b: 4). ('The history of European drama is most appropriately reconstructed as a history of identity'. [My translation])

[6] 'Für unser Vorhaben kann daher nur ein ganz allgemein formulierter Begriff von Identität brauchbar sein' (Fischer-Lichte 1990b 5). (For our project therefore only a very general notion of identity can be of use.' [My translation])

[7] '[...] all the elements, aspects and factors which enable a person to say 'I', which provide him with a consciousness of himself and therefore a self-consciousness – be it as a member of a culture, a people, a religious community, a social group, a family or as an individual' [My translation]. Fischer-Lichte uses terms such as subject, individual, self, I, person, personality, character, role, etc., fairly indiscriminately.

[8] After anthropologist Helmuth Plessner.

[9] Fischer-Lichte generally uses the male pronoun to refer to 'person', 'human being' or 'individual'.

and to relate to himself as an other. 'By viewing himself in the mirror as the other, or within the mirror of the another, he creates an image of himself.'[10] (Fischer-Lichte 1994: 115) Although declared the *sine qua non* for identity formation, prior to any theoretical conceptualization, Fischer-Lichte's universalist-humanist model in fact betrays strong traces of its intellectual heritage. The terminology used is slightly misleading here: identity is described in quasi-Lacanian parlance as the result of a moment of imaginary self-recognition by encountering one's own image in the mirror – thus looking at oneself from the place of the other or through the gaze of the other. But while for Lacan this instance of specular identification confirms the essentially decentred nature of individual consciousness, for Fischer-Lichte this moment ensures its transparence and self-reflexivity.[11] Her model in fact resembles much more closely the social psychological concept of identity formation. The parallels between Fischer-Lichte's 'general notion of identity' and, for example, Mead's model of acquiring identity as a product of social interaction through processes of self-objectification (Mead 1965 (1934), see above) are self-evident.

Indeed, a few years earlier in her *Semiotics of Theatre*, Fischer-Lichte had referred explicitly to Mead to explain the ways in which an audience ascribes identity to a character on stage. (Fischer-Lichte 1992: 64–6; German original published in 1988). The structural similarities between the 'staging' of a fictional character and that of a social character that had inspired the analogy between theatre and social life in social psychology are here inverted: by theorizing parts, roles and fronts, stage settings, and dramaturgical strategies, social psychology appears to offer an apt methodology for analysing the creation of fictional characters. Accordingly, in her history of European

[10] 'Indem er sich im Spiegel als einen anderen oder auch im Spiegel des anderen betrachtet, macht er sich ein Bild von sich selbst.' (Fischer-Lichte 1990b: 4) I have referred here for the English translation to a later article in which Fischer-Lichte disusses her model of the *conditio humana* again (Fischer-Lichte 1994).

[11] In her critical review of Barbara Freedman's *Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis, and Shakespearean Comedy* (Ithaca / London: Cornell University Press, 1991), Fischer-Lichte herself distinguishes her own model from that of Freedman/Lacan: 'By replacing Plessner's conception of the eccentric position of mankind with the Lacanian 'gaze', [Freedman] (clearly unaware of Plessner's work) shifts the focus to the instability and fundamentally non-determinable construction of the identity, which is not directly implied in Plessner's work. Freedman's concept of theatricality is thus clearly open to post-modern theories on "subject"' (Fischer-Lichte 1990b 115).

drama Fischer-Lichte examines the identities of fictional characters by applying social psychological identity models and role theory. Dramatic conflicts are portrayed as role conflicts, and the history of drama appears as a series of social role models. Like Mead or Goffman, Fischer-Lichte places her emphasis thereby less on the activity of the performer than on how this performance is recognized by others – in this instance not the other characters in the play, but the audience in the theatre. In the same way as a social player in reality, a fictional character is confirmed in his identity through his acceptance by the spectators. This confirmation is based on the identification of two basis 'identials': 'body' and 'name'[12]. Fischer-Lichte argues that 'most modern theories of identity concern the name as well as the body and identify these as particularly important identials.' (Fischer-Lichte 1997: 291).[13] Consequently, 'the name and the bodily appearance, in certain respect, fulfil the same function: they both allow the reader/spectator a formal identification of the dramatic character' (Fischer-Lichte 1997: 290). She implies here a fundamental equation between drama/theatre, name/body, reader/spectator: in her words, the body on stage 'corresponds' with the name on the textual level[14] – theatre materializes in the body of the performer the identity that is prefigured within the dramatic text. As far as their articulation of identity is concerned, theatre and drama are thus interchangeable.[15]

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[12] I refer in the following to the detailed discussion of 'body' and 'name' as 'identials' in Fischer-Lichte's earlier essay on the subject, entitled 'Signs of Identity – The Dramatic Character as "Name" and "Body"' (1986), reprinted in Fischer-Lichte 1997: 290–302. Fischer-Lichte's model is clearly at odds with the psychoanalytical, structuralist and post-structuralist models of identity explored in Chapter 1. Referring to Lacan's model of the subject as being twice displaced, both within the Imaginary (the body as the object of the gaze in the mirror-stage) and within the Symbolic (the order of names), Peggy Phelan argues that '[i]dentity cannot, then, reside in the name you can say or the body you can see [...]. Identity emerges in the failure of the body to express being fully and the failure of the signifier to convey meaning exactly.' (Phelan 1993: 13)

[13] In her *Semiotics of Theatre* Fischer-Lichte makes a similar differentiation between 'discursive' and 'presentative' identity, following a model by G.Stone (Fischer-Lichte 1992: 66–7). She concludes: 'Theater can thus only take place if we are confronted with the actor's appearance; the actor's external appearance is normally the first thing we notice about the actor. This initial perception causes us to make an identification of the character in the same way we attribute a specific identity as a meaning to the external appearance of a person.' (Fischer-Lichte 1997: 67)

[14] 'Dem Körper auf der Bühne entspricht im literarischen Text der Name.' (Fischer-Lichte 1990b: 8). ('The body on stage corresponds with the name in the literary text.' [My translation])

[15] In her earlier discussion of 'body' and 'name' as 'identials', Fischer-Lichte proposes a more differentiated theory of this relationship: 'the particular identity of a dramatic character is brought forth and constituted by means of the special relationship that is established between "name" and "body" – that is to say: the relationship between the different symbolical orders to which "name" and "body" belong, as language, society, cultural in general, and nature. [...] [T]he thetic act that constitutes the identity of the

The structural affinities between the *dispositif* of identity and that of theatre that inspired social psychology are also of importance to Fischer-Lichte's model: she argues that the theatre functions as a mirror that reflects back to the spectators the image of themselves as an other. By reflecting (on) this image, the spectators for their part enter into a relationship with themselves.[16] Identity is constituted here firstly as the identification *of* the character on stage, and in a second instance as the identification *with* that character. Theatre thus not only 'symbolizes' the condition of the formation of human identity and fictionalizes it in drama – this affinity also makes it the primary site for identity constitution. It is the social institution *sui generis* (Fischer-Lichte 1990b: 3) in which a society experiences itself through self-objectification. Theatre stages those aspects that are of fundamental importance for the spectators with regard to their identity as representatives of a society .[17] Fischer-Lichte calls the theatre therefore an act of 'self-representation and self-reflection of a society'[18] – the theatrical articulation of the experience of identity is characterized as an essential part of its history.

At the same time, however, Fischer-Lichte limits the methodological scope of her thesis: she pleads for an analytical distinction between the identity of a dramatic

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dramatic character by establishing a relationship between body and language is performed onstage within the limits drawn by the actor's body. In the script, however, it is thus carried out exclusively by means of language which brings forth the play as a symbolic order. [...] From the script of the play one can understand the role as a symbolic order that may be described as a particular historical concept of identity. By enacting this role, the actor onstage reproduces this symbolic order, in which history has engraved its traces sometimes more, sometimes less deeply, by means of the actor's own contemporary body. The enactment, as a partial desymbolization of the symbolic order formed by the language of the play, is performed as an actualization, whereas the symbolization of the actor's body takes place as its historization. Therefore, the identity of the dramatic character onstage, as the result of this process, necessarily points to and participates in two different discourses: that of the culture (epoch/society) within which the play was written and that of the contemporary culture. Thus, the identity of the dramatic character onstage always presents a certain kind of mediation between a former culture and this culture.' (Fischer-Lichte 1997: 293, 297, 301–2).

[16] 'Die Schauspieler fungieren als der Spiegel, der den Zuschauern ihr Bild als das eines anderen zurückwirft. Indem die Zuschauer ihrerseits dieses Bild reflektieren, treten sie zu sich selbst in ein Verhältnis.' (Fischer-Lichte 1990b 4) ('The actors function as the mirror which reflects the gaze of the spectator as that of the other. As the spectator, in his turn, reflects this image, he creates a relationship to himself.' (Fischer-Lichte 1994: 115).

[17] 'Mit den Handlungen, welche die Schauspieler vollziehen, mit den Rollen, welche sie spielen, werden dergestalt Aspekte und Faktoren in Szene gesetzt, die für die Zuschauer als Repräsentanten der Gesellschaft in Hinblick auf ihre Identität als Mitglieder dieser Gesellschaft von grundlegender Bedeutung sind' (Fischer-Lichte 1990b 4). ('With the actions that the actors execute and the roles that they play those aspects and factors are put on stage that are of fundamental importance for the spectators as representative of a society with regard to their identity as members of this society.' [My translation])

[18] 'Theater is insofern als ein Akt der Selbstdarstellung und Selbstreflexion einer Gesellschaft zu begreifen.' (Fischer-Lichte 1990b: 4). ('Theatre is therefore to be regarded as an act of the self-representation and self-reflection of a society.' [My translation])

character and the collective identity of the society within which the drama was created. This distinction allows her to conceptualize models of identity in theatre that not merely confirm but also deviate from those in society, and therefore help to form the foundation of a critical, and not merely affirmative social role for theatre. This distinction, however, refers less to a fundamental than a nominal difference. Fischer-Lichte herself does not uphold this separation in her own analyses – on the contrary, she continuously attempts to establish a link between a social model of identity and its theatrical reflection. Her history of the European drama attempts to fulfil what she had demanded in an earlier essays: 'in order to determine the particular identity of the dramatic character, not only do we have to reconstruct the thetic act by which that dramatic character relates body and language [i.e. the order of the 'name'] to each other, but, moreover, we have to relate this thetic act to the collective identity of the society in which the drama was created' (Fischer-Lichte 1997: 301).[19] According to Fischer-Lichte, it is within the 'masterworks' of dramatic literature that the collective history of identity and its transformations is both executed and stored.[20]

For Catherine Belsey, on the other hand, this history of identity did not begin until the Renaissance, the period of transformation from the Middle Ages to modernity,

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[19] The essay was originally published 1986.

[20] '[I]n den individuellen Meisterwerken ist die kollektive Geschichte des Identitätswandel vollzogen und aufbewahrt' (Fischer-Lichte 1990b: 9). ('In the "masterworks" of dramatic literature the collective history of identity and its transformations is both executed and stored.' [My translation])
Fischer-Lichte divides the history of European drama into five main periods (with a bias toward German dramatic literature):
1. The 'Ritual Theatre' ('Kultisches Theater') of ancient Greece and medieval drama; 2. Theatre of the Renaissance and Baroque ('Theatrum vitae humanae'); 3. Bourgeois Illusionism ('Bürgerliches Illusionstheater') in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Germany; 4. The Drama of Identity crisis ('Drama der Identitätskrise') in the English Romantic period and European Realism; 5. The Drama of the 'New Human' ('Drama des "neuen" Menschen') in the twentieth-century avant-garde.
In summary: According to Fischer-Lichte, ancient Greek theatre marks the period in which the innate identity of belonging to a clan or tribe is replaced with the new political identity of being a member of the polis. Aeschylus portrays the period of transition and the foundation of political identity; Sophocles emphasizes the limits of political identity; and Euripides shows its subsequent dismantling. Medieval theatre is concerned with the vitality of the body and its 'wholeness'. Renaissance and Baroque authors such as Shakespeare, Calderón de la Barca, Racine and Molière portray searches for and playful experimentations with different models of identity, and emphasize identity as mask and role play. The dramatic output of bourgeois illusionism, by playwrights such as Lessing, Goethe, Lenz and Schiller, depicts the individual torn between the modern ideal of individual autonomy and the demands of social reality. Romantic authors such as Shelley and Byron reflect the identity crisis of the nineteenth century with a focus on the unconscious, on alienation, and strange and a-social characters, whilst their counterparts towards the end of the century, realist writers such as Ibsen and Chekhov, focus on the tribulations of the real 'I' behind its social facade. And, finally, the theatre and drama of the twentieth century develops new, non-individualistic models of human identity as governed by the unconscious, or social reality, or forces of spirituality, etc.

during which the modern idea of subjectivity as 'identity', i.e. as a unified, inalienable, unalterable property, was born.[21] Her study on the English drama production of the period, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (Belsey 1985), which she regards as a contribution to a history of subjectivity[22], follows three aims: firstly, to reveal how the supposedly unchangeable 'essence' that constitutes the identity of the modern subject is in fact a historical construction; secondly, how this identity is constructed through the exclusion and suppression of difference, in this case the difference of gender; and thirdly, how fiction is a primary location of the production of such subjectivity.

Belsey defines the 'subject' in familiar terms:

> To be a subject is to have access to signifying practice, to identify with the 'I' of utterance and the 'I' who speaks. The subject is held in place in a specific discourse, a specific knowledge, by the meanings available there. In so far as signifying practice always precedes the individual, is always learned, the subject is a subjected being, an effect of the meanings it seems to possess. Subjectivity is discursively produced and is constrained by the range of subject-positions defined by the discourse in which the concrete individual participates.
>
> (Belsey 1985: 5).

This model is obviously deeply indebted to structuralist and post-structuralist definitions of the subject as discursively produced and constrained by the range of

[21] The difference between Fischer-Lichte's and Belsey's model is manifest in their different reading of the same final passage in Foucault's *The Order of Things*: '[...] one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea' (Foucault 1970: 387). According to Fischer-Lichte, this can 'of course only' refer to the 'man' of western tradition: 'Natürlich kann damit nur der abendländische Mensch gemeint sein. Und so erscheint der Zeitpunkt günstig gewählt – wenn nicht gar Eile geboten ist –, um Bilanz zu ziehen: um die kollektive Geschichte seiner Identität noch einmal am Beispiel ausgewählter Epochen Revue passieren zu lassen, nachzuzeichnen und festzuhalten, ehe er in der Leere künftiger Zeiten endgültig unkenntlich wird und sich seine Spur zuletzt völlig verliert' (Fischer-Lichte 1990b: 9). ('Of course this can only refer to the western concept of man. And thus the timing seems right – even urgent –, to take stock: to let the collective history of his identity parade before one, to trace and record, before he will finally become unrecognizable in the void of the future and his trace will be erased completely.' [My translation]) Foucault's understanding of 'man', however, is more historically specific. He refers to man as an 'invention of recent date': 'man is neither the oldest nor the most constant problem that has been posed for human knowledge. Taking a relatively short chronological sample within a restricted geographical area – European culture since the sixteenth century – one can be certain that man is a recent invention within it' (Foucault 1970: 386). For Foucault, man is 'the effect of a change in the fundamental arrangements of knowledge' (Foucault 1970: 387), which he sets out to examine. As Belsey remarks, '[v]ain, frail, precarious, dispersed across a range of discourses, the figure of man is threatened by the return of the repressed – language, of which he is no more than an effect. Should the reassertion of language, which currently offers to dislodge the certainties of humanist consciousness, succeed in rearranging our knowledge, "then one can certainly wager that man would be erased" [...].' (Belsey 1985: 14)

[22] In *Critical Practice* (Belsey 1980), Belsey had demanded such a new form of critical practice 'which would permit us to identify the historical specificity of modes of subjectivity' (Belsey 1980: 55).

subject-positions that the discourses in which the concrete individual participates offer. Although only mentioned in passing, Foucault, Althusser, Lacan and Derrida have manifestly influenced Belsey's thinking. In her *Critical Practice*, published five years earlier, Belsey had discussed above all Althusser and Lacan in detail, and had designed a possible application of their theories to an analysis of literary fiction that resembles the objectives of her later study almost verbatim.[23]

The model of a discursively constructed, decentred subjectivity is designed in opposition to the ideology of modernism, which 'proposes that the subject is the free, unconstrained author of meaning and action, the origin of history [, u]nified, knowing and autonomous' (Belsey 1985: 8). The ideology of modernism in Belsey's case carries the name 'liberal humanism', 'the consensual orthodoxy of the west', which places this subject at 'the heart of our political institutions, the economic system and the family' (Belsey 1985: ix). 'Identity' plays an important part in this ideology: following Lacan, Belsey defines 'identity' as the imaginary product of the 'mirror-phase'[24] , which conceals the basic divide at the heart of the subject:

> Since the subject of the enunciation always exceeds the subject of the utterance, the 'I' cannot be fully present in what it says of itself. It is this gap which opens the possibility of glimpsing an identity behind what is said, a silent self anterior to the utterance, 'that within which passes show'. The project of humanist criticism is to fill this gap.
>
> (Belsey 1985: 49)

Liberal humanism, however, manages to fill this gap only by excluding and suppressing its 'other' – and Belsey dedicates her study to both aspects, to the emerging identity of the 'unified, knowing, autonomous' and male subject of modernism, and to its other, 'woman', who has meaning only in relation to man. Yet the other of identity becomes a

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23 See her in-depth discussions of Althusser (Belsey 1980: 56–63, 148–9, etc.) and Lacan (Belsey 1980: 60–6, 85–9, 130–2, 140–3, etc.). She also refers to Derrida (Belsey 1980: 59–60, 136–7) and Foucault (Belsey 1980: 160–1).

24 Belsey explores Lacan's theory in more detail in her *Critical Practice*: 'The child has no sense of identity, no way of conceiving of itself as a unity, distinct from what is 'other', exterior to it. During the 'mirror-phase' of its development, however, it 'recognizes' itself in the mirror as a unit distinct from the outside world. This 'recognition' is an identification with an 'imaginary' (because imagined) unitary and autonomous self.' (Belsey 1980: 60).

force of destabilization within it. Using a Derridean model of difference as deference, Belsey locates the possibility of a change of identity within signifying practices:

> Meaning is perpetually deferred by its existence as difference within a specific discourse; it is perpetually displaced by the trace of an alterity within the identity which is no more than an effect of difference. [...] In this sense signifying practice is not outside the material struggles taking place in a social formation. And fiction, as a location of meanings and contests for meanings, is itself a political practice.[25]
>
> (Belsey 1985: 7)

Within the panorama of this theory, theatre does not play a particularly prominent role. The privileged position within the social formation of identity that Fischer-Lichte had ascribed to drama according to Belsey belongs to all fiction. For her literature in general is related to the constitution of subjectivity in two ways:

> Fiction defines and redefines the subject, problematizes the areas of subjectivity which seem most natural, most inevitable, most evidently given. It also addresses the subject. A specific text proffers a specific subject-position from which it is most readily intelligible. It offers to pacify or to disrupt, to impel or to enlist, constructing (and naturalizing) a place for the subject in the process.
>
> (Belsey 1985: 6)

According to Belsey, the 'choice of tragedy as the starting-point for a discussion of the construction of the subject is in one sense an arbitrary one. All signifying practice is the province of such a project' (Belsey 1985: 9). The only relevant difference between fictional texts and other forms of textuality is rooted in the condition of narrativity itself: a narrative structure requires for its development a conflict. 'Fiction therefore tends to throw into relief the problems and contradictions which are often only implicit in other modes of writing.' (Belsey 1985: 9) Fiction can produce new subject positions, manifest the difference at the heart of the dominant model of identity, and thus anticipate a change within this model.[26] Within fiction, however, dramatic literature

[25] Belsey cites the long history of censorship as evidence for the close relationship between fiction and politics, see Belsey 1985: 6.

[26] Belsey describes such a change for the Renaissance, in which two models of subjectivity, the medieval and the modern model, laid their rival claims to the individual of the time: 'The Renaissance plays I discuss in detail in this book are locations of the intersection of rivals discourses, and this rivalry is not resolved' (Belsey 1985: 10). 'In the fifteenth century the representative human being has no unifying essence. [...] Disunited, discontinuous, the hero of the moralities is not the origin of action; he has no single subjectivity which could constitute such an origin; he is not a subject' (Belsey 1985: 18). Man appears instead as 'the temporary location of a conflict [that between vice and virtue] which exists before he is born and continues after his death.' (Belsey 1985: 15). Modernity, on the other, 'locating

possesses no special status: the drama production of the sixteenth and seventeenth century interests Belsey only insofar as it received the greatest public exposure amongst the literary forms of the time : '[...T]he drama of the period before 1642 can be seen as a focus of the contests for the meaning of subjectivity and gender which can also be identified elsewhere' (Belsey 1985: 9). Consequently, the sensual aspects of theatricality, such as its corporeality or spatiality, its particular mode of perception or experience, remain marginal to Belsey's project[27], although she too discusses the spatial outline of theatre in terms of a social 'mirror' to society[28]. Unlike Fischer-Lichte, it is not theatre in general, but the post-Renaissance theatre of Classic realism with its clear audience-stage division and perspectivity that for Belsey constitutes a kind of physical materialization of the 'mirror-stage', in which identity is constituted as an imaginary identification with the stage picture: 'The spectators recognize in the unified subjects

agency and meaning in the unified human subject, becomes an orthodoxy at the moment when the bourgeoisie is installed as the ruling class. Signifying practice, however, is not so well ordered as to wait for the execution of Charles I in 1649 before proclaiming the existence of an interiority, the inalienable and unalterable property of the individual, which precedes and determines speech and action.' (Belsey 1985: 33-34) For Fischer-Lichte the Renaissance was a period in which different models of identity were put to the test with the help of their 'playful rehearsal' on stage: 'Das Theater erschien dem Zuschauer als der ideale Ort, an dem er sich spielerisch auf die Suche nach Identität begeben und neue Identitäten probeweise übernehmen und ausagieren konnte.' (Fischer-Lichte 1990b: 103) (Theatre appeared to the spectator as the ideal place in which he could search for identity in a playful manner and take over and act out new identities in order to try them out.' [My translation]) For Belsey, on the other hand, the period is a battleground for the rivalry between two models of subjectivity which threatened the individual: 'The effect was a form of drama capable at any moment of disrupting the unity of the spectator.' (Belsey 1985:26)

27 A disinterest in the particularity of theatre may be linked to Belsey's reservations concerning the role of experience: Writing is not the transcription of something anterior to itself, a recoverable presence, 'how it felt'. Meanings are not the record of experience, though they may define the conditions of its possibility. On the assumption that meanings are first learned rather than experienced or felt, the meanings in circulation at a given moment specify the limits of what can be said and understood (Belsey 1985: 5). To put experience before discourse is characteristic of the ideology of liberal humanism and its accompanying model of knowledge, 'empiricism'. 'It is for this reason that illusionism progressively eliminates the evidence of its own textuality in order to present (an illusion of) the events themselves, offered up to be directly experienced by the audience' (Belsey 1985: 87). The 'experience' of theatre can therefore be no object for an analysis.

28 The Renaissance stage, according to Belsey, is a transitory form between the 'emblematic' space of medieval theatre, which also enveloped the audience, and the 'illusionist' space of Classic Realism, which separates the audience from the stage. The medieval stage 'offers the audience a coherent pattern of emblematic meanings defining their disunity and at the same time provides a single and thus unified position from which that pattern is intelligible.' (Belsey 1985: 23). In contrast, the modern theatre, 'unfolds as an object of sight for a subject who is held in place by the spectacle. The pleasure of the gaze is the pleasure of an imaginary plenitude, a 'mapping of space' [Lacan] in which the viewing subject masters unchallenged the objects of its vision.' (Belsey 1985: 250. For a full discussion of the development of theatrical space and its influence on the construction of subject-positions, see Belsey 1985: 19–33.

who perform, apparently oblivious of them, within the lighted, framed space of the stage, the depiction of their own imaginary unity.' (Belsey 1985: 23)

I would like to conclude this short digression into theatre history with a brief look at a third model that in many ways complements the two theories introduced above, but places a stronger emphasis on a phenomenology of the theatrical form. In his study of Greek tragedy, *Theater und Mythos – Die Konstitution des Subjekts im Diskurs der antiken Tragödie* (Lehmann 1991), Hans-Thies Lehmann examines the genesis of a premodern model of subjectivity that took shape in the period of transition from a mythical to an individualist world view in Greece in the fifth and sixth century BC. In the tragic theatre of the period the subject emerges in the form of an uncertain and hesitant self-consciousness that begins to questions itself and its previously unproblematic position within the mythical universe.[29] Lehmann too distinguishes this model of subjectivity from the modern idea of the subject as a self-reflective, transparent and autonomous identity.[30] The tragic subject constitutes its subjectivity not as an independence, but precisely as a negotiation with its dependence from an 'Other'[31] – here in the form of its subjection to the mythical order –, which manifest

[29] 'Für die historische Frage nach dem ersten Auftauchen dieses schwierigen Nicht-Orts des Subjekts im Diskurs des Theaters genügt es für erste, das Subjekt nicht aufzufassen als tendenziell sich selbst durchsichtige und selbstreflexive Identität, als souveräne Instanz und als Herr seiner Entschlüsse, sondern als einen Ort der Frage, der Ungewißheit, des zögernden Hervortretens aus einer zuvor fraglos hingenommenen Einbindung.' (Lehmann 1991: 23) ('To address the question of when this difficult non-location of the subject in the discourse of theatre first emerged it should suffice for the time being to define the subject not as a transparent and self-reflective authority and master of his own decisions, but as a location of question, of uncertainty, of a hesitant emergence from a previously unquestioned association.' [My translation])

[30] Whilst for Fischer-Lichte, Greek theatre presented the instance when the Western individual first entered the stage, Lehmann argues that the tragic theatre attempted to depict a non-individualist subjectivity through the use of masks, multiple casting, change of roles, costumes and stylized choreography.

[31] 'Mit dem Begriff Subjekt beschreiben wir vielmehr ein Bewußtsein von sich selbst, das untrennbar ist von einer Beziehung auf die Instanz eines "Anderen" und sich in der Tragödie zu erkennen gibt als Objektsein, Opfersein, Abhängigkeit und Angewiesensein auf diese andere Instanz.'(Lehmann 1991: 129). ('With the term subject we describe a self-consciousness that is inseparable from its relation to the authority of an 'Other' and that manifests itself in the discourse of tragedy as objecthood, victimhood and dependence on this other authority.' [My translation]) In his theory of subjectivity as constituted in a relation to the 'Other', Lehmann refers to both Mead and Lacan, see Lehmann 1991: 129).
This dependence is 'experienced' by the subject in a sensual and corporeal manner: 'das Subjekt [konstituiert] sich insofern in der Relation zur Existenz anderer Subjekte, als es sich *gesehen* weiß, ein Verhältnis zum anderen, das mit der objektivierenden Sicht auf das eigene Selbst konvergiert' (Lehmann 1991: 130). (The subject constitutes itself in relation to the existence of other subjects as it knows itself to be *seen*, a relationship to the other that converges with the objectifying view of the own self. [My translation]) The experience of being seen highlights the role of the body: 'Zunächst als Körper, dann als Selbst erfährt sich das Subjekt von Anfang an als "Gegenbenheit"'(Lehmann 1991: 130). ('Firstly as a

itself in Greek tragedy through the articulation of the experience of pain, powerlessness and victimhood[32].

Lehmann detects an analogy between the premodern model of subjectivity as subjected to the mythical order, and the contemporary (i.e. postmodern) concept of the subject as decentred and constituted in discourse, which allows him to propose a Lacanian reading of the constitution of the subject in the discourse of Greek tragedy. For Lehmann the discourse of tragedy is more than its linguistic expression: referring to Foucault's understanding of discourse (Foucault 1989 (1972)), he defines ancient tragedy as a 'discursive formation' with its own specific enunciative modalities and strategies. The essential elements of this discourse are[33]: the scenery, which places the human body into the empty space of the Greek stage under open skies and thus underlines the subject's subjection and unprotectedness; the polyphony of voices that replaces the singular, authoritative voice of the story-teller; the split of the authorial voice between choir and protagonists; the emphasis on victimhood and sacrifice; the depiction of the mythical order as an enigma; the ambiguity that transforms not just the subject, but the entire tragic discourse into a question; the theatrical mimesis that is regarded as a threat to identity[34]; the distinction between tragedy on the one hand and

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body, then as a self the subject experiences itself from the beginning as a "givenness"'. [My translation]) As a 'givenness', the body exceeds the individual as a site of consciousness and action: 'Das Subjekt ist mehr als das bewußte Ich, der theatrale Körper das Zeichen dieser Diskrepanz.' (Lehmann 1991: 102) ('The subject is more than the conscious "I", the theatrical body is the sign for this discrepancy' [My translation])

32 The German term 'Opfer' can be translated as 'victim' or 'sacrifice'.

33 'Die wesentlichen Momente dieses ironischen, brechenden, bestreitenden Diskurses haben wir versammelt: die Szene, die den Körper ins Leere stellt und seine Schutzlosigkeit fühlen läßt; die Mehrstimmigkeit, die die Instanz und Autorität der Stimme des einen Erzählers ablöst; die Spaltung des tragischen Autors in Chor und Helden, so daß niemand genau wissen kann, wann und ob er durch die Maske der Personen spricht; die Akzentuierung des Opfers; die Konstitution des Subjekts als Frage; [...]; den Rätselcharakter der mythischen Machtordnung; die durchgängige Ambiguität, die nicht nur das Subjekt, sondern den tragischen Diskurs insgesamt zur Frage macht; die als bedrohlich angesehene Mimesis; die Distanz der Tragödie zu Recht und Philosophie, die ihrerseits den Anspruch erheben, den Mythos abzulösen.' (Lehmann 1991: 167). (The essential moments of this ironic, refracting, contested discourse are gathered here: the scenery, which places the human body into the empty void and thus emphasizes its unprotectedness; the polyphony that replaces the singular, authoritative voice of the story-teller; the split of the authorial voice between choir and protagonists, so that no-one knows for certain when and if he speaks through the masks of the characters; the emphasis on victimhood and sacrifice; the constitution of the subject as a question; [...] the depiction of the mythical order as an enigma; the ambiguity that transforms not just the subject, but the entire tragic discourse into a question; the theatrical mimesis that is regarded as a threat to identity; the distance between tragedy and law and philosophy, which themselves claim to be the inheritors of myth. [My translation])

34 'Es ist nicht zuviel gesagt, daß die theatralische Darstellung Platon als ein gefährliches Spiel mit der Identität erscheint, das es zu verhindern gilt. [...] Hier schon taucht die entscheidende Opposition auf:

the parallel discourses of law and philosophy on the other. This discourse of tragedy cannot be reduced to or equated with the dramatic text[35] – on the contrary, it is characterized by an interpenetration of language, the visual aspects or 'opsis' of the performance and its spatio-temporal situation. With this definition Lehmann opens his analysis of subject-formation in Greek theatre towards the inclusion of the sensual aspects of theatricality, aspects such as space, voice, body[36], the depiction of both a speaking and a listening person on stage, the awareness of watching and being watched. These are the elements that differentiate the tragic discourse from the epic story-telling that preceded it. And it is through these elements that the audience is encouraged to identify with what is presented on stage. This identification is according to Lehmann not constituted as the identification with an acting individual on stage as a possible social role-model. Action is secondary to the tragic discourse compared to the depiction of the suffering subject, and the articulation of this suffering in language[37]. Lehmann argues that the tragedy of ancient Greece is the first art form that explicitly refers to its audience by inviting its identification with both the actor who speaks of his suffering and the actor who listens.[38] Through this double identification tragedy manages to

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Identität versus Mischung. [...] In der identifizierenden Darstellung einer Person, auch einer fiktiven, durch eine andere, meldet sich eine fundamentale mimetische Fähigkeit zu Wort, Ausbruch der Seele aus dem Ich-Panzer, nicht zuletzt in der Übernahme des anderen Worts. [...] Solche Mimesis setzt partiell die Ordnung (der Geschlechter, der Zeichen, der Zeit) außer Kraft, die der Staatsbürger im Aufbau seiner psychischen und rationalen Identität hat vollbringen müssen.' (Lehmann 1991: 150, 152). (It would not be overstating to claim that for Plato theatrical presentation presents a dangerous game with identity that must be prevented. [...] Here already appears the opposition that is to become elementary: identity versus mixture. [...] In the identifying presentation of one person – even a fictive – through another person a fundamental mimetic ability emerges, an escape of the soul from of the armour of the 'I', not least through the adoption of the words of the other. [...] Such mimesis partially cancels the order (of gender, of signs, of time) that the citizen of the police had to establish in the formation of his psychic and rational identity.' [My translation])

[35] Lehmann distinguishes the uniqueness of the tragic discourse not only from the discourse of myth that preceded, but also from the discourse of drama, which succeeded it. He argues that dramatic ideals of character development, action, dialogue and the presence of the acting and speaking individual have no relevance for Greek tragedy. Any analysis that uses these categories merely projects its modern dramaturgical ideals on to a discourse that is essentially un-dramatic.

[36] The body in Greek tragedy is according to Lehmann not the individual, naturalistic body of modernity, but a generalized, symbolic body, stylized and transformed through costumes and choreography, see Lehmann 1991: 101.

[37] Lehmann distinguishes the tragic use of language to express suffering from a 'performative' use of language, which he, following Austin's speech act theory, defines as aimed at persuasion, as a medium, as action. Such performative use is characteristic for the modern discourse of drama, see Lehmann 1991: 201–2.

[38] 'Die attische Tragödie bezieht sich als erste Kunstform explizit auf ihr Publikum, und dieser Umstand läßt sich hier so verstehen, daß der Zuschauer – eine Umwälzung gegenüber dem Epos – sich zugleich mit dem Sprechenden bzw. dem Gesagten und mit dem Hörenden auf der Bühne identifiziert' (Lehmann

evoke Aristoteles' famous 'fear and pity': 'pity has to do with the undeserving sufferer, fear with the person like us' (Aristotle 1996: 21)[39].

This identification must not be mistaken for a sense of simple agreement with the social order: against the traditional opinion that Greek theatre fulfilled first and foremost an affirmative role for the polis, Lehmann proposes that such a role was being undermined and subverted by the ambiguities of the discourse of tragedy[40]. In its radical emphasis on subjectivity, Greek tragedy helped to crack open the divine and social discourses of power and insert into it the perspective of the subject. Yet, by doing so the discourse of tragedy already carried within it the seed of its own disintegration. The growing disbelief in the divine order that tragedy articulated eventually led to the suspension of this order and to its replacement with a human rather than divine frame of reference. Lehmann claims that this is the moment in which tragedy as a discourse died and split into a concern with transcendence on the one hand and a concern with the autonomous individual on the other – articulated respectively by the separately evolving discourses of theory and drama.[41] This also changed the status of the sensual aspects of theatre, its specific theatricality: whilst in the theatre of tragedy, spatiality, corporeality and temporality were of significance in their very materiality, in the dramatic theatre these aspects became secondary to the importance

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1991: 47) ('The tragedy of ancient Greece is the first art form that explicitly refers to its audience by inviting its identification with both the actor who speaks and the actor who listens, a radical change from the art form of the epic.' [My translation])

[39] 'Schrecken und Mitleid, nicht Einverständnis provoziert die Tragödie. Sie stellt sich auf die Seite des Menschen, der als Opfer *keine* Ordnung akzeptieren kann.' (Lehmann 1991: 86) ('Tragedy evokes fear and pity, not agreement. It takes the side of the human who as a victim cannot accept *any* order.' [My translation]) The German 'Mitleid' (pity) literally translates as 'co-suffering'.

[40] '[W]orauf es ankommt, ist die Frage, ob man von der Funktion der Tragödie zurückfolgern kann auf die Interpretation ihres Gehalts, oder ob zwischen der zugedachten Aufgabe der affirmativen Repräsentation und dem, was das Theater qua Form und Thematik aussagte, Widerspruch geherrscht hat. Alles spricht für die zweite Behauptung [...] Das Theater war ein Fest, aber im Innern dieses Festes erschien eine bohrende Verunsicherung und Untergrabung der mit diesem Fest verherrlichten Macht (Lehmann 1991: 73). ('What is of importance is the question whether one can deduce from the function of tragedy the interpretation of its content, or whether there was actually a contradiction between the role of affirmative representation and what theatre expressed through its form and content. Everything points towards the latter. [...] The theatre was a festival, but at its core an uncertainty emerged that undermined the power that this festival was meant to glorify.' [My translation])

[41] 'Wenn die Tragödie ihre Aufgabe erfüllt hat, den Ausdruck des Subjekt-Seins ins Leben zu rufen, stirbt sie, zerspalten in eine Theorie (die Transzendenz wird bildlos und Begriff) und ein Drama (in dem die Frage des Subjekts nach seiner Wahrheit nichtmehr an den Götterhimmel gerichtet wird) (Lehmann 1991: 178). ('When tragedy fulfils its role of expressing the subject, it dies, split into theory (in which transcendence becomes an concept) and drama (in which the question of the subject and its truth is no longer addressed to the gods'. [My translation])

of the content of the play. According to Lehmann, the long history of the suppression or sublimation of the materiality of body, space and time in the representational apparatus of European theatre has its beginnings here.

II THEATRICALITY, PERFORMATIVITY AND PERFORMANCE

> When discourses are in flux (of course from one point of view they always are in flux), in periods of unsettled meanings, political struggles exist at various sites of contestation. This productive dissonance is currently the state of play within discourses of performativity and theatricality. Their relationship to each other, and their meanings and uses within their own terms are equally at question. [...] [T]he identification of certain of these applications with specific nations or regions – what we might call 'local struggles' – enables a challenge to the limits of these discourses in light of an increasingly urgent imperative to rethink and resituate performance theory in relation to our contemporary transnational situation.
>
> (Reinelt, forthcoming: without page number)

In a recent comparative exploration of the relationship between the discourses of performativity and theatricality[42], American theatre scholar Janelle Reinelt traces the shifting meanings of both terms across their different genealogies, politics – and geographies. Whilst recent Anglo-American theatre and performance theorists have stressed the importance of performance and performativity as critical terms for a study of performance, their counterparts in non-English speaking countries have instead promoted the concept of 'theatricality' as the 'most widespread heuristic model in cultural studies' (Fischer-Lichte 1995a: 85) (although this distinction is, of course, overly schematic).[43] This can only partly be explained with the fact that performance, performative and performativity are cognates in the English language, but have no equivalent in, for example, Spanish, French or German. It must also be related to different disciplinary genealogies, different disciplinary affiliations, different historical roles of theatre, different institutional and social politics. These differences are illustrated in a recent collection of essays on Latin American theatre and performance (Taylor and Villegas 1994), in which the debate over the appropriateness of either 'performance' or 'theatricality' as critical terms for the description of Latin American

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[42] Reinelt's summary of the debate has been highly influential on my rendition in this chapter.

[43] See, for example, the recently launched interdisciplinary research project, 'Kulturen des Performativen' ('Culture and the Performative') under the chairmanship of Professor Erika Fischer-Lichte at the Freie Universität Berlin. The project 'aims to investigate the relationship between performativity and textuality. With the middle ages, the early modern period and the twentieth century as its historical focal points, the project in particular inquires into the significance and functions performativity acquired during the major transformations in the history of the media.' (Project website: http://www.sfb-performativ.de/seiten/frame_gesa_engl.html; 1 September 2001)

practice is personified in the different positions of the two editors, Diana Taylor and Juan Villegas. Villegas points to the problems of adopting the English term 'performance' and thus superimposing a U.S. academic agenda on the analysis of Latin American culture: 'Is there a potential misinterpretation of "Hispanic" cultures in the United States and Latin American cultures when the writers choose to highlight some concerns according to the emerging critical trends in the United States?' (Taylor and Villegas 1994: 315). He argues that 'performance' is a 'loaded and untranslatable term' and that it would be 'less of an imposition of one culture over another if we were to find or redefine a Spanish term or expression, which may be able to describe the Latin American theatrical modes' (Taylor and Villegas 1994: 315). He proposes instead the terms 'theatrical discourse' or 'theatricality', which allow to redefine theatre as inclusive of its 'other' histories, other practices, an emphasis on the body and on verbal visual, auditive and gestural signs, the role of the audience as co-creators, and cultural and social specificities. 'Accepting the term as it has been redefined, allows the assertion that traditional "theatre" is just one mode of theatricality, limited to a cultural tradition.' (Taylor and Villegas 1994: 317)

> From this perspective, I would argue that 'performance' is a mode of theatricality preferred by some alternative discourses in the United States, whose codes implied a reaction to the established mode of theatricality in this country as was perceived by some theatrical innovators in the sixties and seventies. The performance mode implied a position of political and social protest. In comparison *'teatro colectivo'* in Latin American was mainly a strategy of theatrical production in which the 'author' or "individual creator" was substituted by the group. It usually implied a political and social message of social revolution, but the theatrical codes did not necessarily imply a break with traditional theatre techniques or structures.
>
> (Taylor and Villegas 1994: 319)

Taylor, on the other hand, argues that notions of theatre are in general 'problematic for our communities because they are tied into our history of colonialism, gender inequality and racism.' (Taylor and Villegas 1994: 10)

> In order to be able to appreciate the plethora of spectacles native to our cultures, we have to retain ourselves to look beyond the term 'theatre', a term that was imposed in the early colonial period along with the obligatory adherence to Spanish models, themes and styles. Performance differs from theatricality [...] in that it signals various

specific art forms common both to Latinos and Latin Americans (from performance art to public performance) but also in that it encompasses socialized and internalized roles (including those associated with gender, sexuality, and race) that cannot really be analyzed as 'theatrical discourses' [...].[44] Additionally, the term performance, and especially the verb performing, allow for agency, which opens the way for resistance and oppositional spectacles. Theatricality [...] may be the closest approximation to performance available in Spanish, but it is limited in that it is a noun with no verb and therefore no possibility of a subject position. Furthermore, the term theatrical discourses further precludes the possibility of anti-hegemonic agency – who directs and manipulates theatrical discourses?

(Taylor and Villegas 1994: 14)

To address such difference of histories, politics, terminologies, cultures Reinelt calls for a theory of performance or performativity and theatricality that takes into account the ways in which these concepts 'travel'[45] and change when moved to other locations and contexts. Performance studies as a discipline has itself attempted to embrace such differences of definition and the localized nature of theory to the extent that disagreements about the notion of performance have become 'generative points of departure and coalition for its unfolding meanings and affiliations. [...] Performance studies is a border discipline, an interdiscipline, that cultivates the capacity to move between structures, to forge connections, to see together, to speak with instead of simply speaking about or for others. Performance privileges threshold-crossing, shape-shifting, and boundary-violating figures' (Conquergood 1995: 137–8).[46] Yet, whilst

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[44] Performance for Taylor is inherently anti-theatrical: she insists that the many different manifestations of performance ('performance art, public art, and what we might call public performance' (Taylor and Villegas 1994: 11) share an 'anti-theatrical' goal of rejecting 'the institutionalization of theatre' and attempting 'to subvert a system of representations accused of supporting repressive, hierarchical, and patriarchal societies' (Taylor and Villegas 1994: 11).

[45] Edward Said has discussed the travelling of theory and its necessary transformation by new contexts: 'Like people and schools of criticism, ideas and theories travel [...] Such movement into a new environment is never unimpeded. It necessarily involves processes of representation and institutionalization different from those at the point of origin. This complicates any account of transplantation, transference, circulation, and commerce of theory and ideas.' (Said 1983: 226) He is particularly interested in the transformation of a thus transplanted theory into cultural dogma: 'Appropriated to schools or institutions, they quickly acquire the status of authority within the cultural group, guild, or affiliative family.' (Said 1983: 247)

[46] Schechner has compared performance studies with a sidewinder snake: 'Is performance studies a "field", an "area", a "discipline" ? The sidewinder snake moves across the desert floor by contracting and extending itself in sideways motion. Wherever this beautiful rattlesnake points, it is not going there. Such (in)direction is characteristic of performance studies. This area/field/discipline often plays at what it is not, tricking those who want to fix it, alarming some, amusing others, astounding a few as it sidewinds its way across the deserts of academia.' (Schechner 1998: 357) For a discussion of the history of performance studies as a discipline see Conquergood 1995; Phelan 1998; Schechner 1992; Schechner 1998.

performance studies itself may be concerned with very precise descriptions of the shape-shifting figure of performance, the openness of the term has also invited metaphorical uses which are less so. In the preceding chapter on the performance of culture and identity, many of the theories discussed imply a fairly static figure of theatre versus performance or theatricality versus performativity that treats them as categorical oppositions and ascribes value to one term whilst denying it to the other: theatre versus performance is equated with affirmation versus subversion, convention versus invention, representation versus construction, specular versus corporeal identification, passive reception versus active participation. 'Performance' is affiliated with non-essentialism, difference, communality, whilst 'theatre' appears as the realm of essence, mimesis and subjectivity. Without wanting to settle their meanings, I shall briefly look at both terms and the consequences of their different usages, before attempting to show how they can interact in a performative theatre practice – or theatrical performance practice – devoted to a negotiation of cultural identity.

PERFORMANCE

Marvin Carlson opens his critical introduction to the diverse meanings and uses of the term with the observation that performance is 'an essentially contested concept'[47] (Carlson 1996: 1). Quoting Erik MacDonald, he goes on to suggest that performance *art* '"problematizes its own categorizations", and thus inevitably inserts theoretical speculation into the theatrical dynamic' (Carlson 1996: 2), which contributes significantly to the 'contestedness' of performance as a *concept*. The seductively inconspicuous equation of performance as a critical term on the one hand and performance as an art form on the other here is telling: the proposition that there are no longer clear distinctions between aesthetic practice and its theorization is implicit

[47]The phrase is taken from an article by Mary Strine, Beverly Long and Mary Hopkins, 'Research in Interpretation and Prformance Studies: Trends, Issues, Priorities' (1990), which in turn borrowed the phrase from W.B.Gallie's *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding* (1964) (Carlson 1996: 1). Conquergood uses the same phrase for his concept of performance studies as an interdiscipline that cultivates disagreement, see above (Conquergood 1995: 137).

throughout Carlson's study. Hans-Thies Lehmann offers a different (he himself identifies it as a European[48]) perspective on this relation: '[Performance art] tries desperately to avoid the possibility of theorizing its practice. [...] If [theory] comes to terms perfectly with performance it must have missed performance perfectly by performing theory.' (Lehmann 1998: 91) Whatever the evaluation of their relationship, the dynamic between theory and practice forms the centre of performance's many 'contestations' today.[49] Contributing to the complexity of this dynamic is the fact that performance, performance art, performative and performativity are often used together or interchangeably in the Anglo-American discourse on performance. Unlike 'theatre', whose many metaphorical uses always remain related to an original meaning referring to a particular aesthetic practice, 'performance' does not possess such an origin. This has led to an enormously productive extension of the theoretical debate to consider a wide range of practices, aesthetic and non-aesthetic, across a variety of disciplinary fields, incorporating aesthetic values such as self-reflectiveness, ambiguity or embodied experience into the making of theory.[50] By affiliating what was traditional the field of theatre studies with other disciplines devoted to a wider cultural studies, the emerging performance studies has opened a political project which made the differences of sex, gender, race, and class central analytic categories.[51] 'Performance' has come to refer to a concern for the 'everyday resisting performance practices of subaltern groups' (Conquergood 1995: 137), a commitment to the inclusion of hitherto repressed or overlooked voices, and to 'activist struggles' (Conquergood 1995: 139) Similarly, the

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[48] Lehmann 1998: 91. Lehmann critizises Carlson not only for his bias towards American performance artists and theorists, but also for his 'tendency to transform (often very quickly) theoretical questions into morally, ideologically, politically determined positions', which 'is in some ways disturbing for a European audience' (Lehmann 1998: 92).

[49] Conquergood demands from performance studies to embrace the dialectic between performance theory and practice. 'We believe that theory is enlivened and most rigorously tested when it hits the ground in practice. Likewise, we believe that artistic practice can be deepened, complicated, and challenged in meaningful ways by engaging critical theory' (Conquergood 1995: 139)

[50] See Chapter 1.

[51] See the collections of writings on perfomance studies and cultural theory in Diamond 1996a and Reinelt and Roach 1992. See also Reinelt 1995 for a rendition of the influence of cultural studies on the disciplines of theatre studies and performance studies respectively. 'Cultural Studies has challenged Theatre Studies to pay attention to power investments operating within the field of performance [...]. Similarly, Performance Studies has significantly contributed to decentring the Euro-American perspective of theatre studies. With its methodological combination of ethnography and experimental performance practice, Performance Studies is something of a subset of Cultural Studies [...]' (Reinelt 1995: 125).

marriage of analysis, activism and art (cf. Conquergood 1995: 139) motivated a theoretical and political investment into the making of performance art that has led to new practices, which, 'unlike "regular" theatrical performances, stages the subject in process, the making and fashioning of certain materials, especially the body, and the exploration of the limits of representation-ability.' (Reinelt, forthcoming: without page number). As Reinelt has pointed out, '[t]his use of the term performance is related to a general history of the avant-garde or of anti-theatre, taking its meanings from a rejection of aspects of traditional theatre practice that emphasized plot, character, and referentiality – in short, Aristotelian principles of construction and Platonic notions of mimesis. The rejection of textual sovereignty, of authorial or directorial authority, in favor of the free-play of performance links early avant-garde experiments at the beginning of the century with the 60s and 70s Living Theatre, Open Theatre, and Grotowski's Polish Theatre Laboratory.' (Reinelt, forthcoming: witout page number) Yet, however extended a notion of performance, and however 'anti-theatrical' a concept of the art of performance, theatre always seem to remain at its margins as its Other. Performance has, of course, always been part of the theatrical discourse: it has been used to either denote the practice or effort of performing or its products.[52] In reverse, theatre claims its place in the discourse of performance as a primary instance of the performative. Performance studies thus always finds itself in a (hidden or outspoken) dialogue with its Other, theatre. It is this relationship between performance and theatrical practice that interests me here, a relationship that has concerned performance studies since its inception[53]. I would like to look in a little more detail at two theorists

[52] In German, 'performance' can be translated as either 'Darstellung' meaning the performance of an actor, for example, or 'Vorstellung' referring to the event as limited in space and time.

[53] For a history of performance studies and its roots in theatre studies see Schechner 1998. Schechner points out that, whilst one of the two performance studies departments, the department at New York University's Tisch School of hte Arts, developed out of the theatre studies programme, the other programme, based at Northwestern University, has its roots in oral interpretation. However, Conquergood, who teaches at the latter, highlights the strong artistic emphasis of the performance studies programme of Northwestern, one that is defined as being external too, but still in a defining relationship with theatre: 'the performance studies department picks up where the theatre department stops' (Conquergood 1995: 139).

who have each determined what is considered to be the field of theoretical enquiry about performance today: Richard Schechner and Peggy Phelan.[54]

Reflecting the 'performative turn' in anthropology (Victor Turner) and sociology (Erving Goffman), Schechner in 1973 (Schechner 1973b) formulated an extended notion of performance that outlined the possible objects of study for a new, all-embracing performance theory: performative aspects of everyday life, sport, ritual and play[55], political events, modes of communication and signification, human and animal behaviour patterns, psychotherapy, cultural practices in ethnography and prehistory were all identified as points of convergence between the social sciences and the aesthetic realm of theatre.[56] Janelle Reinelt has evaluated the influence of Schechner's model:

> Linking theatre performances to these other kinds of cultural performance enabled a political project of great potential as it developed through the 1970s and 1980s: not only did distinctions between high and low culture, primitive and mature, elite and popular seem to disappear, but also a methodology based on deliberate socio-political analyses of the operations of these performances began to develop in the work of Richard Schechner, most prominently, but also in performance theorists who were committed to articulating an acute awareness of cultural differences and historical specificities, producing work on race, gender, and sexuality as they are asserted and inscribed in performance: as they become performative.
> Concurrent with this widening of the understanding of what constituted performance came a battle within the Anglo-American academy, most especially in the United States, for a redefinition of the discipline of theatre studies. 'Performance studies' developed its own history and converts, and although somewhat parochial in its battles, this institutional struggle for territory and legitimacy links to a long history of conflict within theatre studies between privileging dramatic texts or the processes and events produced in concrete performances.[57] In the wake of these battles, the imperative of theatre studies to eschew the disinterestedness of art and to embrace the partisan struggles entailed in legitimizing such a program of cultural studies and critique has become the fundamental underlying political challenge. In this debate, the specific social meanings of performances are at stake. On the other hand, performance in its struggle with theatre [...] is often about the perceptual and cognitive capacities

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[54] This is not to underestimate or disregard the contributions of others, namely Dwight Conquergood. But Conquergood's work has its roots in anthropology rather than theatre or literature studies, and it is the relationship between performance and theatre that interests me here.

[55] In an early article from 1966, Schechner identifies the common characteristics of play, game, sport, theatre and ritual as their reliance on time, the value they ascribe to objects, their non-productivity and their dependence on rules. (in Schechner 1988: 1–34)

[56] See the collection of articles on theatre and the social sciences edited by Schechner and Mady Schuman with contributions from Bateson, Birdwhistell, Goffman, Lévi-Strauss, Lorenz, Turner and others (Schechner and Schuman 1976).

[57] See Elam's distinction between 'performance text' and 'dramatic text' as 'that produced *in* the theatre and that composed *for* the theatre' (Elam 1980: 3).

of performance, seen as a formal apparatus that can be foregrounded and/or transformed.

(Reinelt, forthcoming: without page number)

Schechner himself has made his own contributions to performance's struggle with theatre. Before defining performance as 'twice-behaved behaviour' (Schechner 1985: 36), a definition that made it possible to identify a common structure in a wide range of cultural practices, Schechner suggests a number of definitions for, or rather approximations to, a concept of 'performance' that were nearly always determined in relation to its 'other', theatre. In his collection of early writings, *Essays on Performance Theory 1970–1976* (Schechner 1977), reworked as *Performance Theory* (Schechner 1988), 'performance' generally appears as the more comprehensive term, denoting a certain mode of behaviour or action of which 'theatre' is one genre: 'Performance is a very inclusive notion of action; theatre is only one node on a continuum that reaches from ritualization in animal behaviour through performances in everyday life [...] to rites, ceremonies and performances: large-scale theatrical events[58].' (Schechner 1977: 1). The consequence of such an extended notion of performance for a definition and evaluation of theatrical practice becomes manifest a little later: 'Performance is doing something [...] in the subjunctive mood – the famous 'as if'. Performance not only plays out a mode but it plays with modes not necessarily followed through; the theatrical event is fundamentally experimental. [...] Because theatre is subjunctive, liminal, dangerous, duplicitous it must be hedged in with conventions: means of making the place and event safe' (Schechner 1977: 2). Performance here appears as the unacceptable face of theatre, its dangerous 'other'. Implicit in this statement is a judgement on the respective values of a conventional theatre aesthetics (which appears variously as 'Western theatre', 'mimetic theatre' or 'aesthetic theatre' in Schechner's writing at the time) and an experimental theatrical practice. In conventional theatre, the liminal nature of performance is made safe, whilst an experimental theatre may release theatre's dangerous side. Schechner's

[58] In the reworked edition of 1988 these large-scale theatrical events have become 'performances of great magnitude' (Schechner 1988: xiii). In general the later edition replaces the term ' theatre', particularly with reference to an experimental practice, with that of 'performance'.

performance theory is always also a partisan aesthetics: it serves to explain the influences of non-literary forms of performance on the avant-garde theatre production of his period, of which he himself is a protagonist, and to legitimize their experimental work *vis-á-vis* the theatrical mainstream, which he regards as both a historically and culturally limited practice.

In 'Actuals: A Look into Performance Theory' (1970) (Schechner 1977: 3–35), the first essay in the collection, Schechner establishes the connection between non-literary, or to use his term, 'primitive' cultural traditions and (post-industrial) experimental theatre practice, and distinguishes them both from conventional theatre by contrasting the latter's reliance on mimesis and representation with performance's emphasis on 'actuals'. 'Actuals' stress process, the 'here and now' of the performative present/presence, the irrevocability of acts, contest, change in status, and the concreteness of space. Theatre is defined *ex negativo* as hidden process, seamlessness, repeatable and inconsequential acts, absence of risk, and static use of space. In 'Drama, Script, Theatre and Performance' (1973) (Schechner 1977: 36–62), the relationship between all four terms is defined as a series of concentric circles, which are distinguished by their magnitude, both literally by the space and time span they cover and conceptually, from the smallest (script) to the largest (performance). In a revearsal of conventional definitions of theatre and performance, Schechner describes theatre as 'the event enacted by a specific group of performers; what actually occurs to the performers during a production' (Schechner 1977: 39) and performance as the 'whole constellation of events, most of them passing unnoticed, that takes place in both performers and audience from the time the first spectators enters the field of the performance – the precinct where the theatre takes place – to the time the last spectator leaves' (Schechner 1977: 39). This concept of performance shifts the attention from the event of theatre itself to the event of theatrical communication: 'theatre is the domain of the performers; performance is the domain of the audience' (Schechner 1977: 39). In conventional theatre this difference is made insignificant: the 'seams' (Schechner 1977: 40) that traditionally hold the four elements of script, drama, theatre and performance together make them

appear as one and the same. In experimental practice, on the other hand, these seams are emphasized: '[i]t directs the attention of the audience not to the center of any event but to those structural welds where the presumed single event can be broken into disparate elements.' (Schechner 1977: 40). Experimental theatre's 'liminality' is constituted by making manifest the limits of conventional theatre. These limits are historically and culturally contingent: 'It is hard to define "performance" because the boundaries separating it on the one side from the theatre and on the other from everyday life are arbitrary' (Schechner 1977: 44). The reworked edition of the collection (Schechner 1988), contains an additional essay that proposes a similar, albeit more detailed model of the different sizes of performance and theatre. Schechner proposes seven magnitudes of performance – brain event, microbit, bit, sign, scene, drama, macrodrama – which can be found to varying degress in performativity, theatricality and narrativity. Performativity contains all seven, of which the first three are particularly prominent; theatricality refers to the last five, above all sign and scene; and narrativity only denotes the last three, of which drama and macrodrama are its most distinctive features. As a consequence, Schechner claims that '[p]erformativity – or, commonly, 'performance' – is everywhere in life, from ordinary gestures to macrodramas. But theatricality and narrativity are more limited, if only slighly so. Differences in degree of magnitude do lead to differences in kind.' (Schechner 1988: 283) In 'From Ritual to Theatre and Back: The Structure / Process of the Efficacy-Entertainment Dyad' (1974–1976) (Schechner 1977: 63–98), Schechner makes a third proposition for a possible distinction between theatre and performance, based on function, in addition to that of structure and magnitude. This time, performance is defined as encompassing both ritual and theatre, which are distinguished by their different social function, namely by the importance they attribute to either efficacy or entertainment: 'Whether one calls a specific performance ritual or theatre depends on the degree to which the performance tends towards efficacy or entertainment' (Schechner 1977: 74). Schechner links the tendency toward an efficacious or an entertaining mode of performance to a wider socio-political analysis. Each historical period is characterized by the dominance of either mode, and changes between

them are part of changes in the overall social structure, 'yet performance is not a passive mirror of these social changes but part of the complicated feedback process that brings about change.' (Schechner 1977: 76). Again, Schechner separates contemporary experimental practice from traditional conventional theatre, this time with the help of the efficacy-entertainment dyad: 'But within the last fifteen years the process of mounting the performance [...] have become the subjects of theatrical manipulation. These procedures have to do with the theatre-in-itself and they are (as regards to theatre) efficacious, that is, these procedures are what makes a theatre into a theatre [...]. The attention paid to the procedures of making theatre are, I think, attempts at ritualizing performance, of finding in the theatre itself authenticating acts. In a period when authenticity is increasingly rare in public life the performer has been asked to surrender his traditional mask and himself; or at least to show how the masks are put on and taken off' (Schechner 1977: 76) As a result, 'the art is joined to large political movements. Sometimes [...] the art identifies with - even help to form - a sense of ethnic, racial or political identity. [...] And the object of such performances is both to entertain – to have fun – and to create communities: a sense of collective celebration. This contemporary movement originated in the avant-garde theatre and is moving toward ritual' (Schechner 1977: 89).[59] Although subsequently critizised for, amongst other points, the hidden universalism of his model[60], the field staked out by Schechner has retained its validity for the study of performance until the present: an extended notion of performance including a wide range of cultural practices and behaviours, an intercultural and interdisciplinary theoretical approach, a regard for experimental artistic practices, and a political commitment to cultural differences and identity politics.

This is the field in which Peggy Phelan has also been moving, although her *Unmarked* (Phelan 1993) presents a radical interrogation of its main assumptions. Her notion of performance as radical singularity and non-repeatability, which has remained the dominant paradigm in performance studies, clearly revisits – albeit not outspokenly –

[59] Other essays in the book discuss Turner's model of social drama and its application to theatre, see above Chapter 1.
[60] See Bharucha 1993.

Schechner's 'twice behaved behaviour'. Phelan attempts to rethink the claims of identity politics through a feminist psychoanalytic examination of a diverse range of performance texts, including, beside live performance, the 'inanimate arts' of photography, paintings and film. She argues that identity politics are based on visibility, assuming a connection between representational visibility and political power. This connection is based on a number of presumptions: that identities are visibly marked, that the relationship between representation and identity is linear and mimetic, and that increased visibility equals increased power. (Phelan 1993: 7). Phelan, starting from a psychoanalytic and deconstructionist mistrust of visibility, explores its affiliation with voyeurism, fetishism and colonialism, and its compatibility with a capitalist economy: 'The production and reproduction of visibility are part of the labour of the reproduction of capitalism' (Phelan 1993: 11) Reasserting instead the power of the invisible and the 'unmarked', she attempts to find a 'theory of value for that which is not "really" there, that which cannot be surveyed within the boundaries of the putative real. By locating a subject in what cannot be reproduced within the ideology of the visible, I am attempting to revalue a belief in subjectivity and identity which is not visibly representable.' (Phelan 1993: 1) Adopting a Lacanian model of imagistic identity construction, which bases identity's inherent instability on the subject's failure to see itself seeing and on its dependence on the gaze of the Other, Phelan declares that: '[i]dentity is perceptible only through a relation to an other – which is to say, it is a form of both resisting and claiming the other, declaring the boundary where the self diverges from and merges with the other. In that declaration of identity and identification, there is always loss, the loss of not-being the other and yet remaining dependent on that other for self-seeing, self-being.' (Phelan 1993: 13) The representational economy of visibility, which is founded on resemblance and repetition, tries to escape the instability of identity and produce a psychic assurance of the Other by representing it as the Same. Performance for Phelan presents a model for an alternative representational economy, one which is based on representation without reproduction, and one 'in which the reproduction of the Other as the Same is

not assured.' (Phelan 1993: 3)[61] The 'ontology' of performance is 'representation without reproduction': 'Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations *of* representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance.[...] Performance's being, like the ontology of subjectivity proposed here, become itself through disappearance.' (Phelan 1993: 146)

Schechner's concern for political issues, experimental artistic practices, an extended notion of performance[62], and its implications for the discipline of performance studies and its pedagogy are shared by Phelan. She too links her definition of performance to an oppositional politics: arguing that such performative practice can simultaneously be immaterial and yet express value, she locates an oppositional force within its non-reproductivity, its disappearance, allowing for a different way of thinking about the political and psychic relationship between self and other in cultural representation.[63] A politics of identity and a politics of scholarship are for her intrinsically linked[64]: 'I am

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[61] It is above all the 'romance' of the encounter between self and other that interests Phelan: 'While cultural theorists of the colonial subject and revisionary meta-anthropologists have thrown welcome light on the historical patterns of the violence of this encounter, we still have relatively little knowledge of the romance nestled within it.' (Phelan 1993: 4).

[62] Phelan relates the term 'performance' to a wide range of representational media, including performance art and theatre, but also 'inanimate' art forms such as photography and painting, whose performativity is defined by the possibility of an (imagined or actual) exchange of gaze between self and other: 'While the notion of the potential reciprocal gaze has been considered part of the "unique" province of live performance, the desire to be seen is also activated by looking at inanimate art.' (Phelan 1993: 4)

[63] Philip Auslander has presented the most succinct challenge to Phelan's model to date by questioning its implicit hierarchy of the 'live' over the 'mediatized': 'All too often, such analyses take on the air of a melodrama in which virtuous live performance is threatened, encroached upon, dominated and contaminated by its insidious Other, with which it is locked in a life-and-death struggle. From this point of view, once live performance succumbs to mediatization, it loses its ontological integrity.' (Auslander 1997b: 51) In response to Phelan's proposition that live performance's inability to participate in the economy of reproduction gives it an oppositional edge, Auslander suggests that 'in the context of a mediatized, repetitive economy, using the technology of reproduction in ways that defy that economy may be a more significantly oppositional gesture than asserting the value of the live' (Auslander 1997b: 51). 'My argument is that the very concept of live performance presupposes that of reproduction, that the live can exist only *within* an economy of reproduction' (Auslander 1997b: 55).

[64] 'How can one create a performative pedagogy in the West which refuses the acquisite model of power-knowledge operative everywhere in institutions of "higher learning" ? How can one invent a pedagogy *for* disappearance and loss and not *for* acquisition and control?' (Phelan 1993: 173) Schechner too is concerned with the pedagogical implications of performance: 'Performance studies and practiced interculturally can be at the core of a "well-rounded education".' (Schechner 1992) Conquergood even argues that it is the performance of scholarship that is the true challenge to contemporary performance studies: 'Athough we still need to think more deeply and creatively about the performative nature of culture and identity, the truly radical move is to explore performance as a mode of scholarly representation. [...] The move from scholarship *about* performance to scholarship as, [*sic*] *by means of* performance strikes at the heart of academic politics and issues of scholarly authority.' (Conquergood, forthcoming: 15)

writing against the perpetual fracturing of disciplines, specializations, and identities progressive political and critical theory has wrought. These fractures make us easy targets for a relatively unified Right. These chapters seek to establish a different idea of mutuality, sociality, and the real' (Phelan 1993: 28). Yet she herself emphasizes the difference between her own model and that of Schechner, a difference which expresses the shift from a *poietic* to a *kinetic* paradigm that performance studies has undergone: 'While Schechner refers positively to the power of performance to "invent" the real, I am arguing that actually performance admits and tries to face the impossibility of seizing/seeing the real anywhere anytime.' (Phelan 1993: 192)

THEATRICALITY

Reinelt points out that '[t]heatricality as a concept and as a discourse has a more diffuse history than performance and the performative, partially because less technical and widely distributed metaphorical usages of the theatrical and of theatricality threaten to dilute any prospective genealogy of this discourse. Performance has these generic applications too, of course, but the struggles around the connotations and uses of "performance" have actually succeeded in creating a network of meanings which are at least less amorphous than those that operate in "theatricality"'. (Reinelt, forthcoming: without page number). Yet it is possible to identify a number of recurring motifs that structure the debate on 'theatricality'. Fischer-Lichte (Fischer-Lichte 1995a) has divided the contributions roughly into two different approaches: 'narrow' attempts to delimit the 'essence' of what characterizes theatre; or 'wider' approaches, which seek to identify the existence of theatrical elements or structures outside the realm of theatre. Both theoretical stances, however, often concur in their selection of the elements that are associated with 'theatre' or 'theatricality', highlighting either its mimetic nature[65], its corporeal, spatial and temporal aspects, or its reliance on the presence of an audience.

[65] It is above all a critique of mimesis that has motivated the widespread discussion of 'theatricality' in French critical thought, by theorists such as Althusser, Barthes, Cixous, Deleuze, Kristeva, Lacoue-Labarthe, Lyotard etc. For a collection of the most important writings on the theme by French theorists published over the past fourty years see Murray 1997.

Amongst the narrower applications of 'theatricality' are those that theatre studies itself has proposed: the term is widely used by theatre scholars to denote the self-referentiality of the medium, identifying elements of dramatic texts or performances that contain self-reflective and metatheatrical allusions to their own making, in analogy to the linguistic concept of 'metalanguage' or the modernist concept of 'literarité'. 'Theatricality' has an equally long history concerning the 'wider' metaphorical uses in other disciplines. In literary studies, for example, the term frequently denotes literary motifs of display, masquerade, 'playing a role', etc. A similar utilization of the theatrical metaphor in sociology has already been mentioned.[66] It should be added at this point that the term is very often used in a derogatory sense. The 'anti-theatrical prejudice' (Barish 1981) against mimetic representation that has characterized much Western thinking since Plato had led to a widespread association of theatricality with artifice and deception.[67] There is also a related 'prejudice' that highlights other aspects of theatricality, namely its temporality, spatiality and the involvement of spectators. It is in this sense that the term appears in one of the most prominent attacks on theatricality, art historian Michael Fried's notorious polemic against minimalist art, 'Art and Objecthood'. The essay, first published in *Artforum* in 1967, defends modernist art and its 'autonomy' as an art work from the contingencies of context, the space and time of its situation and its audience. Accordingly, Fried attacks Minimalism for its emphasis on its own presence as an 'objecthood', including its dependence on the presence of the spectators and the time and place of their experience in defining what constitutes the 'art work' – in short, 'theatricality'. Fried's 'anti-theatrical prejudice', which manifests itself in statements such as 'theatre is now the negation of art' (Fried (1967), as quoted in Auslander 1997a: 50), has been the target of much criticism by theatre, performance and art scholars alike[68],

[66] See also the comparatively early study on the theme by Elizabeth Burns (Burns 1972), which is dedicated to an exploration of 'theatricality' as a 'double relationship between theatre and social life' (Burns 1972: 3). For Burns, theatricality is defined as 'a mode of perception' (Burns 1972: 13) that can be found both in theatre and culture in general, and that is determined and shaped by social convention.

[67] Reinelt argues that '[t]his, then, might be the most typical Anglo-American explication of the meaning of theatricality in relationship to performativity: the later is preferred when we are rejecting the mimetic aspects of representation, whether in "theatre" or in "life"' (Reinelt, forthcoming: without page number).

[68] See, for example, Auslander 1997: 49–57; Jones in Jones and Stephenson 1999: 39–55; Quinn 1995. Auslander proposes a more balanced reading of Fried, arguing that Fried's prejudice is not against theatre

which need not be revisited here. Suffice to state in the context of this study that theatricality in Fried's terms denotes the opposite of modernist self-referentiality – a dissolving of boundaries and an embrace of spectatorial identification associated with postmodern relativism.[69]

Taking the debate from art history back into theatre, I would like to discuss three recent definitions of 'theatricality' that move within the same discursive field staked out above. Fischer-Lichte has established herself as one of the most prominent advocates of a particularly 'European' perspective on theatricality[70], which has proposed definitions of the term that are partly in correspondence with, but mostly in opposition to those of performance and performativity. She too is motivated by a concern for the status of the discipline: theatricality is introduced to address the employment of theatre as an interdisciplinary model in a wide range of cultural studies (overlapping to a large extent with similar definitions of performance)[71], but also to identify 'the distinctive features of theatre history as a single discipline' (Fischer-Lichte 1995a: 85) which in turn inform its use in other disciplines. It is this emphasis on the particularity of theatre *vis-à-vis* other cultural performative practices that distinguishes the debate on theatricality from the discussion on performance and performativity, which is characterized precisely by its widening of the understanding of what constitutes performance. Consequently, the former also places less emphasis on the social and political implications of theatricality, and instead focuses on its aesthetic uniqueness. These differences can be partly explained by the different genealogies of the disciplinary field in the US and in Europe.

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per se, but against a notion of 'theatricality' that is relevant to a particular historical moment in the history of art, and emphasizing his influence on subsequent critical debates on postmodernism in both the visual arts and performance. Jones is concerned with the way in which Fried's essay, by rejecting art's dependency on spectatorial involvement, constructs the subject of the art critic as an authority whose interpretations are presented as universal truths, a claim which she opposes from a 'feminist, post-colonial/ anti-racist, queer, and class-conscious point of view' (Jones and Stephenson 1999: 46) in an attempt to produce a new, 'performative' form of art criticism that reflects the 'embodied sensuous experiences' of the writer herself. Quinn discusses Fried's essay in the light of his later work on 'theatricality' versus 'absorption' in painting, in which theatricality refers to a self-awareness of the painted subject of its being represented, and to its acknowledgement of the artists (or the viewer) as a spectator.

[69] Fried himself later noted the correspondence between his notion of theatricality and postmodernism: 'In the years since "Art and Objecthood" was written, the theatrical has assumed a host of new guises and has acquired a new name: post-modernism.' (Fried (1983), as quoted in Auslander 1997a: 52)

[70] Her English-language collection of recent essays is subtitled: 'A European Perspective' (Fischer-Lichte 1997).

[71] Fischer-Lichte refers amongst others to the use of theatrical metaphors in the works of Erving Goffman.

Whereas in America, the development of performance studies grew out of a history of conflict within theatre studies between privileging the literary aspects of dramatic texts and emphasizing the performative aspects of the actual event of performance[72], German theatre studies, for example, almost from its outset in the early 1900s attempted to define as the 'essence' of theatre the performative event. Rather than cultural anthropology, the social sciences, linguistics or performance art, Fischer-Lichte claims as her predecessors the avant-garde theatre movement of the early twentieth century, which devoted itself to an exploration of the 'essence' of what distinguishes theatre as an art form. She differentiates between two different uses of the term 'theatre': 'On the one hand, they restricted it to a particular art form which [...] was defined by its very material as essentially different from the material of any other art form. On the other hand, the same movements claimed to close the gap between art and life and to fuse theatre and reality. This demand resulted in a considerable expansion of the concept "theatre"'. (Fischer-Lichte 1995a: 86) Theatricality thus came to denote either a 're-theatricalization of theatre' as a specific art form[73], or a broader concept that was located outside of the frame of theatre, such as Evreinov's formulation of theatricality (*teatral'nost*) as a pre-aesthetic instinct (cf. Fischer-Lichte 1995a: 86).

In her own theorization of the subject Fischer-Lichte attempts to bridge the two concepts and propose a model of theatricality that recognizes it as the 'common denominator of theatre and culture, or as the focus in which both intersect and coincide' (Fischer-Lichte 1995a: 87), whilst maintaining its distinctiveness: 'For, if everything is "theatre", the concept becomes so wide that it loses any distinctive or cognitive capacity.' (Fischer-Lichte in Reinelt forthcoming, without page number) She bases her understanding of the term on her previous work on theatre semiotics, in which she defined theatricality as a 'particular mode of using signs or as a particular kind of semiotic process in which particular signs (human beings and objects of their

[72] See Reinelt 1995; Reinelt forthcoming.

[73] Fischer-Lichte mentions the works of Edward Gordon Craig and Georg Fuchs as protagonists of the 're-theatricalization' movement at the beginning of the twentieth century.

environment) are employed as signs of signs – by their producers, or their recipients' (Fischer-Lichte 1995a: 88).[74]

> This has two important consequences. First, since theatre produces signs using heterogeneous material which can, in principle, be identical to the material of any cultural system, the human being and its total environment may function as theatrical signs in their specific material quality. Secondly, however, whilst human beings and the objects of their environment in every culture always exist in certain communicative, practical and situative contexts which do not permit a human being to be replaced by another or by an object at random or vice versa, mobility is the prevailing feature in the case of the human body and the objects from its surroundings which they are used as theatrical signs. Here, a human body can, indeed, be replaced by another random object or a human body because in their capacity as theatrical signs they can signify one another.
>
> (Fischer-Lichte 1995a: 88)

Consequently, any behavioural, situational or communication process may be regarded as theatrical if 'the semiotic function of using signs as signs of signs in a behavioural, situational or communication process is perceived and received as dominant' (Fischer-Lichte 1995a: 88). With this definition, Fischer-Lichte emphasizes the role of the signs' recipients in determining when such a shift of the dominance within the semiotic function takes place: 'this shift of the dominant is not an objective given but depends on certain pragmatic conditions' (Fischer-Lichte 1995a: 88). By foregrounding the prominent role of the recipient in the process of meaning-constitution, theatricality highlights the capacity of the spectator to construct reality in the process of perception. This link between theatricality and reception is central to Fischer-Lichte's argument: In the works of the early twentieth century avant-garde[75] and those of contemporary 'postmodern' theatre, she find evidence for a connection between attempts at re-theatricalization, which place a new emphasis on the materiality of theatre – a shift towards a focus on body and space, different kinds of interaction between actors and spectators, the dissolution of the linear narrative structure and new experiences of time

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[74] 'Theatricality' or 'theatralité' was introduced as a critical term by French semiotic theory in order to denote the semiotic specificity of theatre, in analogy to the concept of 'literarité'. For a discussion of semiotic models of 'theatricality', especially in French semiotic theory, see Melrose 1994. The term 'theatricality' can also be found in many literary studies on the subject, where it often denotes a special textual quality of a fictional work.

[75] Fischer-Lichte refers above all to Max Reinhardt's production of Friedrich Freksa's *Sumurun*, which ran from 1910 to 1912 in Berlin, London, Paris and New York.

–, and a radical subjectification of the process of reception: 'The process of reception is realized as a subjective construction of theatrical reality' (Fischer-Lichte 1995b: 102). She argues that theatricality merely emphasizes the processes of reality construction that can also be found in everyday life: 'in theatre as well as in every day life we construct our own reality, proceeding from our perception of more or less the same kind of material (human beings in an environment)' (Fischer-Lichte 1995b: 103). Unlike in everyday life, however, where the construction of reality is often an unconscious activity, in the theatre 'the focus of our attention shifts to the very process of construction and the conditions underlying it. While constructing a reality of our own, we become aware of doing so and begin to reflect upon it. Thus, theatre turns out to be a field of experimentation where we can test our capacity for and the possibilities of constructing reality.' (Fischer-Lichte 1995b: 104) Theatricality for Fischer-Lichte thus refers to a particular perceptual and cognitive capacity to construct reality, which is not restricted to theatre, yet is 'explicitly focused and marked by it' (Fischer-Lichte 1995b: 103). Within the panorama of this theory, performance appears as the manifestation of this capacity in an actual event.

Two years later, in an article entitled 'Performance Art and Ritual: Bodies in Performance' (Fischer-Lichte 1997c), Fischer-Lichte revisits the discussion, but this time reverses the relationship between performance and theatricality, and thereby appears to move closer to the position of her Anglo-American colleagues. Like them, she too now refers to cultural anthropology, in particular Milton Singer's theory of cultural performance[76], Austin's speech act model[77] and early examples of performance art, namely the seminal *untitled event* at Black Mountain College in 1952[78], to locate a widespread 'discovery of performativity' in the early 1950s, which for her marks the beginning of a period of gradual transition from a material to a performative culture. Spearheading this transition are performance artists such as Hermann Nitsch, Joseph

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[76] See above Chapter 1.
[77] See above Chapter 1.
[78] *untitled event* was initiated by John Cage and involved Cage, the pianist David Tudor, the composer Jay Watts, the painter Robert Rauschenberg, the dancer Merce Cunningham and the poets Mary Caroline Richards and Charles Olsen.

Beuys and Marina Abramovic[79]. The performativity of their artistic practice is defined by Fischer-Lichte in similar terms to her definition of theatricality before: as an emphasis on the materiality and non-referential aspects of performance – 'real people performed real actions in a real space in a real time' (Fischer-Lichte 1997c: 25) – and as an emphasis on the radical subjectivity of reception, elements that both foreground construction rather than representation as the basic mode of performative signification:

> [The moment of performance] is preceded by the subjective construction of the artist who has designed the actions, and it flows into the subjective construction of the spectators who later, in the process of recollection, attribute different meanings to them. While during the performance, for a fleeting moment, signifier and signified seem to merge, before and after it, in the subjective constructions of the performers and the spectators, they irretrievably fall apart.
>
> (Fischer-Lichte 1997c: 34).

In this model, performance appears as the more comprehensive term. Culture is defined as quintessentially performative: 'Performativity turned out to be the most important characteristic of theatre, art, culture' (Fischer-Lichte 1997c: 26); and theatre is regarded as one, albeit privileged genre of cultural performance: 'For such a performative culture, theatre understood as performative art par excellence – as realized in performance art – could serve as a model' (Fischer-Lichte 1997c: 26). Although overtly closer to an Anglo-American model of performance as a cultural practice that exceeds the realm of theatre, Fischer-Lichte's theory remains committed to an investigation of the formal identities of theatre and performance as signification practices, rather than an examination of their respective political role as cultural practices of constructing identities, which has been the main preoccupation of performances studies in the US.

Fischer-Lichte's interest in theatricality as a critical concept has been partly motivated by the works of her German colleague, Helmar Schramm. In his essay, 'Theatralität und Öffentlichkeit – Vorstudien zur Begriffsgeschichte von "Theater"'

[79] Fischer-Lichte analyses three works in details: Nitsch's *Second Action* of his Orgy Mystery Theatre in Vienna on 16 March 1963; Beuys *Coyote: I like America and America likes me* at the René Block Gallery in New York in May 1973; and Abramovic's *The lips of Thomas* at the Krinzinger Gallery in Innsbruck in 1975.

(Schramm 1990[80], Schramm, however, is less concerned with the identification of the limits of theatricality, theatre and theatre studies that interest Fischer-Lichte, than with the opposing intention of overcoming these boundaries. In reference to a wide range of historical material, he claims that there can be no one definition of theatre, but rather a number of 'archaeological fields of enquiry' that each propose a different understanding of the term[81]. These are grouped by him into three different frames of reference that co-exist and compete within the cultural and social sciences[82]: 1. theatre as a metaphorical model[83]; 2. theatre as a rhetoric medium[84]; 3. theatre as an autonomous art[85]. Theatricality is thus a shared 'discursive element' ('Diskurselement') within a wide range of discourses in an essentially interdisciplinary and intercultural field. Performance appears as a subset of theatricality: following linguistic theory, Schramm defines performance as the pragmatic aspect of language communication (Schramm 1996: 27). The widespread use of performance as a critical term in the social sciences is for him an indication of theatricality's inherently transversal nature: it signifies a new mode of thinking ('Denkweise' (Schramm 1990: 225)) that is based on a 'gesture of crossing boundaries'. Schramm too is concerned with disciplinary questions: but for him, the discipline of theatre studies presents an attempt to delineate theatricality as an aesthetic practice at the same time as theatricality as a cultural practice expands into other realms.

[80] English title: 'Theatricality and Public – Preliminary studies towards a history of the concept of theatre' (My translation).

[81] 'Daher möchte ich drei "archäologische Suchfelder" für die Erschließung begriffsgeschichtlichen Materials unterscheiden, nämlich: "Theater" als *metaphorisches Modell*, als *rhetorisches Medium* und als *schöne Kunst*' (Schramm 1990: 224). ('Thus, for the examination of materials referring to a history of the concept I would like to differentiate between three "archaeological fields of enquiry", namely: Theatre as a metaphorical model, as a rhetoric medium, as an autonomous art.' [My translation])

[82] Although allocating a metaphoric use of theatre to thinkers of the seventeenth century, a rhetorical use to thinkers of the eighteenth century and an aesthetic consideration to thinkers of the nineteenth century (see above), Schramm does not see them as exclusive, but rather as coexisting and competing within the same theories, and concludes that a 'geschichtliche Verlaufsform von "Theatralität" [...] nur indirekt erschließbar [ist], indem der Theater-Begriff als kulturwissenschaftliches Diskurselement behandelt wird.' (Schramm 1990: 225). ('A historical development of 'theatricality' can be deduced only indirectly by regarding the concept of theatre as an element of discourse within cultural studies.' [My translation])

[83] Schramm mentions Bacon and Montaigne as examples for the metaphorical use of theatre as a model for an 'artificial' world.

[84] Schramm refers to Hobbes and Locke as programmatic attempts to systematize modes of sensual expression into an organized rhetoric.

[85] Schramm discusses Kant, Schiller, Goethe and Moritz as theorists of an autonomy of art.

In his own conceptualization of the subject[86], Schramm attempts to circumscribe 'theatricality' as the interaction of three cultural 'energies': language, movement and perception, or semiosis, kinesis and aisthesis. In the development of a 'fundamental re-ordering of the sciences and arts' (Schramm 1995: 115) at the inception of modernity, these three energies were 'artificially synchronized into one theoretical whole which transcended their spontaneous interaction' (Schramm 1995: 115). The preconditions for such a concept of synchronization was the 'methodological drawing of a sharp distinction between the random (physical) world of experience and a calculable (rational) world of systematic representation' (Schramm 1995: 115). Its foundation was the concept of the distanced observer, which was introduced to replace the participating player of the Middle Ages. Schramm argues that '[s]ignificant analogies exist between the determination of the location of the ideal observer in the representation of science and the spatio-temporal organization of seeing, speaking and acting in the canon of European theatre forms' (Schramm 1995: 115).[87] As a consequence, in a contemporary world in which the sciences and the arts are again fundamentally re-ordered, the specular conditions of representation are being questioned and the three cultural energies of language, movement and perception are beginning to drift apart again to exist in their heterogeneous autonomy, Schramm calls for a rethinking of theatre as both a representational art form and a 'science': 'As an Arts Discipline, it must [...] radically question the traditional boundaries in theatre arts'; and '[a]s Cultural Studies, it [...] is also naturally linked to the idea of transgressing institutionalized boundaries' (Schramm 1995: 116).

[86] See also Schramm's extended exploration of the subject, *Karneval des Denkens* ('Carnival of Thinking' [My translation]), a discussion of the concept of theatricality in philosophical texts of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, which covers similar theoretical ground (Schramm 1996). In this study, which is influenced by the proliferation of performance and theatre as critical terms in anthropology and the social sciences as well as philosophical applications of the terms, Schramm draws a close link between the end of the 'fictive unity of the subject' and the end of the autonomy of art in contemporary thinking, see Schramm 1996: 15.

[87] See also Schramm's discussion of the premodern analogy between theatre and alchemy as two forms of spontaneous visceral interactions of cultural energies, which in the development of modernity and its written culture of representation are transformed into science on the one hand and representational art on the other, before reappearing in the early twentieth century as mutual concepts in Artaud's theatre manifestos (Schramm 1995b).

Whilst Fischer-Lichte attempts to delimit theatricality from other cultural practices, and Schramm proposes a model of theatricality that emphasises its potential as a discursive element that crosses such boundaries, Josette Féral instead focuses her exploration of the topic precisely on these margins as the location where theatricality is negotiated. In a relatively early essay on the theme, entitled 'Performance and Theatricality: The Subject Demystified' (Féral 1982), the Canadian theatre scholar discusses the relationship between performance and theatricality with reference to the different ways in which they construct subjectivity. Theatre is described in terms of representation (Féral 1982: 175), narrativity (Féral 1982: 175) and the construction of subjects as unitary (Féral 1982: 177). Performance, on the other hand, is defined as rejecting narrativity (Féral 1982: 177), as 'representing only the failures of representation' (Féral 1982: 179) and as destabilizing subjectivity (Féral 1982: 177). It is important to stress, however, that Féral does not conceive of performance as 'opposing' theatre (Carlson 1996: 137) – rather, she defines performance as the margin of theatre in the Derridean sense, as 'belonging to its limits' (Féral 1982: 171), as 'something which is never said, but which, although hidden, is necessarily present' (Féral 1982: 178)[88]. 'Performance can be seen, therefore, as a storehouse for the accessories of the symbolic, a depository of signifiers which are all outside of established discourse and behind the scenes of theatricality. The theatre cannot call upon them as such, but, by implication, it is upon these accessories that theatre is built.' (Féral 1982: 178). Féral's objective is to redefine theatricality by exploring its performative margins. She too refers in her analysis to the performance art of the 1960s and 1970s. But her ultimate interest lies with the contemporary theatre avant-garde, with artists such as Robert Wilson, Richard Foreman or the Living Theatre, whose work maintains closer links to performance than to traditional theatre: 'performance gives us a kind of theatricality in slow motion: the kind we find at work in today's theatre. Performance explores the under-side of that

[88] See also Féral, Savona and Walker 1985 for a more detailed discussion on the 'limits' of theatricality.

theatre, giving the audience a glimpse of its inside, its reverse side, its hidden face.' (Féral 1982: 176)[89]

Féral identifies three 'essential foundations of all performance' (Féral 1982: 171): 'the manipulation to which performance subjects the performer's body', [...] the manipulation of space, [...]; and finally, the relation that performance institutes between the artist and the spectators, between the spectators and the work of art, and between the work of art and the artist' (Féral 1982: 171). Whilst theatre suppresses its '"baser" elements' (Féral 1982: 171), performance calls attention to the materiality of body and space, their non-representational aspects, their existentiality. Body[90] and space[91] become 'part of the performance to such an extent that [they] cannot be distinguished from it' (Féral 1982: 173). Rather than communicating meaning between two subjects[92], reception in performance works as a provocation of 'synaesthetic relationships between subjects' (Féral 1982: 179), 'waking [...] the performer's and the spectator's [body] from the threatening anaesthesia haunting it' (Féral 1982: 174). Performance breaks down representational relationships to allow for a free emotional flow of experience and desire. These are only 'incidentally conveyed by a *subject* (here, the performer), and that subject lends himself only very superficially and partially to his own performance. [...H]e is a pure catalyst.' (Féral 1982: 177)

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[89] Whilst Féral takes as her starting point a critique of Michael Fried's position on theatricality, Auslander has unravelled the hidden parallels between her and Fried's model: 'To Fried in the Pop Art mid-1960s, painting needed to defeat objecthood and assert presentness in order to retain its specificity as a medium, and to assert the integrity of modernism against an emerging postmodernism. To Féral [...] in the deconstructionist early 1980s, performance needed to defeat representation and assert presentness in order to establish its specificity as a medium (that is, to distinguish itself from theatre) and to differentiate an emerging postmodernism from an existing modernism. [...] [B]oth discourses are firmly inscribed within the [...] narrative of a medium's struggle to discover and assert that which is specific to itself.' (Auslander 1997a: 56)

[90] 'The body is made conspicuous: a body in pieces, fragmented and yet one, a body perceived and rendered as a *place of desire*, displacement and fluctuation, a body the performance conceives of as repressed and tries to free' (Féral 1982: 171). [This presents] 'a march ahead towards the dissolution of the subject [...] in death [...], the experience of a body wounded, dismembered, mutilated, and cut up [...], a body belonging to a fully accepted lesionism' (Féral 1982: 172).

[91] 'Carving out imaginary or real spaces [...], one moment in one place and the next moment in the other, the performer never settles within these simultaneously physical and imaginary spaces, but instead traverses, explores, and measures them, effecting displacements and minute variations within them.'(Féral 1982: 172) This space 'becomes the site of an exploration of the subject (Féral 1982: 173).

[92] 'Performance does not aim at *a* meaning, but rather *makes* meaning insofar as it works right in those extremely blurred junctures out of which the subject eventually emerges' (Féral 1982: 173)

Against the idea that performance is mutually exclusive of theatre, particularly with reference to the position of the subject, Féral redefines the relationship between performance and theatre with the help of a Lacanian model of subject-formation. Both theatre and performance deal with the Imaginary as a way of constituting 'subjects in process' through constructing physical space and then transforming it into psychological or imaginary space. But theatre is based on an essential 'doubling and permutation' of subjects (actor/character, author/director, director/actor, spectator/character) which is concealed by the relationship of mimetic identification that is established between them in order to create the illusionary unitary subject on stage. Performance, on the other hand, 'demystifies the subject on stage[93]: the subject's being is simultaneously *exploded* into part-objects and *condensed* in each of those objects' (Féral 1982: 178). Theatre is symbolic – the result of a secondary semiotic process of codification, whilst performance appears 'primary' (Féral 1982: 177). Theatre sets up a 'thetic multiplicity' of 'viewpoints and gazes', a 'density of signs' (Féral 1982: 178, after Barthes), which is absent from performance.

> Theatricality can therefore be seen as composed of two different parts: one highlights performance and is made up of the *realities of the imaginary*; and the other highlights performance and is made up of *specific symbolic structures*. The former originates with the subject and allows his flows of desire to speak; the latter inscribes the subject in the law and in theatrical codes, which is to say, in the symbolic. Theatricality arises from the play between these two realities. From then on it is necessarily a theatricality tied to a desiring subject, a fact which no doubt accounts for our difficulty in defining it. Theatricality cannot *be*, it must be *for* someone. In other words, it is *for the Other.*
>
> (Féral 1982: 178)

[93]'[...P]erformance conscripts this subject both as a constituted subject and as a social subject in order to dislocate and demystify it' (Féral 1982: 173).

CHAPTER THREE
BRITH GOF (WALES): LOCATION, SITE, HETEROTOPIA - PLACING IDENTITY IN PERFORMANCE

In a contribution to the first-ever comprehensive collection of essays on theatre in Wales (Taylor 1997a), Mike Pearson, then artistic director of the experimental theatre company Brith Gof, outlines a new aesthetics for Welsh theatre by linking a performative articulation of cultural identity to the places and spaces of its performance:

> A Welsh experimental theatre seeks *other places, forms and functions* for performance. In such constructed situations, *free from the laws and by-laws of normative theatre practice*, other things, *real things*, can happen. Performance may be in and of itself a *locale of cultural intervention and social innovation.* [...] Performance need not be restricted to the public or monumental zone of the auditorium. It might favour sociopetal spaces which enhance interaction by throwing individuals together. Performance may begin to resemble a *'special world'*, not entirely hermetically sealed, but a 'devised' world, all the elements of which (site, environment, technology, spatial organisation, form and content, rules and behaviours) are conceived, organised and ultimately experienced by its ordering of the participant. Perhaps this is an *idealized world where wrongs can be righted*, injustices repealed, new agendas set; where individuals work for the best of intentions, for the common good. We may all – performers and spectators – eventually have to ask, 'Who is who?', 'Whom do I watch?', 'What's going on here?' – in a *virtual Wales.* Welsh experimental theatre is created within a specific social and cultural milieu. [...] To *challenge and to create identities* may be its ultimate objective.
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> (Pearson 1997b: 97–8; emphases added)

Pearson here establishes a link between performance, identity, representation and space that will concern me in this chapter. His model implies the proposition that cultural identity is engendered spatially, that theatrical space is engendered culturally, and that the 'laws' of theatrical representation are inscribed in the places and spaces of performance. Bringing together all three claims, he suggests that, by placing performance in spaces other than traditional theatre auditoria, the particular performative practices these spaces engender may help to secure a specific Welsh identity to the work by displacing the barrier separating representation from a realm of non-representation or

'reality', and thus intervening in the construction of Welsh cultural identity by creating a 'new real', a 'virtual Wales'. Within this 'special world', a liminal space of potency and potentiality, identity appears not as a given object to be represented, but the joint product of the work of the spectators and the performers, conceived and experienced in performance. There is a strong ethical note to Pearson's model: performance for him creates a realm of 'justice'[1] where the construction of identity does not exclude alterity, but actually demonstrates an integrity toward it by allowing for the possibility of sharing between performers and spectators in the moment of performance.

In order for theatre to become a locale where cultural identity can thus be challenged or created, Pearson suggests an address to three of theatre's spatial components: the consideration of the (cultural) placement of theatre; a revision of the auditorium–stage relationship and the way it favours a particular form of social interaction; and the creation of a stage environment where spectators may experience identity differently. Studies of the space of Western theatre usually distinguish in a similar manner between three spatial configurations and their respective cultural significance: the location of theatre, the internal spatial division between auditorium and stage, and the space of the stage itself[2]. The notion that this spatial apparatus of theatre and its respective historical manifestations – a particular choice of location, for example, or a particular audience-stage configuration – are engendered culturally has become almost a commonplace in theatre studies[3]. An address to all three spatial components of theatre has been explored to varying degrees in the works of Brith Gof since the company's inception in 1981. Their large-scale productions for so-called 'found' industrial locations

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[1] See Chapter 1.

[2] Elam has described the space of the stage also as a 'a *virtual* space – that is, an illusionistic 'intangible image' resulting from the formal relationships established within a given defined area' (Elam 1980: 67).

[3] Bennett, for examples, argues that both the location and architecture of theatre is culturally significant: 'The milieu which surrounds a theatre is always ideologically encoded and the presence of a theatre can be measured as typical or incongruous within it.' (Bennett 1997: 126) 'The theatre building is a landmark as cultural institution. It is a physical representative of the art which dominant ideologies have both created and promoted.' (Bennett 1997: 128) The prominent placement of Greek theatre within the urban outline of the Polis, or the separation of the auditorium from the box-set stage in bourgeois theatre have become familiar examples for the cultural significance ascribed to particular spatio-architectural arrangements in theatre. For a full discussion see Arnott, Chariau, Huesmann et al. 1977; Bennett 1997; Carlson 1989; Chaudhuri 1995; Fischer-Lichte 1992; Mackintosh 1992..

in the 1990s singled them out as one of the most prominent exponents of 'site-specific' performance in Europe[4]. But even long before the company turned to an explicit address to site, their work had been preoccupied with an exploration of locations 'within which a society works, plays and worships' (Brith Gof 1985: 3). They have experimented with different audience configurations, from unconventional seating arrangements to actually involving the spectators as co-performers. And they have created all-encompassing stage environments. Yet, despite their continuing interest in the question of space in performance, Brith Gof's address to this question has undergone significant changes during the development of their work, changes which can be traced back to the company's changing understanding of the nature of Welsh identity – or more specifically, to its spatial nature.

The connection which Pearson makes between place and space on the one hand and the constitution of cultural identity on the other can be further explored by referring to recent theories on the spatial formation of identities[5]. Spatiality, or the spatial nature of social existence, has become an increasingly important aspect of social theory. In 1989, the geographer Soja is still complaining that '[a]n essentially historical epistemology continues to pervade the critical consciousness of modern social theory. [...] This enduring epistemological presence has preserved a privileged place for the 'historical imagination' in defining the very nature of critical insight and interpretation. So unbudgeably hegemonic has been this historicism of theoretical consciousness that it has tended to occlude a comparable critical sensibility to the spatiality of social life' (Soja 1989: 10). Yet, only four years later, Keith and Pile point to the multitude of spatial metaphors employed in contemporary social theory 'position, location, situation, mapping; geometrics of domination, center-margin, open-closed, inside-outside, global-local; liminal space, third space, not-space, impossible space; the city'. (Keith and Pile 1993: 1) Building on phenomenology, sociopsychology, and on the works of Lefebvre

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[4] See, for example, Kaye 1996b; Kaye 1996d.
[5] See, for example, Bhabha 1994; Carter, Donald and Squires 1993a; Foucault 1986; Hetherington 1998; Jameson 1991; Keith and Pile 1993; Kirby 1982; Tuan 1977.

(Lefebvre 1991), Foucault (Foucault 1986) and Jameson (Jameson 1991), amongst others, Soja proposes a model for socially–based spatiality, which explores the created space of social organisation and production:

> The general argument I have presented can be briefly summarized in a sequence of linked premises: 1. Spatiality is a substantiated and recognizable social product, part of a 'second nature' which incorporates as it socializes and transforms both physical and psychological spaces. 2. As a social product, spatiality is simultaneously the medium and outcome, presupposition and embodiment, of social action and relationship. 3. The spatio-temporal structuring of social life defines how social action and relationship (including class relations) are materially constituted, made concrete.
>
> (Soja 1989: 129)

As simultaneously the condition for and the outcome of social practice, cultural identity both makes spaces and is made by them.[6] 'Identity [...] is also about spatiality. In part, this means that identity involves an identification with particular places, whether local or national. It also means that certain spaces act as sites for the performance of identity.' (Hetherington 1998: 105)

Foucault has proposed a model for the history of social spatiality[7] and its relation to identity in an article entitled 'Of Other Spaces' (Foucault 1986)[8]. He begins this history in the Middle Ages, where 'there was a hierarchic ensemble of places: sacred places and profane places; protected places and open, exposed places; urban places and rural places [...]. It was this complete hierarchy, this opposition, this intersection of places that constituted what could very roughly be called medieval space: the space of "emplacement"'. (Foucault 1986: 22) This medieval space of emplacement was replaced

[6] Cultural anthropology has described the space of identity in similar terms to the ones that Pearson uses in his description of the theatrical space of identity. Greverus, for example, has identified the cultural territory of identity as a concrete and self-produced space of experience, participation and action, in which identification with the space is constituted through the making of space and an active taking possession of it, see Greverus 1978.

[7] Foucault developed his theory in direct reference to Bachelard's study of internal space (Bachelard 1994) with the intention to add to Bachelard's work, and that of phenomenology in general, a study of external spaces, actually lived and socially produced spaces: The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and knaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things. We do not live inside a void that could be colored with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another.' (Foucault 1986: 23)

[8] The article is based on a 1967 lecture entitled 'Des Espaces Autres', which remained unpublished until 1984.

by the modern space of extension, opened up by Galileo in the seventeenth century. This space was constituted as 'infinite, and infinitely open: In such a space the place of the Middle Ages turned out to be dissolved, as it were; a thing's place was no longer anything but a point in its movement, just as the stability of a thing was only its movement indefinitely slowed down.' (Foucault 1986: 22) The contemporary space of late-modernity or postmodernity for Foucault is defined by the order of the 'site'. 'The site is defined by relations of proximity between points or elements; formally, we can describe these relations as series, trees, or grids. [...] Our epoch is one in which space takes for us the form of relations among sites.' (Foucault 1986: 23) He concludes that 'our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein.' (Foucault 1986: 22) In summary, Foucault's three-part model proposes a distinction between location, space and site as three spatial orders, associated with pre-modern, modern and late-modern or post-modern societies, and defined respectively by the practices of emplacement, extension and storage. His model can be extended easily to differentiate between three modes of identity constitution through spatial practices: localization, movement and relation. There are distinct parallels with Carter, Donald and Squire's study of identity and spatiality, in which pre-modern or traditional identities are described as 'firmly located in particular places which housed stable cohesive communities of shared tradition and perspective' (Carter, Donald et al. 1993a: vii) and contrasted with '[t]he logics of universalism and, more recently, modernization and globalization', which 'have sought to represent localised identities as historical, regressive characteristics, and have worked to undermine the old allegiances of place and community' (Carter, Donald et al. 1993a: ix). For Carter, Donald and Squire, too, postmodern identities have developed as a resistance to the modern space of universality and homogeneity, and have replaced it with 'a more heterogeneous conception of the public sphere' (Carter, Donald and Squires 1993b: x), in which identity is asserted as a '*relational* form' (Carter, Donald et al. 1993b: x), and as 'fluid, migratory' (Carter, Donald et al. 1993b: x).

Carter's, Donald's and Squire's model of fluid identities is exemplary for the current debate on the relationship between identity and space, which often favours the dislocated practices of 'nomadism', 'diaspora', 'exile', 'mapping', 'journeying', 'non-site', 'border', etc. over those political practices that locate identity within the specificity of geography. Such specificity has been central to definitions of Welsh cultural identity. Although Welshness[9] is mostly commonly defined in linguistic terms as being closely allied to the Welsh language, recent political struggles over self-government have also defined Welsh identity in geo-political terms as referring to a distinct 'region' or 'nation'. Discourses of nationalism and regionalism are often defined as conservative 'politics of location'[10]. Although Carter, Donald and Squire count these among today's cultural practices that have developed in resistance to the universalized space of modernity, they also express caution concerning the 'dichotomous notion of difference' expressed in nationalism, which 'has regularly been mobilised to legitimate cultural and political exclusion' (Carter, Donald et al. 1993b: x). They have identified at the heart of such essentialized identity the existence of a 'psychical geography' (Carter, Donald et al. 1993b: xi) which continues to derive it sense of identity from a stable attachment to a given place. Indeed, in Wales, identity has historically been tied to its landscape[11] and defined in terms of a 'topophilia', a deep emotional attachment to the native landscape, expressed in the different words and sounds of the Welsh language. This particular 'sense of place' is thought to be operational also in the theatrical production of the

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[9] I use 'Welshness' as a synonym for 'Welsh cultural identity' here because it suggests the existence of an essence at the heart of Welsh culture which fully reflects Brith Gofs understanding of Welsh cultural identity at the time. It also roughly corresponds to the Welsh term *Cymreictod*. For a discussion on Welsh cultural identity see Bowie 1993; Bowie and Davies 1992; Cole 1990; Curtis 1986.

[10] See Chapter 1.

[11] In Wales, identity has historically been tied to the landscape through colonial equations between place, ethnicity and culture. In the great project that was the construction of 'the imagined community' (Anderson 1983) of Great Britain (Colley 1992) in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, those aspects of the Welsh physical landscape were highlighted that provided the greatest contrast to Englishness. After having been regarded in the early eighteenth century as backwards and barbaric, Wales was turned in the imagination of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, in the words of contemporary traveller George Borrow, into the romantic 'Wild Wales', a picturesque country of high mountains, deep valleys and wild rivers. The Welsh were portrayed as Noble Savages, which were to be seduced into the new nation that was Britain. Welsh identity was defined by its connection with the landscape, an assumed close and often mystic relationship to nature, embodied by the simple manners of the rural people. For a full discussion of notions of landscape in Welsh culture see Aaron 1994; Hourahane 1999a; Hourahane 1999b.

culture.[12] Mike Baker, responsible for the theatre provision at the Arts Council of Wales throughout the 1990s, has detected 'a desire to create a theatre which grows from a love and a care for local people and the heritage and future of the locality, which is a dominant strain in the theatres of Wales.' (Baker 1990: 119) 'This is most typically found as community theatre, written or devised specially for a locality and taken to its audience in village halls and centres where local people are used to meeting for other reasons.[...They] offer a strong sense of place'. (Baker 1990: 119)

The relationship between the particular spatiality of Welsh cultural identity and the use of unconventional spaces for theatrical performance[13], which Baker alludes to here, has nowhere been more fully explored than in the works of Brith Gof:

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[12] The majority of critical writings on Welsh theatre over the past twenty years have focused on its concern for cultural identity. (See, for example, Jones 1980, Tighe 1986, Baker 1990, Rabey and Savill 1990, Wallace 1991, Hughes 1994, Adams 1996, Taylor 1997a.) In return, theatre has been defined as one of the major public fora where Welsh cultural identity is negotiated. This may be surprising in the light of the comparatively minor role that theatre as an art form had played in Wales until recently. It has become a commonplace that there is no 'indigenous' theatre tradition in Wales (For a history of professional theatre in Wales since the sixteenth century, focusing on the development of English-language theatre, see Price 1948; Price 1984; Price 1953). This is usually explained with the low density of the population, with the language divide, with a poor road and public transport system, with the influence of a stern Non-Conformism and with the absence of a wealthy, urban bourgeois class for which the theatre would have presented an important forum for self-representation. It is widely acknowledged that it was not until the 1960s that, under the patronage of the newly founded Welsh Arts Council, a professional theatre in Wales finally took shape (For a summary of the development of professional theatre in Wales after 1962 see Adams 1996: 41-7). Tighe speaks about the 'Margin Effect': 'Theatre, historically, is marginal to Welsh culture in both languges [*sic!*]. Wales is marginal to the British state' (Tighe 1986: 248). As a result of this double marginality, the creation of a distinctly Welsh theatre form has often been intrinsically linked to the affirmation or creation of a distinct Welsh identity. 'The search for a suitable form and for suitable subject matter in theatre goes hand and hand with the search for political and cultural forms. Politics and theatre are two aspects of the same personal and general involvement' (Tighe 1986: 253).In Wales, we can distinguish between two strategies that have been employed to this effect: 'cultural appropriation' and 'cultural rediscovery'. The former attempts to appropriate theatrical models developed elsewhere – for example an English-style model of literary theatre – by introducing Welsh subject matters or by translating text into the Welsh language; the latter attempts the invention of a new and distinctly different theatrical form, often openly rejecting the model of appropriation, by referring back to traditional proto-theatrical forms of Welsh cultural expression (i.e. poetry, religious rites, folk customs, musical forms). This debate has culminated in the demand for a Welsh national theatre, a demand which is now nearly a century old. There have been numerous attempts to establish a national theatre company for Wales in both languages (for two different views on the history of the National Theatre movement see Jones 1980 and Adams 1996).
For a discussion on the role of landscape in Welsh theatre see Roms 2000a.

[13] Many critics have highlighted the non-traditional use of space as one of the main characteristics of Welsh theatre practice. Michael Billington, drama critic of The Guardian, at a conference in Edinburgh in 1991, where he was asked to characterize the theatre of the four British nations, put it like this: 'Welsh theatre [...] tends toward performance art and takes place outside of conventional theatre buildings' (as quoted in Shank 1994: 4). The usage of buildings other than conventional theatres was first born out of a pragmatic necessity in Wales, motivated by the shortage of purpose-build theatres in the country. But is has generally also been explained with a distinct Welsh relationship to place which is situated at the heart of its identity. The Scottish arts organiser Neil Wallace speaks of a '"theatre of topophilia" – one with a resilient love or sense of place' (Wallace 1991: 5). See also Laker 1997 for a discussion of theatre spaces in Wales.

> [...] I think it's within the history of Brith Gof not performing in theatre spaces. That's for a number of reasons. One is that there aren't a large number of theatres in Wales. There's a limited circuit – and almost all of those theatres are problematic in one way or another. They were all built within three or four years of each other, but actually nobody had thought about what theatre might be in Wales. Coupled with that, right at the end of our life within Cardiff Laboratory we went to live and work in a small village in West Wales, and began to think about manifestations of theatre that were not theatre-bound. We were making performances for farmhouse kitchens, for the Post Office counter, and so on. [...] I think it would be the venues in which a Welsh, particularly a Welsh rural audience, would feel more at ease in – rather than sitting in rows in the dark in a theatre.
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> (Pearson as quoted in Kaye 1996c : 209–10)

Yet, for Brith Gof pragmatic reasons for performing in non-theatrical spaces ('there aren't a large number of theatres') and an interest in the different forms of communality these spaces bring with them ('venues in which a Welsh, particularly a Welsh rural audience, would feel more at ease in') are closely linked to fundamental aesthetic considerations ('what theatre might be in Wales'), and these for the company are always inherently allied with political considerations.[14] They are concerned with what Bhabha has called the 'intersubjective and collective experience of *nationness*' (Bhabha 1994: 2) as a form of 'living the *locality* of culture' (Bhabha 1994: 140). Such a new national discourse attempts to think beyond the narratives of originary identities and homogenous spaces that characterize 'national*ism*' (Bhabha 1994: 140), to replace it with the 'in-between space' that emerges in the articulation of cultural differences. 'The "locality" of national culture is neither unified nor unitary in relation to itself, nor must it be seen simply as "other" in relation to what is outside or beyond it. The boundary is Janus-faced and the problem of outside/inside must always be a process of hybridity, incorporating new 'people' in relation to the body politic, generating other sites of meaning and, inevitably, in the political process, producing unmanned sites of political antagonism and unpredictable forces for political representation.' (Bhabha 1990b: 4)

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[14] According to Welsh critics, this has made Brith Gof 'the most dynamic force for change in Welsh theatre culture in the 20th century' (Savill 1993: 230). 'If you speak to anyone outside Wales about Welsh theatre they will very soon mention Brith Gof: it is seen as the epitome of Welshness and of a distinct form of performance – a tribute to the company's own insistence that its aim "to create a new and alternative theatre discourse in Wales" was exclusively theirs.' (Adams 1996: 54)

Brith Gof' have always explored how issues surrounding Welsh cultural identity and nationness may be articulated within the 'locality' of theatre. Their approach to these issues can be traced back through several evolutionary stages , which I shall distinguish, with the help of Foucault's model of cultural spatiality, as 'location', 'site' and 'heterotopia'. 'Heterotopia' is Foucault's term for a particular type of 'site'[15]:

> There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, *heterotopias.*[16]
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> (Foucault 1986: 24; emphasis added)

Foucault develops his notion of heterotopias in contrast to that of utopias[17], 'sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces.' (Foucault 1986: 24) Heterotopias thus provide sites in which given social structures are challenged in order that identities may be renewed or changed. A heterotopia can thus act as a liminal space for the production of identity through an affectual, experiential, embodied identification through performance'.[18] Soja has pointed out that 'Foucault's heterogeneous and relational space of heterotopias is neither a substanceless void to be filled by cognitive intuition nor a repository of physical forms to be phenomenologically described in all its resplendent variability. It is another space,

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[15] Herrington has identified the origins of the term: 'The idea for the term originally comes from the study of anatomy where it has a specific medical usage. In particular, it is used to refer to parts of the body that are where they should not be: out of place organs, missing pieces, extra fingers or toes, or, like tumours, alien to the body as a whole.' (Hetherington 1998: 131)

[16] Foucault identifies a number of heterotopias: the boarding school, the honeymoon hotel, rest homes and psychiatric hospitals, prisons and barracks, the cemetery and the church, the theatre and the garden, museums and libraries, the Moslem hammam and the Scandinavian sauna, brothels and colonies, mirrors and boats.

[17] From the Greek *ou* (not) and *topos* (place), utopia translates as 'no-place'.

[18] Hetherington has discussed Foucault's theory of heterotopias in connection with Turner's model of liminality, see Hetherington 1998.

[...] actually lived and socially created spatiality, concrete and abstract at the same time, the habitus of social practice' (Soja 1989: 18) 'Heterotopias' are 'other spaces' or 'spaces of otherness', which are constituted 'through the way they unsettle established modes of representing and ordering rather than because of any intrinsic otherness within a site itself' (Hetherington 1998: 131). They are established through the juxtaposition of incommensurate objects that are usually not found together, and through the resistance this juxtaposition creates to the way representation is usually ordered and perceived.

Brith Gof's theatrical practice can be described as a gradual development towards the creation of a theatrical heterotopia[19], in which familiar, 'found' locations are used to create a resistance to the way representation is usually ordered to signify 'identity'. Lyotard has described the working of theatrical representation as reliant on the order of the above-mentioned three elements of theatrical space:

> For all theatre is [...] thus made up of two limits, of two barriers filtering the coming and going energies; one limit (1) which determines what is "exterior" to the theatre ("reality") and what is "interior", a second limit (2) which, on the inside, disassociates what is to be perceived and what is not to be perceived (underneath, stage lights, wings, chairs, people...). Criticism, involved in the new theater, addressed itself essentially to the problem of the second limit (2), as staging and architectural experiments prove. But the crisis is now that of the first limit (1); stage + house/"outside". It is a selective limit, par excellence; sounds, lights, words; eyes, ears, postures [...] get sorted out so that what is a libidinal displacement may yield to the re-presentative replacement of performance.
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> (Lyotard 1997 (1977): 287–8)[20]

Lyotard has linked the spatial set-up of representation in theatre with the organisation of political space, which too is structured by three limits, through which political energy is filtered: 'Here again, in the set up of the *politeia*, you have first of all the enclosure of a space [...]. [...] Within, there is this central space, which is found already in the communities of warriors in Homer, *es meson*, in the middle. When one speaks as a politician, one comes to speak in the middle [...]. [...] And then there are also

[19] Foucault himself described the theatre as a heteropia as it 'is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible [... and which] brings into the rectangle of the stage, one after the other, a whole series of places that are foreign to one another' (Foucault 1986: 25).

[20] For Lyotard theatre presented a paradigm for an analysis of representation in general. For a full discussion of Lyotard's model see Bennington 1988: 10-1.

processes of effacement: in fact, wealth, connections, pressure groups, rhetoric will be ways of getting to talk in the middle, scenographies, but they will be effaced and must be effaced for the political stage to be constituted' (Lyotard, as quoted in Bennington 1988: 12–13). Making visible the workings of the representational apparatus of politics may release a different political energy. Brith Gof shared this hope for a different politics, one which would break with the exclusion of alterity and the division between centre and margin on which representational politics relies, by making visible the workings of the theatrical-representational apparatus in performance.

I LOCATION

Brith Gof was founded in 1981 by Mike Pearson and his collaborator Lis Hughes Jones[21] with the intention

> to develop a new, vibrant and distinctive theatre tradition in Wales, one which is relevant and responsive to the perceptions, experience, aspirations and concerns of a minority culture, and which is more than just a pale reflection of English theatre convention.
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> (Brith Gof 1985: 2)

The name chosen for their company, Brith Gof, a Welsh idiom meaning 'faint recollection', expressed Pearson's and Jones's desire to revive the suppressed cultural memory of a traditional minority culture. Hall has characterized similar projects as acts of 'imaginative rediscovery' that attempt to unearth 'that which the colonial experience[22] buried and overlaid, bringing to light the hidden continuities it suppressed' (Hall 1990: 224). Whilst acknowledging its emancipatory potential as a 'very powerful and creative force in the emergent forms of representation amongst hitherto marginalised peoples' (Hall 1990: 223), Hall criticizes its underlying essentialist conception of cultural identity for its neglect of the vicissitudes of actual historical experience. This description does not exactly fit Brith Gof's intentions at the time: the choice of subject matter for their early productions combined the founding myths of Welsh culture with the actual history of the culture's erosion through economic exploitation.[23] Yet by

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[21] Pearson and Jones met at Cardiff Laboratory Theatre, which Pearson himself had established in 1974 and which he co-directed throughout the 1970s with Richard Gough. Inspired by the works of Jerzy Grotowski and Eugenio Barba, the laboratory's objectives were to 'function as a body for intensive long-term research into theatrical methodology, [...] essentially in the field of physical expression' (Pearson 1980: 2). This interest in physical theatre, which led the company to explore the performance styles of other cultures, namely Asian theatre forms such as Nô, Kabuki and Balinese Theatre, continued to be of importance for the early works of Brith Gof. Similarly, the interest in taking work out of formal theatre settings into other locations was crucial to the practice of both companies, albeit for different reasons. But Pearson's and Jones's ambition to found a distinctly Welsh theatre aesthetics began to be at odds with the growing international aspirations of the Cardiff Laboratory Theatre. After Pearson's and Jones's departure, the company continued under the directorship of Richard Gough. It was later renamed Centre for Performance Research and is now based at the University of Wales Aberystwyth, from where it has extended its activities to include festivals, conferences, a resource centre and a publishing house. For a history of Cardiff Laboratory Theatre until 1980 see Cardiff Laboratory Theatre 1980.

[22] Brith Gof often referred to Wales as 'England's first colony' (Pearson 1996b: 5).

[23] Amongst the theatrical re-incarnations of Welsh myths and legends were several productions based on the ancient Welsh collection of myths, the *Mabinogi* (*Branwen* 1981, *Rhiannon* 1981, *Manawydan* 1982, *Blodeuwedd* 1982-3). These were followed by productions with subject matters such as the impact of land enclosures (*Gwaed Neu Fara* (Blood or Bread) 1982) and afforestation (*Rhydcymerau* 1984), the

creating a historical narrative of destruction and loss and the possibility of subsequent rebirth, Brith Gof too located the essence of Welsh cultural identity before and outside of the contingencies of its history.

In 1985, Pearson addressed the *Congrés Internacional de Teatre a Catalunya* with a paper on 'The Creation of a Welsh Theatre' (Pearson 1986), a reworked version of which appeared in the first Brith Gof promotional booklet under the title 'Theatre in a Minority' (Pearson 1985).[24] In this essay, Pearson for the first time sets out in detail the company's artistic credo of developing a theatre practice which in form and content would represent what he perceived to be the distinct identity of the Welsh minority culture. The specifics of Welsh cultural identity are conceptualized by Pearson with the help of three notions which can be summarized as 'difference', as 'performance' and as 'locatedness'. In his argument Welshness appears as essentially different to both the culture of its dominant neighbour, England, and to the English-speaking culture of the industrial and urban areas of Wales itself[25]. Welsh-speaking Wales is described as a 'pre-industrial society' or 'traditional society', with 'small towns and villages', which are 'economically poor, based largely upon upland agriculture' (Pearson 1985: 3).[26] English-speaking Wales, identified with industrialization and urbanity, is not included in Pearson's definition of what constitutes the essence of Welshness.[27] According to

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erosion of an agricultural life style (*Boris* 1985), the hardships of emigration (*Ymfudwyr* 1983–5) and war (*Gernika!* 1993), and the decline of the coal industry in Wales (*Pandaemonium: The True Cost of Coal* 1987).

[24] The differences between the two versions are insignificant for Pearson's main line of argument. The paper, which was written for an international audience of scholars and artists, is more elaborate in its description of the Welsh situation, which Brith Gof may have regarded as unnecessarily detailed for a promotional booklet that addressed a largely Welsh readership. I have chosen to use the latter version as the basis for my discussion as it is more clearly written in the style of an artistic programme. I will refer to the text of the original paper only when the text deviates substantially from that of the booklet.

[25] For statistic information on the geographical spread of Welsh speakers in Wales see Bowie 1993.

[26] In order to establish Brith Gof, Pearson and Jones moved from Cardiff in the industrial south of the country to Aberystwyth, a small university town set in rural, predominantly Welsh-speaking West Wales.

[27] It is in this point where the version in the Brith Gof booklet deviates most significantly from the original text of the conference paper. The paper extends its discussion of Welshness to include the English-speaking South Wales valleys, the industrial heartland of the country, by declaring the political radicalism of the latter to be a cultural inheritance from the former, which for Pearson betrays their common (Welsh-speaking) ancestry: 'The valleys of the South have a reputation for radicalism and militancy. As material capitalism declines and the problems of the post-industrial era emerge, direct action is being taken to preserve jobs and communities. Perhaps this resistance springs from Welsh-speaking forebears whose other off-spring continue carrying out campaigns of passive resistance and civil disobedience to preserve the Welsh language and adequate social services in rural areas. [...] The pre-industrial may yet have something to teach the post-industrial.' (Pearson 1986: 267–8) Pearson appears

Pearson, the Welsh are a 'linguistic minority' with their 'own distinctive patterns of social and cultural life' and a 'strong sense of their own history and political and religious identity' (Pearson 1985: 3). Their different language plays an intrinsic role for the definition of this cultural identity: 'Of course, the language enshrines a particular way of looking at the world.' (Pearson 1985: 3) The particularity of world view refers above all to the cognitive and emotional relationship of the Welsh to the locations of their culture: Pearson mentions such concepts[28] as '"y filltir sgwâr" – the square mile of one's childhood, "y fro" – the intimate neighbourhood [...], and "hiraeth" – the nostalgic longing for one's native land' (Pearson 1985: 3) as linguistic manifestations of the deeply located nature of Welsh cultural identity.

Pearson's description of the cultural space 'Wales' as a stable hierarchy of significant locations resembles Foucault's definition of the pre-modern 'space of emplacement' (Foucault 1986: 22). Within this spatial order, identity was established as an identity of location[29], 'firmly located in particular places which housed stable cohesive communities of shared tradition and perspective' (cf. Carter, Donald and Squires 1993b: vii). As Carter et al. point out, '[t]he logics of universalism and, more recently, modernization and globalization have sought to represent localised identities as historical, regressive characteristics, and have worked to undermine the old allegiances of place and community. But the burgeoning of identity politics, and now nationalism, reveal a clear resistance to such universalizing strategies' (Carter, Donald et al. 1993b). Pearson's model of Welsh identity is conceptualized as such a strategy of resisting economic and cultural change: '[...] this is a society under threat [...], [...] pressures for change are commonly felt. Resistance comes naturally.' (Pearson 1985: 3) His

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to imply that due to the century-long process of Anglicisation in the wake of industrialisation, the remaining 'true' Welsh aspects of the English-speaking parts of Wales have been mostly hidden, but that they may re-emerge in an era which experiences the decline of the industrial. Yet, although English-speaking Wales is declared 'the other off-spring' of Welsh culture, it features only in so far as it retains traces of its Welsh-speaking heritage, and is thus not included in Pearson's definition of the essence of Welshness.

[28] In a policy document written six years later, Pearson calls these concepts 'the untranslatable, that which cannot be colonised' (Pearson 1991: 4). As concepts that cannot be translated, they guarantee for him the essential otherness of Welsh identity.

[29] An 'identity of location' here defines itself as essentially spatial in all its aspects – even with regard to its definition of history, which changes from that of a temporal diachrony to a more spatial synchrony. 'History is experienced as contemporaneous.' (Pearson 1985: 3)

commitment to traditional Welsh culture and its peripheral rural economy as a site of resistance does not allow him to acknowledge the actual implication of this economy in the geopolitical logic of industrial capitalism[30]. Instead, he regards it as being outside this logic altogether ('pre-industrial') and positioned as the radical 'other' to its development. In Pearson's opinion Welsh culture may thus offer a potential cure for the cultural devastation of post-industrialism: 'A traditional society experiences the particulars of change: we can see things happening. This singular viewpoint may be important to help understand what is happening in majority cultures in the West, where the deep sense of loss and displacement is widely felt though more difficult to locate.' (Pearson 1985: 3)

Welsh cultural identity is in Pearson's view also defined as essentially 'performative'. Pearson states, 'The Welsh are used to performing' (Pearson 1985: 3), and cites the importance of religious singing and preaching, oratory, poetry recitation[31], choral song and folk dancing in Wales as evidence for the performative nature of the culture.[32] Pearson's description contains obvious traces of anthropological models of cultural performance, often used to describe pre-modern, traditional societies. Particularly Singer's mimetic view of performance as an affirmation of cultural assumptions[33] seems to find an echo in Pearson, whose model implies that Welsh cultural identity exists essentially before its expression in performance, but requires repeated performing to allow the Welsh people to affirm their identification with it. Pearson explicates this function in regard to the Welsh language: 'the culture *maintains* its strength and vibrancy through the love for and *constant celebration* of its own language.' (Pearson 1985: 3,

[30] For a detailed discussion of the uneven economic development of geographic regions as a key feature of capitalism see Soja 1989, above all Chapter 4: 'Urban and Regional Debates: the First Round' (Soja 1989: 94–117).

[31] Pearson has to downplay the written literary aspects of Welsh culture in favour of its oral nature in order to emphasize its difference to a modern, literary and non-performative English culture: 'As befits an oral culture, poetry is composed for singing and speaking' (Pearson 1985: 3).

[32] For a full discussion of Welshness as performance see Trosset 1993. Trosset, an American anthropologist, investigates how the Welsh sense of self and society is centred around the view of 'persons as performers' (Trosset 1993: 170). This view is developed in what she calls 'culturally approved styles of performance' (Trosset 1993: 136), i.e. the competitions of the *eisteddfodau*, the religious modes of expression developed in chapel culture etc., which in turn become essentialized components of Welsh self-definition.

[33] See above Chapter 1.

emphasis added) The two main locations for this performative affirmation[34] are the chapel and the *eisteddfod*[35], 'the twin pillars of Welsh-speaking society' (Pearson 1985: 3), where the language is experienced through its performance in various traditional techniques of oratory (religious preaching and singing, and competitive singing, speaking and recitation, see Pearson 1985: 3).

Brith Gof's conception of a theatre which may similarly affirm Welsh cultural identity uses the same basic definitions of difference, performance and locatedness. Pearson proposes a radical argument which claims that in order to represent an identity which was previously excluded from representation in theatre, the apparatus of theatrical representation itself has to be changed. He bases his argument on an implicit distinction between the cultural values of 'theatre' and 'performance': whilst for him Welsh culture is essentially performative, it is also deeply non-theatrical. 'This is surely a reflection of the stern and strict Non-conformism which captured Welsh hearts and minds during the 18th and 19th Centuries. It frowned upon such trivial pursuits' (Pearson 1985: 3). In his essay 'theatre' takes on two different meanings: firstly, 'theatre' denotes a conventional theatrical practice, here associated with English culture and therefore inappropriate for an expression of Welshness; and secondly, it stands for the new theatre practice of Brith Gof, which attempts to reinvent the theatrical form out of the spirit of cultural performance. This distinction resembles the one made by Schechner between a conventional theatre aesthetics, which is regarded as both a historically and culturally limited practice, and an experimental theatrical practice, which embraces non-literary forms of performance.[36] In its first manifestation, theatre in Pearson's essay appears variously as part of the '"entertainment and leisure" industry', 'signified as a distinct mode of expression', governed by 'rules of decorum and prudence' (Pearson 1985: 3), withdrawn from reality to the 'proscenium arch and the

[34] This affirmation is performative in terms of Austin's speech-act theory: speaking a minority language like Welsh can regarded as a form of performative utterance in and of itself, as, beyond its constative properties, it enacts the survival of the language.
[35] 'Eisteddfod (p. eisteddfodau) Welsh language cultural gatherings held throughout Wales, throughout the year, culminating in the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol – the National Eisteddfod – an itinerant festival alternating between locations in North & South Wales, and claimed to be the largest cultural gathering in Europe.' (Brith Gof 1995: 9)
[36] See above Chapter 2.

creation of stage illusion' (Pearson 1985: 4), defined by 'naturalism and social realism' and featuring 'dialogue' and 'stage gesture' (Pearson 1985: 5). Pearson here merges four historically distinct characteristics of Western theatre, i.e. drama (as developed by the Greeks), the proscenium stage (as developed in the seventeenth century), naturalism (as the dominant style of nineteenth century bourgeois theatre) and commercialism (as developed in London's West End towards the end of the nineteenth century), into one definition which he equates with the dominant formal nature of 'English theatre'.[37] In his view, a culture defined by its difference, particularly by being different from English culture, requires for its expression a theatrical practice that is different from this literary, naturalist and commercialized aesthetics. Pearson consequently defines the traditional performative activities of Welsh culture (singing, preaching, story-telling, dancing, patterns of work) as 'building blocks' (Pearson 1985: 5) for a new Welsh theatre aesthetic. Such use of traditional cultural forms is a common instrument in the 'imaginative rediscovery' which Hall has identified for the project of revitalizing a hitherto suppressed cultural identity. Brith Gof, however, did not restrict themselves to a folkloristic notion of cultural authenticity. Instead, their work combined such 'authentic' forms with elements appropriated from other cultures. In most of their early productions, Brith Gof merged elements from traditional Welsh activities with elements taken from Asian theatre forms such as Nô, Kabuki or Balinese dance.[38] The company found a model for such intercultural practice in the contemporary avant-garde, namely in the works of theatre artists such as Grotowski and Barba. Their styles of theatre too combined elements of traditional cultural performances (folk customs, social rituals) with elements taken from the theatre of non-Western cultures. It is not the implicit universalism of such intercultural performance practice[39] that attracted Brith Gof to

[37] The amalgamation of ancient Greek, early modern and nineteenth century characteristics in Pearson's definition of modern theatre mirrors the different attempts to date the birth of modernity to either classical Greece, when the Western notion of the subject first took shape, the Renaissance, when the modern world view was first articulated, or the nineteenth century, when economic development led to the rise of artistic modernism. For different definitions of modernity see Welsch 1991.

[38] See Savill 1993: 10-51 for a detailed analysis of the influence of Asian theatre techniques on Brith Gof's early performance work.

[39] The implicit humanist universalism at the heart of much intercultural theatre practice, most notably in the works of Peter Brook, is now a well-rehearsed argument. See, for example, Fischer-Lichte's study of

non-Western theatre forms. It is what is perceived to be the radical difference of these forms, which emphasize the communal and non-scripted elements of theatrical practice, to the practices of a modern Western literary theatre which made intercultural performance work a valuable example for the company to follow. 'It is possible for a traditional society to embrace the exotic if it springs from similar roots.' (Pearson 1986: 272)[40] Rather than appropriating, mimicking or subverting dominant theatrical forms, all possible strategies for a post-colonial cultural project (cf. Bhabha 1994), Brith Gof created hybrids[41] of 'authentic' cultural forms and 'inauthentic' intercultural borrowings[42]. The radicalism involved in replacing the adoption of English theatre techniques prevalent in Welsh theatre at the time[43] with such hybrids is underlined by Cliff McLucas, a visual artist based in Wales who was to join the company a few years later:

> Brith Gof has always worked in this hybrid way, bringing at least two things together which normally don't collide; between the two, a spark ignites, an eternal irreconcilability, contemporary radical performance welded onto a very traditional non-theatrical culture.
>
> (McLucas in Savill 1993: 129)

How then did Brith Gof bring together the 'irreconcilability' of the familiar and the foreign, the authentic and the inauthentic so that both could become signifiers for Welsh cultural identity with which the audience could identify? The answer lies in Brith Gof's use of location. Whereas English theatre is performed in a 'circuit of municipal theatres'

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the semiotics of intercultural performance as an attempted reinvention of a universal theatrical language (Fischer-Lichte 1997: 147–157 and Fischer-Lichte 1989 or Shevtsova's discussion of the notion of universal communication at the heart of this work (Shevtsova 1993: 21–54). For a critique of such practice as a continuation of colonialist models of exchange based on economic and political inequality see Bharucha 1993.

[40] Pearson also mentions the influence of other rural cultures of Eastern or Southern Europe or South America on Brith Gof's theatre work (Pearson 1985: 5).

[41] This hybrid practice, which attempted to replace what was seen to be the enforced theatrical tradition of a colonizing majority with a radically other approach, is distinctly different from what Fischer-Lichte describes for the theatre of many 'Third World' countries, where the enforced theatrical tradition of the colonizing cultures is often re-appropriated rather than abolished altogether : 'For in the case of Third World countries, the combination of cultural elements [...] is the result of colonization. Thus, it functions more frequently as a kind of transitional phase by which the imposed foreign will be gradually eliminated.' (Fischer-Lichte 1997: 141)

[42] Savill calls this phase in Brith Gof's work one of 'Mythic Re-Incarnation and Re-Invention' (Savill 1993).

[43] See above.

(Pearson 1985: 3), Welsh theatre for Pearson must take place in non-theatre venues, 'places of *work*, *play* and *worship* [...], cathedrals, barns, houses and museums: in the arena-like configuration of cattle markets, in and around the pulpits of large chapels...' (Pearson 1996c: 2–3). Brith Gof's rejection of traditional theatre buildings was not merely based on the actual shortage of these in Wales. It is their symbolic function within a predominantly bourgeois, urban, literary, and individualist culture, for Pearson intrinsically bound up with Englishness, which made them inappropriate for the creation of a different Welsh theatre. Brith Gof's answer was to move into other locations, locations which in turn were regarded as deeply rooted in the particulars of Welsh culture. The company's understanding of what constitutes these particulars was clearly manifest in their choice of venues in which they staged their early work: barns, bull-rings, chapels, farmhouse-kitchens – Welshness appears as essentially rural, religious, domestic and communal.

For their early works, Brith Gof devised two ways of working in these non-theatre venues. The first was to build a mobile stage unit, complete with its own floor, seating and lighting, which could be placed into any available space. These units ensured a similarity of performance conditions in changing environments, enabling the company to tour widely and 'allowing detailed choreography for unchanging dimensions, extremes of action for a known surface, the proximity and touch of three-dimensional performers and the creation of complex imagery before a fixed arrangement of seating'. (Pearson 1997b: 95) The second variety of work consisted of unique events devised for specific locations. Amongst Brith Gof's early shows were performances created specially for Harlech Castle (*Branwen*, 1981), the village of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant (*Gwŷl y Beibl*, 1985), or St David's Cathedral (*Oherwydd y mae'r amser yn agos*, 1986). Underlying both ways of working, however, was the assumption that the fundamental relationship between theatrical performance and its location is one of 'natural' congruity: 'Things like *Rhydcymerau*, which we did in a disused cattle market in Lampeter, with the audience sitting on two sides where the farmers would have looked down onto the beasts when they went through, seemed entirely *natural*.' (Pearson in Kaye 1996c: 210;

emphasis added) Although the meaning of these performances was certainly affected by their placement, this style of work presents more a kind of 'theatre on location', rather than a site-specific practice in the true sense[44], as it treats the location as a given space which is used to 'frame' (in Goffman's terms) the performance culturally, but which in return remains largely unaffected by it. The possibility of activating other, potentially conflicting, meanings of a location through performance, which was to become central to Brith Gof's site-specific work a few years later, was here still inconceivable, as it might have introduced a level of possible criticism into the work which the company attempted to avoid for the sake of an affirmation of a hitherto marginalized identity: '[...] we must be careful how we criticise our own society lest we damage it further' (Pearson 1985: 3).

For Brith Gof, the different locations of Welsh theatre brought with them also a distinctive – i.e. non-English – form of social interaction, one which stressed the importance of communality over that of individuality. The company regarded them as buildings 'in which rural audiences would feel more at ease than in the rows of a darkened auditorium'. (Pearson 1996c: 2) This supposed easiness sprung from the fact that most of these were already sociopetal spaces[45], which had the primary function of bringing people together, a communal use which Welsh theatre merely needed to appropriate. Pearson goes even further in implying that the locations chosen are mostly venues for cultural performances and therefore already have an intrinsic spatial arrangement which is based on a relationship between performers and community. Brith Gof's performances in chapels used the spatial configuration of the preacher facing the congregation, and a show in a cattle mart placed the audience like buyers surrounding the spectacle of a livestock auction. If the form of communality was not suggested by the location itself, Brith Gof produced it with the help of the mobile stage unit. In these units the stage was always on a central axis around which the audience was grouped, expressing not only a wish for intimacy and three-dimensionality, as claimed by

44 See below.

45 American psychiatrist Humphry Osmond defines sociopetal spaces as arenas in which people are brought together, as distinguished from sociofugal spaces, whose function is to keep people apart, see Elam 1980: 64.

Pearson above, but also the desire to place the theatre at the centre of the community, and to make it the mirror of an audience which is deeply familiar: 'Our audience is specific and finite.[...] Our audiences are not faceless; we may know many of them by name.' (Pearson 1985: 3) 'Real' locations thus gave Brith Gof two elements to work with: their symbolic function[46], i.e. the cultural significance of the location for a rural Welsh community, and their social function, i.e. an audience configuration modelled on its concomitant mode of social interaction. The familiarity of both elements was meant to help stimulate the spectators' identification with the proceedings on stage by marking them as relevant to their sense of cultural identity.

I would like to explicate this complex interplay of location and identification in Brith Gof's early work by taking a closer look at one of the principal shows of this period, *Rhydcymerau* (1984). *Rhydcymerau* dealt with the influence of the British government's afforestation programme on rural Welsh communities in the 1950s. The Second World War had made manifest a shortage of timber in Britain. In the post-war years the Forestry Commission began to establish vast plantations of cash-crop conifers, many of them on large upland areas in Wales. The enforced selling of land for the purpose of planting trees for future military efforts and the ensuing demise of the local, Welsh-speaking community in these areas became a major issue for the Welsh nationalist movement in the 1960s and 1970s. One of the regions worst affected by the afforestation was the area around Rhydcymerau (near Llandeilo) in Mid-Wales. The place became a potent symbol for what was regarded as the gradual disappearance of Welsh culture for the sake of England's economic and military interests[47], made

46 Fischer-Lichte argues that 'we can define the symbolic function signified by the theater building quite generally as the theater's social function. This can be fulfilled in a variety of forms, depending on whether the function involved is sacred, representative, political, pedagogical, entertaining, or compensatory in nature, etc. If, by contrast, theater is performed in a space which was set up to serve other purposes, this space itself is to be taken less as a sign which could be interpreted with regard to the theater than as the specific fact that precisely this space is being used for the performance of theater.' (Fischer-Lichte 1992: 97).

47 Other places in Wales of a similar symbolic status are the RAF bombing school at Penyberth in the heartland of the Welsh-speaking Llŷn Peninsula, which was the target of a famous arson attack by Welsh authors Saunders Lewis, D.J.Williams and Lewis Valentine in 1936; and the valley of Tryweryn in Merioneth, a Welsh-speaking community of particular cultural significance, which was drowned in 1965 by the Liverpool Corporation against wide-spread Welsh protest to provide water for the burgeoning population of the English city, one of six water reservoirs created in Wales after the Second Word War. For a historical account of the events surrounding these locales see Davies 1994: 592, 633–34 and 664; for an account of the role of these locales for the Welsh nationalist movement see Evans 1991 .

prominent by Welsh-language poet Gwenallt (i.e. David James Jones) in a poem of the same name:

> Plannwyd egin coed y trydydd rhyfel
> Ar dir Esgeir-ceir a meysydd Tir-bach
> Ger Rhydcymerau.
> [...]
> Ac erbyn hyn nid oes yno ond coed,
> A'u gwreiddiau haerllug yn sugno'r hen bridd:
> Coed lle y bu cymdogaeth,
> Fforest lle bu ffermydd,
> Bratiaith Saeson y De lle bu barddoni a diwinydda,
> Cyfarth cadnoid lle bu cri plant ac ŵyn.
> Ac yn y tywyllwch yn ei chanol hi
> Y mae ffau'r Minotawros Seisnig;
> Ac ar golfenni, fel ar groesau,
> Ysgerbydau beirdd, blaenoriaid, gweinidogion ac athrawon Ysgol Sul
> Yn gwynnu yn yr haul,
> Ac yn cael eu golchi gan y glaw a'u sychu gan y gwynt.
>
> (Gwenallt (David James Jones) 1951)[48]

In *Rhydcymerau*, Brith Gof used Gwenallt's writings and those of another Welsh-language author, D.J.Williams, to connect the disappearance of a place to the death of a culture which had been intrinsically linked to that locale.[49] The show was devised for the National Eisteddfod in Llanbedr-Pont-Steffan (Lampeter) in August 1984 and was staged in the town's disused cattle mart. As described above, the audience was placed on two sides of the gallery from where farmers would have looked down on the livestock auction in the arena below. The venue thus provided Brith Gof with a symbolic function and a social function that were both closely related to Welsh culture. But, as Pearson points out, the location also suggested a different mode of signification:

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48 'Near Rhydcymerau/ On the land of Esgair-ceir and the fields of Tir-bach,
They have planted the saplings to be the trees of the third war. / [...]
And by this time there's nothing there but trees./ Impertinent roots suck dry the old soil:
Trees where neighbourhood was, / And a forest that once was farmland.
Where was verse-writing and scripture/ is the South's bastardized English.
The fox barks where once cried lambs and children, / And there, in the dark midst,
Is the den of the English minotaur; / And on the trees, as if on crosses,
The bones of poets, deacons, ministers, and teachers of Sunday school, / Bleach in the sun,
And the rain washes them, and the winds lick them dry.' (Gwenallt (David James Jones) 1983)

49 Brith Gof have come back to the stories surrounding such 'disappeared places' in Wales many times in their work, most notably in *Tri Bywyd* (1995) and in Mike Pearson's recent *Theatre/Archaeology* projects (Pearson and Shanks 1997a), which both returned to the same afforested area around Lampeter. For the differences in the approach to these places in their later work see below.

> Theatre need not be signified as a distinct mode of expression. *Rhydcymerau* was created in a disused cattle market which provided a natural auditorium. Such locations, free from rules of decorum and prudence, allow us to use techniques unthinkable in a theatre. In *Rhydcymerau* two carpenters worked throughout the performance, their sawing and hammering counterpointing the patterns of poems and stories concerning rural decay, blurring the distinction between work and performance.
>
> (Pearson 1985: 3–4)

The rules of decorum and prudence that Pearson refers to here are not so much theatre-specific regulatory practices, such as fire regulations or rules concerning audience numbers, than conventions of good or acceptable practice, which prevent theatre from using techniques that could endanger or inconvenience audience members or performers. Pearson seems to go even further by implying that these rules also regulate the way in which theatrical representation 'works'. He appears to suggest that the use of real ('natural') locations such as the cattle mart in *Rhydcymerau* not merely allow for the inclusion of 'real' activities in performance, but actually enable their being recognized as real by obfuscating the distinction between reality ('work') and its representation ('performance'). The same applies for the inclusion of objects: *Rhydcymerau* featured a number of everyday objects taken from rural life, amongst them a small pair of shoes, an old sewing machine, a washtub and a clothes-line. 'It was important that we used real things, water, children's clothes, shirts hung on a line.' (Lis Hughes Jones as quoted in Savill 1993: 112) Their reality was of such importance to Brith Gof's political project because the objects and activities presented in *Rhydcymerau* were beginning to be absent from the everyday life of the Welsh people. As Bhabha has argued for the development of national identity, '[t]he scraps, patches and rags of daily life must be repeatedly turned into the signs of a coherent national culture [...] (Bhabha 1994: 145). In order for the scraps of daily life to be recognized as signs of cultural identity, however, they had to undergo a form of semiotic transformation, described by Pearson as a two-step process. The first step concerned the materiality of the signifiers. One of theatre's unique semiotic characteristics, and the basis of its mimetic function, is the use of 'real'

material signifiers to represent a signified.[50] In conventional Western theatre, however, their material nature and their everyday use is regarded as secondary to the abstract process of signification.[51] Pearson proposes that the presencing of the objects and activities in *Rhydcymerau* achieved a different form of meaning-production, one which worked through the experience of their materiality, rather than through their suppression. Welsh politician Dafydd Elis Thomas has recognized this aspect of Brith Gof's work: 'By working in a very direct, material way, audiences are compelled to experience the events. It is not complicated symbols that they make, but clear unambiguous material signs.' (Elis Thomas as quoted in Brith Gof 1985: 1) Implied in Brith Gof's use of real locations is the belief that these enable a form of reception for a largely theatre-illiterate audience which is based on experience rather than abstract interpretation, and which ensures a direct and unambiguous form of affective identification with the familiar materiality of the objects and activities of their daily life. In order for these to become meaningful 'signs' for cultural identity, rather than merely the quotidian objects and activities that they are, they have to be defamiliarized. It is only through establishing a semiotic differential [*différentielle signifiante* to use Kristeva's term] between the familiar and the non-familiar that representation can be achieved and meaning established.[52] Pearson describes this process of defamiliarization as one of manipulation and mutation:

> [Brith Gof] are drawn naturally to a theatre of physical expression and visual imagery. Yet the Welsh are a verbal not a visual people. To create the visual dimension in our work [...] our props are the implements and simple possessions of rural peoples manipulated in unexpected ways to create strong and eloquent metaphors; our physical rhythms are the rhythms of work, play and worship, mutated, given new emphasis.
>
> (Pearson 1985: 5)

[50] Fischer-Lichte describes theatre's unique semiotic status as follows: 'Thus, in a certain sense, theater involves the "doubling up" of the culture in which that theatre is played: the signs engendered by theater respectively denote those signs produced by the corresponding cultural systems. Theatrical signs are therefore always signs of signs which are characterized by the fact that they may have the same material constitution as the primary signs which they signify [...].' (Fischer-Lichte 1992: 9).

[51] The semioticians of the Prague School describe the semiotization of the object in theatre as being reliant on the suppression of its material nature and its practical function: 'while in real life the utilitarian function of an object is usually more important than its signification, on a theatrical set the signification is all important' (Brusák as quoted in Elam 1980: 8)

[52] Turner has described the need for defamiliarization in the establishment of liminality: 'in liminality people "play" with the elements of the familiar and defamiliarize them.' (Turner 1982a: 27).

In *Rhydcymerau* the objects and activities of the everyday ('the visual'), now defamiliarized into potential signifiers, were juxtaposed with the classic writings of Gwenallt and D.J. Williams ('the verbal') to form metaphors[53] for Welsh cultural identity. The audience was expected to identify the familiar (verbal) with the unfamiliar (visual) aspects of the performance in order to establish the same affective identification with the latter, and in return also reaffirm their relationship with the former. In Bhabha's terms (Bhabha 1994: 145), this process can be described as the combination of the 'pedagogical' (as the established narratives of Welsh literature) and the 'performative' (as its recursive presencing) that for him structures all cultural identification, and that allow for the establishment of an affective relationship with both the (historical) narratives and the (contemporaneous) everyday objects. Houston describes this process of identification as one of synaesthesia:

> The perception of 'synesthesia' is comparable to perceiving a sensation in one part of the body when another part is stimulated; thus, the poems and songs of Welsh folklore are here meant to stimulate certain passions about the everyday objects and actions of the people. [...] In the hybrid between the visual and the vocal signification of Welsh cultural identity there emerges a space for public reflexivity toward the 'found' elements which make up this hybrid. [...] The potential for a theatre event with the spectators, where this performative *act* becomes a process of constituting cultural identity, is an extension of the performative *presence* Pearson discovered in the people's experience of the oratory in the chapel and at the *eisteddfod.*
>
> (Houston 1998: 212–13)

There are, however, testimonies of audience reactions to *Rhydcymerau* that reveal that it was precisely the performative presencing of the familiar Welsh poems and songs which created an uneasiness in the Welsh audience:

> It would be fair to also say that many of the audience attending *Rhydcymerau* (1984) had an intimate knowledge of the eponymous poem and suffered an embarrassment concerning the style of its rendition, and a feeling of disquiet about the accent of a learner[54] (NR) [i.e. *Nic Ros*] which seemed to disrupt the rhythm structures compared to the familiar, traditional ways of recitation.
>
> (Savill 1993: 113)

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[53] For a discussion of the role of metaphors in the constitution of cultural identity see Hastrup 1995: 32–8.

[54] 'Learner' refers to a learner of the Welsh language as opposed to a native speaker.

Here a conflict arose between the performative presencing of the poem in the particular voice and accent and rhythm of the performer and the spectators' cultural expectations of this performance. The affirmation of cultural identity in cultural performances such as the competitions of the *eisteddfod* relies on the mimetic attempt to replicate *as closely as possible* a culturally established, or assumed 'original', form of performative presencing. Rather than providing a space for the audience to identify with Welsh cultural identity, the performance thus opened the possibility of critique and conflict. The conflict arose because the particular defamiliarization of the poem through its rendition by a learner of the Welsh language[55] created a *supplement* that disrupted the psychic 'Real' of the audience's 'intimate knowledge' of the established narratives of Welsh cultural identity. It appears that Brith Gof undermined their own intention to affirm a community of spectators – in this case defined by their linguistic competence – by confronting the coherence of the thus defined spectatorial 'we' with its 'other', a learner of the Welsh language. The conflict hinted at the internal differences that exist within Welsh cultural identity – differences of age, class, race or linguistic ability. It also reflected the make-up of the company itself: both artistic director Mike Pearson, an immigrant from England, and performer Nic Ros, who was born into an Anglo-Welsh family, were learners of the Welsh language. *Rhydcymerau* expressed not so much the intention to reaffirm an established notion of Welsh cultural identity, than a hidden desire to create an imaginary 'we' in which the members of Brith Gof themselves could partake.

Although the problematic reception of *Rhydcymerau* remained an isolated case among the responses to Brith Gof's early shows, it hints at a fundamental contradiction

[55] For research on the relationship between linguistic competence and Welsh cultural identity with particular reference to learners of the Welsh language see Bowie 1993; Bowie and Davies 1992. Bowie offers a differentiated study of the geographical differences in the status of learners in Wales, and summarizes: 'To qualify as Welsh, in the eyes of many native Welsh speakers, a person should satisfy a number of closely related criteria. These include speaking Welsh as a first language, being born in Wales, preferably in a Welsh-speaking area, having relatives who are well known within the small Welsh-speaking world and, among those who have "lost" the language, a fluency in Welsh as a second language. No one of these factors will alone suffice, and some combinations are more likely to win acceptance than others. Those who fall short according to these indicators of Welshness can find themselves classified as "English", or as "not quite Welsh". (Bowie 1993: 177)

in the company's aesthetic practice at the time: the tension between the desire to represent an 'origin', in this case the 'Real' of Welsh cultural identity, and the dependence on mimesis and repetition for representation, which can never fully reproduce the 'Real'. Phelan, for whom performance expresses the 'impossibility of securing the Real' (Phelan 1993: 192)[56], has described this contradiction as the failure of realist theatre:

> Corporeal bodies amid real objects: realistic theatre employs properties which reproduce the effects of the real. These props index the failure of representation to reproduce the real. The real inhabits the space that representation cannot reproduce – and in this failure theatre relies on repetition and mimesis to produce substitutes for the real. Behind the effects of the real is a desire to experience a first cause, an origin, an authentic beginning which can only fail because the desire is experienced and understood from and through repetition.
>
> (Phelan 1993: 126)

Transferring this problem to the arena of the political, Bhabha has described a similar tension that exists in all narrations of cultural (or national) identity between the pedagogical and the performative, a tension which he identifies as a 'split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical [based on the pre-given or constituted historical origin in the past], and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative [which serves to demonstrate its contemporaneity].' (Bhabha 1994: 145-6) It appears that Brith Gof got caught in the liminal space of irreconcilability between the pedagogical/ familiar/ 'origin' (cultural performance) and the performative/ foreign/ repetition (theatrical performance).

Rather than reorganizing the apparatus of theatrical representation by moving it into 'real' locations in order to allow it to represent the 'Real' of Welsh cultural identity, Brith Gof thus reproduced its representational conventions. The company identified the spatial condition of theatrical representation and identification as being primarily dependent on the location of theatre, rather than on a complex interplay between the three spatial orders of theatrical representation as identified by Lyotard (Lyotard 1997 (1977): see above). Indeed, Brith Gof's early shows retained the spatial distinction

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[56] See Chapter 2.

between the realm of theatre and that of 'reality', and the differentiation between stage and auditorium. The desire to reorder or challenge theatrical representation by moving into non-theatrical locations is exemplary for much experimental performance work since the 1960s, namely that of the so-called 'environmental theatre'[57], in whose tradition Brith Gof clearly stands. Chaudhuri criticizes its inherent contradictions:

> One direction from which this ideology might be glimpsed is in the environmental theatre's self-characterization as radical and subversive, and particularly in its insistence on being the opposite of naturalism. [...] The relationship between naturalism and environmentalism is, in fact, a continuum that has been disguised as a rupture, and the motivations behind the disguise – the unconscious motivations, to be sure – derive from its occlusive ideology.
>
> (Chaudhuri 1995: 23, 26–7)

Chaudhuri detects behind this continuity from naturalism to environmentalism a 'hidden discourse of home and belonging' (Chaudhuri 1995: 27). For Pearson, too, their practice is diametrically opposed to naturalism and realism in theatre, which for him are mere stylistic choices: 'Naturalism and social realism are not automatic choices for performance style.' (Pearson 1985: 5) But rather than abolishing realism, Brith Gof 's early works betray an implicit acceptance of the idea of representation as inherited from realism, attempting to encourage a spectatorial affective relationship with the 'origin' of Welshness through a form of mimetic and specular identification.[58]. It is the desire to belong to the 'home' of Welsh cultural identity that is at the heart of Brith Gof's concept of theatrical location.

[57] The term 'environmental theatre' was coined by Richard Schechner: 'Environment can be understood in two different ways. First, there is what one can do with and in a space; secondly, there is the acceptance of a given space. In the first case, one creates an environment by transforming a space; in the second case, one negotiates with an environment, engaging in a scenic dialogue with a space.' (Schechner 1969b (1968): 178). See also Schechner 1973a.

[58] For a discussion of the realist mode of spectatorial identification see Diamond 1992: 'Dramatic realism produces precisely those conditions that allow for the creation of a smugly self-identifying spectator/ critic and the creation in the late nineteenth century of an aggressively bourgeois we.' (Diamond 1992: 393)

II Site

A shift of focus from a conceptualization of theatrical space as 'location' to one of 'site' in Brith Gof's work became manifest with *Gododdin* in 1988, the company's first show that can be described as 'large-scale site-specific'.[59] The production coincided with Brith Gof's growing interest in the 'other' of Welsh cultural identity, in the urban, industrial and bilingual aspects of Welsh culture.[60] The introduction to the second Brith Gof booklet, published in 1988 just before the première of the piece, describes the change as follows:

> Three years ago, we published our first booklet on the work of Brith Gof. The ensuing period has been a time of exciting growth and development during which the scale and nature of our work has changed markedly. [...] Our performance work has diversified, with greater concentration on the creation of special events for particular locations, what is now known as site-specific work, and greater emphasis on music, using the latest techniques of sampling and recording. [61]
>
> (Brith Gof 1988: 1)

Accordingly, Brith Gof's artistic manifesto had undergone few, but significant changes from the one published three years earlier. These alterations concern primarily the company's increased attention to the 'use of original arrangements of audience and of architectural space', and to 'large-scale, site-specific events devised for particular locations and occasions', taking inspiration from and referring directly to the surrounding architecture (Brith Gof 1988: 2). The most important modification to their artistic

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59 Although Brith Gof had created special events for particular locations before – see above– it was only with *Gododdin*, under the influence of scenographer Cliff McLucas, that Brith Gof became interested in the full implications of both site and scale in their work. Pearson himself has often emphasized the role of this production as a marker for the beginning of a new phase in their work: 'So we were a small company working mainly in rural contexts. And then suddenly in December 1988 we made this [i.e. *Gododdin*] and everything changed!' (Pearson 1997c: 3). Most critical evaluations of Brith Gof's theatre work (Koch 1998, Houston 1998) follow him in dating a major shift in the company's aesthetics to the year 1988. Only Savill fixes this change a little earlier, with the production of *Du a Gwyn* (*Black and White*) in 1986: exploring the role of political propaganda, live performers interacted with projected film, which for Savill marked the beginning of a more 'technological and consciously post-modernist phase' (Savill 1993: 224) in Brith Gof's work. In general, artistic practices seldom changes overnight, and earlier works often carry the seeds of a later development. *Du a Gwyn* certainly anticipated the more technological, self-referential shows of the later period. But *Gododdin* introduced a completely new spatial concept to Brith Gof's practice.

60 For *Gododdin*, the company moved to Cardiff, the capital city of Wales, which is located in the predominantly English-speaking and industrialized southern part of the country.

61 The greater emphasis on music and site-specific scenography in Brith Gof's work led to the appointment of composer John E.R.Hardy and scenographer Cliff McLucas in 1989 as artistic co-directors of the company.

programme is the insertion of a mere four words that nevertheless sum up Brith Gof's changing attitude towards Welsh cultural identity. Whereas in 1985, the company's aims were described as follows: 'to develop a new, vibrant and distinctive theatre tradition in Wales, one which is relevant and responsive to the perceptions, experience, aspirations and concerns of a minority culture' (Brith Gof 1985: 2), the booklet of 1988 reads instead: 'one which is relevant, responsive *and challenging* to the perceptions, experience, aspirations and concerns of a *small nation*' (Brith Gof 1988: 3; emphasis added). The new description of Wales as a small nation rather than a minority culture indicates that Brith Gof's understanding of Welshness had shifted from a cultural and linguistic determination to a political and geographical one, which allowed for the incorporation of the English-speaking, industrial and urban aspects that had previously been excluded from Brith Gof's definition of Welsh cultural identity. And, most importantly, the role of theatre in relation to this extended concept of Welsh cultural identity for Brith Gof is no longer one of affirmation, but also one of challenge.

It is possible to speculate about what had motivated this change. The economic problems of the 1980s had affected the whole of Wales across the divides of language, geography and industry. In 1984, at the height of Thatcherism in Britain, the bitter protest of the Miner's Strike and the severe poverty it provoked caused the Welsh nationalists to express their solidarity with the South Wales miners.[62] And the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl in 1986, which caused long-lasting problems for the farming industry in Wales, had made painfully obvious that every culture, however marginalised, is always implicated in the globality of economical development and ecological change.[63] But it was not merely their 'concern about the isolation of the traditional culture, and of

[62] 'At times, the strike appeared to be a Wales-wide crusade: the miners were assisted by the quarrymen of Gwynedd and the farmers of Ceredigion, and the nationalists – particularly Dafydd Elis Thomas, the president of Plaid Cymru since 1983 – were among the staunchest of their supporters.' (Davies 1994: 684) The increasing support for the Welsh nationalist party Plaid Cymru in the English-speaking post-industrial regions of South Wales is another strong indicator for the growing solidarity among Welsh-language and English-language Wales, motivated by their joint feeling of being politically, culturally and economically marginalized by England.

[63] 'One of the most significant changes to have affected the Welsh in recent years has been Chernobyl. There are still Welsh farmers who cannot sell their radioactive sheep. It's brought a great awareness to Welsh consciousness that we must no longer isolate ourselves against issues. It's not enough to see ourselves as isolated.' (Dafydd Elis Thomas as quoted in Murray 1991: 52)

the rural people's relationship to the rest of the world' (Houston 1998: 220) which initiated a change in Brith Gof's attitude towards Welshness. It was also the growing realisation of the internal differentiation within Welsh identity itself that motivated it. Cliff McLucas, who as Brith Gof's newly appointed scenographer and artistic co-director was the main instigator of the company's ideas on site-specificity at the time, expressed this realisation in an interview with Charmian Savill on the occasion of the European tour of *Gododdin* in 1990:

> I know many young Welsh speakers in the arts who cannot associate their belief in what they do with 'being Welsh', being of an essentially reactionary and repressive notion of 'Welshness' clustered around a collection of cultural and historical customs. [...] There is an increasing groundswell of criticism from within the heartland, implying that Brith Gof has somehow stopped being Welsh. I think it is the tightrope the company has to walk. The idea of an authentic Welshness which speaks for the heartland is a myth. However, being Welsh does mean something.
>
> (Savill 1990: 26–7)

With this statement McLucas distances himself implicitly from Brith Gof's previous understanding of Welsh identity. He contradicts Mike Pearson's former belief, articulated in his essay of 1985, that the Welsh are one homogenous people, unified by their language, their common history and their shared cultural codes, by pointing at the internal differences (here in the form of generational differences) that divide Welsh culture.[64] McLucas's observations have obvious affinities with Stuart Hall's model of a non-essentialist view of cultural identity:

> This second position recognises that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant *difference* which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather – since history has intervened – 'what we have become'. We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity', without acknowledging its other side – the ruptures and discontinuities [...].
>
> (Hall 1990: 225)

It is important to note that Brith Gof's conception of Welsh cultural identity continued to be articulated along the lines of 'difference', 'performance' and 'locatedness'. The company still saw Welsh culture as being different from English culture. Indeed, their resistance to what they believed to be the English colonisation of Welsh culture

[64] For a discussion on 'international difference' as expressed in Welsh literature see also Thomas 1992.

became the main thematic preoccupation of their work at the time[65]. This difference, however, no longer appeared as an essentialized, pure otherness, but as the result of a particular history, which had also created the '*Présence*' (to use Hall's term) of English culture within Wales. Welshness changed from something that was to be maintained and affirmed in performance to something that could also be negotiated and, more importantly, challenged performatively. Whereas their early work had represented cultural identity as the *object* of cultural erosion, their new productions focused instead on the *process* of cultural domination and devastation as defining aspects of Welsh cultural identity. Furthermore, McLucas's quote indicates that the company's idea of Welsh cultural identity was now conceptualized as different also from some 'repressive' and 'reactionary' aspects of Welshness, i.e. from the traditionalist, rural side of Welsh culture which previously for them had been at the very heart of its definition. Consequently, Brith Gof no longer looked to traditional folk culture alone as evidence for the performative aspects of Welshness, but also to the role of new media, such as television, film and electronic music, as performative modes for its expression.[66]

The change in Brith Gof's understanding of what constitutes the locations in which Welsh cultural identity is negotiated became obvious in the choice of venues in which they staged their work at the time: these included railway stations (*Pax*, Aberystwyth 1991), disused car factories (*Gododdin*, Cardiff 1988), and abandoned iron foundries (*Haearn*, Tredegar 1992) [67]. The difference between these venues and the locations of the early productions is not merely one of scale, as Houston suggests (Houston 1998: 221). With *Gododdin*, Brith Gof also began to work in different *types* of locations, in what we may call the architectural remnants of Wales' industrial past. Not only do these

65 *Y Pen Bas Y Pen Dwfn* (Television production, 1995) combined extracts from Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* with the story of the drowning of the valley of Tryweryn by the Liverpool Corporation in 1965 (see above) as two narratives of English colonialism. Brith Gof often referred to Wales as 'England's first colony' (Pearson 1996b: 5).

66 'Videotape, electronic music and film are immensely helpful: they help us to exist within a spectrum of expression congruent with the experience of our audience.' (Pearson in Savill 1990: 22) Brith Gof at the time began to acknowledge that the Welsh-language community had become a very media-literate culture through the introduction of its own television channel, S4C, in 1982.

67 During their site-specific phase Brith Gof also worked in 'conventional' performance spaces such as the black box theatre of Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff or the large, raised concert hall stage of St David's Hall in Cardiff.

locales have a different history from the rural locations used previously, their history is also not as easily available through the established discourses of Welsh cultural identity. Rather than having a clear and unequivocal symbolic function, they are the products of complex and often ambivalent economical, political and cultural developments. For example, Houston has identified the many factors that informed McLucas's choice of the iron foundry at the Old British Coal Works in Tredegar, South Wales, as a site for *Haearn*: 'Briefly these are: *history* – international, national, and local; *politics* – those to do with socialism and communism on an international scale, those to do with how socialism and communism relate to Welsh nationalism; *culture* – language, work, community; and economics – the commodities of iron, steel, and coal.' (Houston 1998: 232–3) Brith Gof themselves began to call these venues 'sites' rather than locations. The existence of these places within a complex network of historical, political, cultural and economical relationships complies with Foucault's use of the term: 'The site is defined by relations of proximity between points or elements; formally, we can describe these relations as series, trees, or grids.' (Foucault 1986: 23) The cultural space 'Wales' no longer resembles a pre-modern 'space of emplacement' (Foucault 1986: 22), but a postmodern space of 'relations among sites' (Foucault 1986: 23). Within this spatial order, identity is established as a differential, contingent on its (changing) connections and negotiations.

Their implication within a complex relational space also changed the nature of the relationship between site and performance, which could no longer be conceptualized as one of 'naturalness'. Instead, it was endlessly problematized, reworked and elaborated in both Brith Gof's practical and theoretical explorations of 'site-specificity'[68] Although

[68] Art historian Danto claims that the expression *site-specific* 'entered the art-world discourse primarily in connection with Richard Serra's controverted *Tilted Arc*' (Danto 1995: 198). Serra's famous response to the public debate and legal battle over the removal of his sculpture in 1981 is often used as a definition of the term: 'To move the work is to destroy the work' (as quoted in Kaye 2000: 2). Site-specific art is thus an art work that is defined in relation to its location. With its roots in Minimalist sculpture of the 1960s, it expresses precisely what Michael Fried has criticized as Minimalism's 'theatricality': the incursion of the time and space of the viewing experience into the interpretation of the art work. In a recent volume, which charters the development of site-specific art from its origins in the 1960s to contemporary installation and performance art, Kaye defines site-specific art practice not merely as dependent on its actual physical location, but also on its position in relation to the discourses which 'all inform what "it" can be said to *be*. Site-specificity, then, can be understood in terms of this process, while a "site-specific work" might articulate and define itself through properties, qualities or meanings produced in specific

their approach grew in sophistication over the years, it is possible to summarize the basic principles thatguided the company's site-specific work from 1988 to 1995[69]. The relationship between site and performance appears variously as that of 'host' (site) to 'ghost' (performance) [McLucas in Kaye 2000: 53], or that of the 'found'[70] (site) to the 'fabricated' (performance) [Pearson]:

> site specific performances [*sic*] are conceived for, and conditioned by, the particulars of *found* spaces, (former) *sites* of work, play and worship. They make manifest, celebrate, confound or criticise location, history, function, architecture, micro-climate... They are an interpenetration of the *found* and the *fabricated*. They are inseparable from their sites, the only contexts within which they are 'readable'.
>
> (Pearson in McLucas and Pearson, without date: 2)

Whilst the earlier 'theatre on location' treated the location as a given space that was used to 'frame' the performance culturally, but which in return remained largely unaffected by it, Brith Gof's site-specific works created a mutual interrogation of performance and site. McLucas subsequently termed the phrase 'placeevent'[71] (see Kaye 2000: 52) to underline their interdependence. The company's site-specific works took a particular site as a starting point, but they never merely animated the history of the building. Instead, they presented, as Mike Pearson later puts it, a 'complex superimposition and co-existence of a number of narratives and architectures, historical and contemporary' (Pearson 1997b: 96). As Kaye has pointed out, site-specificity in this sense not only

relationships between an "object" or "event" and a position it occupies.' (Kaye 2000: 1). In response to Fried, Kaye proposes that site-specificity is linked to the development of performance and its incursion into visual art and architecture. Consequently, Kaye is less interested in identifying particular types of locations or formal approaches, than in revealing common strategies: 'site-specific practices are identified with a *working over* of the production, definition and *performance* of place.' (Kaye 2000: 3)

69 The following site-specific shows were created during this time: *Gododdin* (1988–1989), *Los Angeles* (1990–1992), *Pax* (1990–1991), *Haearn* (1992), *Y Pen Bas Y Pen Dwfn* (Television production, 1995), *Tri Bywyd* (1995).

70 The term 'found' goes back to Marcel Duchamp's concept of the 'ready-made': 'The "found", in this sense, is recognized as a resistance to formal resolution, and in a certain *excess* discovered in an awareness of the breaching of a defining limit or boundary.' (Kaye 1996d: 63). Schechner first used the term 'found space' in relation to theatrical practice: 'The very opposite of total transformation of space is found space. The principles here are very simple: (1) the given elements of any space – its architecture, textural qualities, acoustics, and so on, are to be explored, not disguised; (2) the random ordering of space is valid; (3) the function of the scenery, if used at all, is to point up, not disguise or transform the space; (4) the spectators may suddenly and unexpectedly create new spatial possibilities'. (Schechner 1969b (1968): 182).

71 This use of the term 'place' seems to owe more to Schechner than de Certeau, on which Kaye places his model: de Certeau distinguishes between space (*espace*) and place (*lieu*) by declaring '*space is a practiced place*' (de Certeau 1988: 117), whereas Schechner claims: 'The transformation of space into place is at the heart of the construction of a theatre' (Schechner 1977: 110).

refers to a position within an actual physical location, but can be understood as a positioning in relation to political, aesthetic, geographical, institutional, or other discourses, which all 'inform what "it" can be said to *be*' (Kaye 2000: 1). In practice this meant that the particulars of a building (e.g. its history, its usage, its shape, its context) were thoroughly researched by Brith Gof and then combined with other related, but not necessarily congruous material to form the basis for the work. For example, in *Haearn (Iron)* (1992), historical film footage of steel-making in South Wales was combined with the Greek myths of Hephaestus and Prometheus, first person accounts of the Industrial Revolution, Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*, her letters, journals and diaries, and chronicles of the development of medicine and industrial science in the nineteenth century, to form a heterogeneous body of material relating to the theme of the making of industrial man and woman. This material was then transformed into several so-called 'architectures'[72], dramaturgical structures in time and space, each of which were expressed through a different medium (design, physical performance, libretto, musical score, narrative, etc.). The various elements of the performance were created independently and then combined at a late date in the rehearsal process. In these works the company also developed a sophisticated bilingual technique in a 'truer reflection of the linguistic composition of the nation' (Pearson 1997b: 90).[73] *Haearn* used an eclectic

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72 McLucas, who originally trained in architecture, defines the use of the term as follows: 'it's a way for me to try and deal with the inner skeleton, or structures, of a piece of work. It can literally be an architecture, working within a building, or it can be the [...] relationship between the software, if you like, the performers, the audience, performer to performer, performer to audience, audience to audience' (Brith Gof 1995: 18).

73 In an article for Welsh magazine *Tu Chwith*, Pearson discusses the use of bilingualism in performance, referring to both the use of two verbal languages (Welsh and English) and the juxtaposition of the two languages of the stage (the 'dramatic text' and the 'performance text'). 'Yng Nghymru, mae gennym gyfle amheuthun: mae'r gynulleidfa ddwyieithog – a medrwn gymryd yn ganiataol fod pawb sy'n siarad Cymraeg yn ddwy-eithog – yn clywed dwy iaith, sy'n medru arwain rhywun i ofyn pam fod rhywfaint o wybodaeth naratifaidd yn cael ei drosglwyddo i un iaith yn hytrach na'r lall (cerdd dafod i'r Gymraeg a data gwyddonol i'r Saesneg?). Lyw y gynulleidfa uniaith Saesneg un linell ar ei phen ei hun, a theimlo ei bod yn rhan o'r chwarae ac wedi ei hymddiethrio ar yr un pryd, gyda'r Gymraeg yn gweithredu fel math ar *felisma*. Mae'r cyfochri ieithyddol yma yn cynnig croesdoriad o ddehongliadau sydd efallai'n cael eu chwyddo gan y pellter sy'n eu gwahanu – Cymraeg y Canol Oesoedd, Saesneg "estuary" – yn hytrach na gan ei hagosatrwydd.' (Pearson 1997d: 15). ('In Wales, we have an extraordinary opportunity: the bilingual spectator – and it surely the case that all Welsh-speakers are bilingual – will hear two languages and may be drawn to question why certain narrative information is assigned to one language – poetics in Welsh? scientific data in English? – rather than the other. The English speaker hears a singular line, feeling at once included and alienated, with the Welsh perhaps functioning as a *melisma*. This juxtaposition of languages offers a range of options for interpretation,

mix of textual material (poetic writing, historical accounts, scientific textbooks, documentary film footage) delivered in either Welsh or English (and never translated), each relating to one of the performance's different narrative 'architectures' and resonating with the different cultural connotations of the respective language: poetic texts concerning the man-making efforts of Prometheus and Hephaestus were sung in Welsh, the accounts of industrial experiments read in English.[74] The result was a bilingual, multimedia and polyvalent performance style, which replaced that of the monolingual, body-oriented and deliberately unambiguous style of Brith Gof's early years. As Kaye has argued, '[r]ather than look toward a synthesis of elements through performance, the guiding metaphor for the construction of Brith Gof's work in these places has been the coexistence of distinct "architectures" inhabiting one another and the site itself without resolution into a synthetic whole. It is a relationship between elements which amplifies a fundamental exchange between site and performance' (Kaye 2000: 53). The incongruity of site and performance creates a defamiliarization which enables signification[75]: McLucas describes this as a 'mismatch between the "host" and the "ghost", and from the beginning of the work it's fractured, it's deeply, deeply fractured. [...]It seems to me that in a funny way they [i.e. site-specific shows] are more discursive, and have gaps in them – you can see other things through [...].' (McLucas in Brith Gof 1995: 51) '"Specificity" to site, here, is to be discovered in an encounter with that which lies beyond the obvious elements of the piece, through intrusion of the "found", *in looking*, into the incompletions of the fabricated.' (Kaye 1996d: 65–6)

The third constitutive element in Brith Gof's site-specific works was thus the audience. 'Site-specific performances [...] are the ones where we create a piece of work

enhanced perhaps by the distance between them – mediaeval Welsh, "estuary English" – rather than their closeness.' (Pearson 1997e)

[74] The film and television works of Clifford McLucas for Brith Gof (*Pax TV- Y Fam, Y Ddaear, A'r Angel* (1992) [The Mother, the Earth and the Angel, a reworking of the themes of *Pax*]; *Y Pen Bas, Y Pen Dwfn* (1995)) included not only densities of computer-controlled imagery, but also layers of Welsh and English text scrolling from top to bottom and from side to side at different speeds, each within its own stratum.

[75] Pearson describes this defamiliarization as the creation of a 'paradox': 'site may facilitate the creation of a purposeful paradox, through the employment of orders of material seemingly unusual, inappropriate or perverse at this site: an opera in a shipyard, an early Welsh epic poem in a disused car factory' (Pearson 1997b: 96)

which is a hybrid of the place, the public and the performance' (McLucas in Brith Gof 1995: 48). This changed the formal identity of the performance itself: 'Site-specific performances which fold together place, performance and public have no natural edges or frame to hold their identity discrete, no stage-backdrop against which their outlines might be thrown into crisp focus and they do not rely on containment for their identity and integrity.' (Pearson 1997b: 97) In its dependence on the presence of the spectators and the time and place of their experience in defining what constitutes the 'work', site-specificity is a manifestation of the 'theatricality' that Fried identified for postmodern art practice.[76] With *Gododdin*, the company began to experiment with different audience configurations. These were no longer prescribed by the site (though a site-specific performance may annex an already-existing audience arrangement), but demanded their reconsideration every time:

> Empty, disused buildings may permit the use of large open playing areas: with the spectators as a crowd, standing and shifting; [...] or the formalisation of unusual audience arrangements – in squares, circles, rows, alleys, high-up, far-away, at an oblique angle. [...] There may be a choice of what to watch, changing points of attention, multiple focus, the proximity and touch of performers. And each spectator will have a fundamentally different experience and interpretation of events.
>
> (Pearson 1996c: 6)

Brith Gof's site-specific shows during that period fell into two main groups.[77] The first used a promenade-style setting in which the spectators were allowed to move freely around the performance space (e.g. *Gododdin*, 1989; the performances of *Pax* in Glasgow and Aberystwyth, 1991). In these performances the audience was again addressed as a community of spectators, but the communality was no longer available by simply adapting the social organisation already inherent in the chosen venues – the new industrial sites were not primarily sociopetal spaces like the rural locations used previously. Instead, the audience placement needed to be considered anew in each performance – the shift from a familiar, homogenous rural audience to an unfamiliar,

[76] See above Chapter 2.

[77] Lehmann offers a useful distinction between two theatrical uses of a very large and open theatre space, which he terms a 'centrifugal space': the first emphasizes the venue's dimensions, which thus determine the reception of all other elements; the other uses the place to place a multitude of performance areas within it to be performed simultaneously or successively, see Lehmann 1999: 285–6.

heterogeneous urban one had made this necessary. As a consequence, the audience itself became a semiotic element in the performance, often (inadvertently) embodying a particular identity position (e.g., the enemy in *Gododdin;* see below). It was also at the time of *Gododdin* that Brith Gof began to develop an interest in the psychic and political implications of perspective in theatre[78]. The promenade-style site-specific performances attempted to destabilize the notion of a singular, fixed viewpoint from which the work would be seen:

> That's how we've moved on, and moving away from theatres into other buildings where performance can be constituted as a 'field' of activities, rather than as an 'object' to look at, means that we can include other theatrical devices. [...] there's no single viewpoint, the Emperor's seat of a conventional auditorium from which to view the work.
>
> (Pearson in Brith Gof 1995: 17)

Kaye has identified a relationship between meaning-constitution and the literal embodiment of perspective in Brith Gof's work: '[r]ather than present a specific or single *reading* of site, such a fractured work *disperses* the site, constituting "different groups of audience in different places" such that "every single member of the audience is going to have a different reading of the piece" (McLucas in Brith Gof 1995: 55) Not only did Brith Gof try to achieve a multiplicity of possible interpretations by multiplying the actual physical stances that the spectators were able to take in relation to the work. By moving the audience out of the theatre seat into the middle of a spectacle, the company also attempted to replace the gaze as the main vehicle of interpretation with a 'synergic' address (cf. Melrose 1994) to different senses[79] in a quasi-Artaudian attempt to constitute sense through a 'sensing' of space. In his study of postmodern performance, Birringer cites Brith Gof's *Gododdin* as a paradigmatic example for a postmodern attack on the 'spectator's theatrical competence or optical control over the "languages" of the stage': 'the scopic drive is driven wild by the constant permutations of the aural-visual-kinetic elements and part objects in the mise en scène,

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[78] See above Chapter 2.

[79] Keir Elam has described this form of performance as a 'contact' mode, which has 'instituted new informational channels for performance, such as the olfactory and the tactile' (Elam 1980: 66)

which demand to be reorganized perceptually by each of the spectactors'. (Birringer 1991: 98)

The second group of site-specific performances (e.g. *Haearn*, 1992; *Tri Bywyd*, 1995), on the other hand, fully duplicated the spatial stage–auditorium arrangement that the first group rejected so forcefully. In these performances, the audience was often placed on a raked seating area, in front of which the performance space covered a huge area of vast depth, which allowed for a sophisticated play with the perception of foreground and background, but which left theatre's basic convention of audience placement and perspective intact. Instead of a literal embodiment of multiple perspectivity, these performances attempted to multiply the possibilities of interpretation through the juxtaposition of different structural 'architectures'. At the same time, though, they too involved the audience as a semiotic element. In *Haearn*, for example, the 'architecture' structuring the relationship between the audience and the performance was called 'The Valley/The Mirror'. The audience, most of whom came from the formerly coal- and iron-producing valleys of South Wales, were placed on a raked seating area on one end of the building, whilst on a symmetrical seating arrangement at the building's opposite end the performing choir and band were placed, who came from the same area. Audience and performers were here conceptualized as 'The Mirror', i.e. as two mutually reflecting components, deeply connected through their joint belonging to the world of 'The Valley'.

The difference between these two ways of positioning the audience in relation to the performance can be traced back to the different artistic visions of the two directors of the company, Pearson and McLucas.[80] Pearson developed a strong interest in creating work that undermined the stage–auditorium divide, whilst McLucas was more interested in expanding the possibilities of conventional perspective.[81] McLucas used the term 'witness' (see Houston 1998: 232) to describe the role of the audience in his

[80] Hardy left the company in 1990, and Hughes Jones followed in 1992.

[81] Quick criticizes Brith Gof for the contradiction between Pearson's demands for a new spectatorial practice and the conventional seating arrangement in productions such as *Haearn*, which had actually been directed by McLucas (Quick, without date: 8). The contradiction was to become the starting point for the next phase of Brith Gof's work, and eventually led to the break-up of the company in 1998.

site-specific shows, a term which hints at a more passive and reflective engagement with the performance than Pearson's notion of the active, moving and responding 'crowd'. But despite their differences, both types of audience configuration in Brith Gof's work, that of 'the crowd' and that of 'the mirror' or 'the witness', attempted to place the audience within a total scenic environment that encompassed both the performance space and the space of the auditorium. Even in McLucas's seated productions, we can no longer speak of a 'stage' in the traditional sense. His site-specific scenography always addressed the totality of the space. This had major consequences for the conception of meaning-production in these performances. The traditional stage–auditorium divide relies on the convention of the 'frame', regarding everything outside of the stage as irrelevant to the meaning of the work. In Brith Gof's site-specific shows, on the other hand, everything was regarded as potentially significant: 'there's no way to stand outside it to try and define or divine the material' (McLucas in Brith Gof 1995: 33). Space was emancipated from its function as a mere backdrop or container to a purposefully meaningful factor. The totality of scenic space demanded that, 'in looking, the viewer read *through* and *between* performance and place' (Kaye 1996d: 65). Meaning was constituted as the product of an active interrelationship between site, performance and spectator. With regard to their representation of Welsh cultural identity, both types of audience configuration attempted to establish a form of identification that would constitute identity as such a product of an active interrelationship between site, performance and spectator. In her study of the spatial constitution of subjectivity in theatre, Helga Finter (Finter 1990) proposes a distinction between the two approaches in relation to their articulation of identity and identification. Both types break with what she calls the panoptic paradigm of post-Renaissance Western theatre[82], in which identity is constituted as a specular

[82] Foucault has described modern panopticism as a function of the theatrical in his description of Bentham's *Panopticon*: 'We know the principle on which it was based: at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building [...]. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cell

identification with the imaginary unity of the 'other' as its mirror on stage.[83] One approach, which she calls 'kaleidoscopic'[84], mobilises the spatial *dispositif* of the panopticon by multiplying perspectivity through activating a play of difference between auditive and visual theatrical codes. Finter argues that this type of deconstructivist theatre establishes a position of radical subjectivity, in which the subject is constituted as a 'subject in process' (*sujet en procès*) through a (never stable) negotiation of this play of difference. Contrary to this approach, the environmental model[85] negates the existence of panoptic perspectivity altogether by abolishing the distinction between stage and auditorium. The stage no longer presents the 'other' in whose mirror identity can be established. In the attempt to create a community of performers and spectators, environmental theatre must exclude the other as pure excess – thereby establishing a corporeal and affective identification with communality through an exclusion of otherness that for Finter betrays traces of fascism.[86] However, Brith Gof's site-specific work suggests that this distinction is not so easily made. *Haearn*, for example, employs the kaleidoscopic form to make the audience aware not of their subjectivity, but their communality – the 'play of difference' between the different architectures remains anchored in a common referent, that of Welsh cultural identity. Both forms of performance thus either abstractly or literally 'position' the audience in a relation to the discourses that define its subjectivity and identity.

I would like to explicate the formation of identification in the environmental type of Brith Gof's site-specific performances[87] by taking a closer look at the first of the

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of the periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible.' (Foucault 1979: 200).

83 See also Belsey's model in Chapter 2.

84 Finter identifies artists such as Robert Wilson, Mabou Mines, Attroupement and Richard Foreman as representatives of a kaleidoscopic approach.

85 Finter mentions the work of the Living Theatre as an example for environmentalist theatre.

86 Although Finter embraces the 'postmodern', i.e. deconstructivist, practice of artists such as Robert Wilson as an example of aesthetic pluralism, there is an obvious anxiety in her work about the possible dissolving of boundaries also associated with postmodernism. One may speculate that for Finter, an eminent scholar of the modernist theatre avant-garde (see Finter 1990), postmodernist pluralism is the materialization of an already implicit pluralist quality of aesthetic modernism (a point often argued, for example by Welsch 1990), whereas the dissolving of boundaries, particularly those between the individual and community, presents a radically anti-modern quality.

87 The 'kaleidoscopic' site-specific works, particularly *Haearn*, have been widely discussed, most notably in Houston 1998; Kaye 1996b; Kaye 1996c; Kaye 1996d; Kaye 2000; Quick, without date.

company's large-scale [88], site-specific shows, and in many respects still their most successful work to date, *Gododdin* (1988–1989)[89]. The production took as its starting point the earliest poem in the Welsh language, *Y Gododdin*, thought to have been composed in the sixth or early seventh century by the poet Aneirin. The poem commemorates the fate of three hundred Celtic warriors from the ancient North-British tribe of the Gododdin, close relatives of the Welsh, who in AD600 were defeated by an invading army of one hundred thousand Angles near Catraeth, today's town of Catterick in North England. All but one of the Celts were killed in the battle, and the one hundred and three stanzas of the poem make up both a eulogy celebrating their courage and an elegy grieving their death:

Gwŷr a aeth Gatraeth gan wawr
Trafodynt eu hedd eu hofnawr,
Milcant a thrychant a ymdaflawdd.
Gwyarllyd gwynoddyd waywawr,
Ef gorsaf wriaf yng ngwriawr,
Rhag gosgordd Mynyddog Mwynfawr.
[...]
Truan yw gennyf, gwedi lludded,
Goddef gloes angau trwy anghyffred,
Ac ail trwm truan gennyf gweled
Dygwyddo ein gwyr ben o draed,
Ac uchenaid hir ac eilywed
Yn ôl gwŷr pybyr tymyr tydwed,
Rhufon a Gwion, Gwion a Gwlged,
Gwŷr gorsaf wriaf, gwrdd yng nghaled.
Ys deupo i'w henaid wedi trined
Cynnwys yng ngwlad nef, addef afneued.

(Aneirin 1990[90]: 9, 53)

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[88] Pearson explains the desire to make a work 'at scale' as follows: 'One very strong reason for doing *Gododdin*, for trying to make a piece of work 'at scale', was simply my feeling that all of theatre practice in Wales was being defined by what you could get in the back of a Transit van! [...] We were working in a political climate at that time where there were very, very few voices of resistance at any kind of scale at all.' (Brith Gof 1995: 8–9).

[89] *Gododdin* was the final performance in Brith Gof's *Disaster of War/ Trychinebau Rhyfel* series. Based on the collection of etchings of the same name made by Francisco Goya during and after the Spanish Peninsular War, Brith Gof created ten performances, collaborations and pedagogical projects investigating the experience of war between 1987 and 1989, see Brith Gof 1988.

[90] 'Warriors went to Catraeth with the dawn, / Their fears departed from their dwelling-place, / A hundred thousand and three hundred charged against each other./ He stains spears with blood, / The most valiant resister in battle, / Before the retinue of Mynyddog Mwynfawr. [...]
Grievous for me, after toil, / Is the suffering of death's agony in affliction, / And again it is a heavy grief for me to see / The headlong fall or our men, / And long sighing and lamentation / After the valiant warriors of our land and territory, / Rhufon and Gwgon, Gwion and Gwlged, / Bravest men in their stations, mighty in conflict. / May there be for their souls after battle / A welcome in the land of heaven, the home of plenty.' (Aneirin 1990: 8, 52)

Brith Gof selected twenty-five stanzas from the poem, which describe the assembly of the warriors at the court of Mynyddog Mwynfawr, their year-long riotous preparations for combat, their heavy drinking session prior to the battle, and their final defeat. The verses were chosen for their sonic quality as much as for their meaning. The words were then woven into the musical framework as a libretto sung both in Welsh and English. For the music, the two Brith Gof musicians, composer John Hardy and vocalist and librettist Lis Hughes Jones, worked with industrial percussionists Test Department. The London-based band had gained a reputation for staging large-scale collaborative events, crossing music, dance and theatre. Brith Gof first became aware of the politically outspoken musicians through their *Shoulder to Shoulder* recording with the South Wales Striking Miners Choir (1985). For *Gododdin*, Test Department's signature percussion work, using pieces of scrap metal and other found materials, was combined with trumpet, horns, cello, bagpipes and vocals to create a musical composition of eight sections, each with a distinctive instrumentation and rhythm. The score was then amplified to create a sophisticated sonic 'architecture'. The physical action, carried out by six performers, who were joined at times by the six members of Test Department, followed the same pattern of an eight-part structure.[91] The physical choreography included patterns of group movement and imagery and the use and manipulation of a limited range of objects such as oil drums, long wooden poles and car bonnets. 'The physical action is inspired by the exploits of the warriors of Gododdin and mirrors the frenetic energy and dynamism of their struggle against the English' (Brith Gof 1989a: 1).

91 1. Prologue ('*The men of Gododdin are gathered for battle*'): 'arrogant and assertive perambulations of the central area'; 2. Heroic Society ('*Games, training and feasting*'): 'physical games and confrontations, vaulting with poles, hurling oil drums, hoisting with pulleys'; 3. Berserking ('*Working themselves up into a fighting fury*'): 'going berserk, dangerous work with oil drums, breaking windscreens'; 4. Arming for Battle ('*Preparation for War*'): 'Decorating the bodies for the fray'; 5. Journey ('*The way to battle*'): Group movements using the long poles, manipulation of banners, ankle deep in water'; 6. Battle ('*Questing for glory*'): 'breaking out, standing on cars, strapping on car bonnets, confronting the audience, climbing, collapsing'; 7. Lament ('*A song of grief for the dead*'): 'Staggering and falling into the lake until all movement ceased, bodies in the freezing water'; and 8. Epilogue ('*Regret leading to renewal*'): 'A slow withdrawal'. The sections were preceded by a procession of the performers entering the space, dragging a 'war wagon' with the musicians on top ('*Entry and Roll-call*') (See Brith Gof 1989a; Brith Gof and Test Dept. 1989b).

The most striking element of *Gododdin* was the scenography, designed by Cliff McLucas. *Gododdin* was first staged in the disused Rover factory in Cardiff's dockland, a site that had been earmarked as part of a high-profile regeneration project of the area by Cardiff Bay Development Corporation. In an attempt to 'bring the outside inside' (Brith Gof 1989a: 3), McLucas brought six hundred tons of sand, creating a sand circle of over a hundred feet across with a peak of sixteen feet height in its centre, an avenue of fifty hanging conifers cutting through it, and surrounded by thirty whitewashed cars, into the empty hall of the former machine shop. The sand circle served as the main performance area, around which the audience was standing or moving freely. During the 'battle' section, performers broke out of the circle to perform directly in the midst of the spectators. Twenty minutes into the performance the sand circle was flooded, making the performing conditions for the performers increasingly difficult.

Gododdin already included all the elements that were to become the hallmark of Brith Gof's large scale, site-specific work: a defunct industrial site symbolizing the decline of the heavy industry in Wales; an ambitious scenography designed at the scale of civil engineering and relating to the architectural dimensions of its surrounds; a standing, moving audience that was directly implicated in and occasionally endangered by the performance; a performance style striving for physical authenticity by creating difficult performing conditions for the performers; and a combination of performance elements, in this case libretto, physical action, music and scenography, devised separately and then assembled with the help of a common time-base structure.

In *Gododdin*, Brith Gof's concept of site-specificity was still in its infancy. The old Rover Factory in Cardiff was selected primarily for its size, its availability, its 'non-theatreness', and less for its particular history. The scenography of the piece was strictly speaking not 'site-specific', i.e. designed for the specificities of a particular venue, but conceptualized as an assemblage of scenic elements, which could be dismantled and then reassembled in accordance with the different locations in which the show was performed. But the attention that was paid to the architectural specifications of each of the venues on the European tour of *Gododdin* in 1989, including a sand-

quarry in Italy, a defunct crane factory in Germany, an ice-rink in Friesland and a former tram depot in Scotland, already anticipated Brith Gof's later attempt to come to terms with the full spatial implications of a new genre of performance work. From here to *Haearn*, the pivotal show of Brith Gof's site-specific phase, where not just the architectural, but also the historical, political and industrial connotations of the building became an integral part of the work, there was an increasing sophistication of the company's address to site. Indeed, as the manifestation of a set of practices that were concerned with a '*working over* of the production, definition and *performance* of "place"' (Kaye 2000), to cite Kaye's recent definition of site-specificity, *Gododdin* can be rightfully counted amongst Brith Gof's site-specific shows. Most importantly, however, *Gododdin* already articulated a new concept for a performative negotiation of cultural identity which encapsulated the essential concern of Brith Gof's site-specific phase in the late 1980s and early 1990s: to link the decline of industrial culture in Wales, as represented by the sites, to the mythological narratives of cultural birth, defeat and rebirth which the Welsh-language culture had cultivated. The result was a concept of Welsh cultural identity that embraced both the ancient and the modern, the rural and the industrial, the English-speaking and the Welsh-speaking as common victims of the cultural and economic exploitation of Wales by the English colonial project.

For this purpose, Brith Gof employed a similar technique to the one explored in their early work: they used 'real' objects and 'real' task-based activities, this time taken mainly from the world of industrial labour, and combined them with a piece of classic Welsh literature. Like the objects in *Rhydcymerau*, the objects in *Gododdin*, such as oil drums and cars, were used in unfamiliar, often paradoxical ways and new contexts: oil drums became castles, wrecked cars were used as chariots and car bonnets served as shields in a scenography juxtaposing industrial elements with those taken from nature. By 'misusing' the products of industrial manufacturing Brith Gof focused the attention on their *defunctness*, and on the defunctness of the industry that produced them. However, as Pearson himself points out, the objects and activities in these site-specific shows were

of a different kind to the ones in Brith Gof's early work, a change that was the result of the new scenographic concept:

> I think the key moment for me came with *Gododdin*, when Cliff produced the designs for *Gododdin*, and he'd made a formal architectural address to that site using a repertoire of materials, whereas I had thought he would build dioramas, scattered around a large space upon which we would do fragments of the story of the *Gododdin*. He didn't do that, but built another architecture in the existing architecture, and because we were also building an architecture of sound [...] then that had big repercussions for me in terms of physical action. The physical action could not just tell a story within these other formalities which were beginning to be constituted in a very different way, these were not the backgrounds for a theatre narrative to unfold. The physical performance therefore had to find its equivalent, perhaps much more schematic work, where the audience were watching the symptoms of physical performers exposed to increasingly difficult physical conditions for instance, as opposed to watching what they chose to tell us.
>
> (Brith Gof 1995: 44)

Brith Gof's early metaphorical style is contrasted here with a new, 'symptomatic' physical performance technique.[92] Not only is this technique 'more schematic' or 'cruder' (Savill 1993: 207), Pearson also appears to argue that it is of a different semiotic nature. He puts forwards a complex argument, suggesting that the scale[93] and site-specific (i.e. architectural and integrated) nature of the scenography in *Gododdin* had changed the nature of the physical performance from a representational practice ('what they chose to tell us') to a practice which focused instead on the 'symptoms' of the really exhausted and endangered body of the performer. Brith Gof's productions at the time featured extraordinary physical performances, from the berserking bodies of *Gododdin*, who were battling against a rising water level, to the flying bodies in *Pax*, who were hoisted from cathedral-high scaffolding towers. Whereas the metaphorical style of the early work represented an everyday activity by reperforming it and

92 Referring to Peirce's ternary sign model, Susan Melrose argues that both 'symptom' and 'metaphor' are conventionally related to the order of indexicality: "'the sign" is read as a (convenient, metaphorical) "arrow" or symptom, said to be pointing (through processes of logical interference) to a logically agreed (and hermeneutically more interesting !) "something else"' (Melrose 1994: 29). The relationship between symptom or metaphor and that to which they point is of a different quality, however: whilst metaphor is based on a relation of analogy and translation, and inevitably replaces that to which it points, the symptom is based on a relation of cause and effect, and is inevitably replaced by that to which it points.

93 In an interview with Savill, Pearson describes the influence of scale on the physical performance: 'the problem for me was that none of the techniques I possessed could operate in scale. When we moved on site to rehearse [...] none of us had considered the problems of doing dangerous physical work in such conditions [...].' (Pearson as quoted in Savill 1993: 207).

ascribing new cultural meaning to it, the symptomatic style focused instead on the *energy* with which these extraordinary activities were performed. This energy was 'real' – and it created real effects on the audience:

> [*Pearson:*] [...] in our work we always use the real thing. If it's a brick it's a brick, so if it's flying at you...., that's one of the things an audience knows and realises about our work. Curiously though at the beginning I think they didn't. Very often in *Gododdin*, we'd run around with a barrel, or swing a tyre on the end of a rope, and they'd think this is not a tyre... [*McLucas:*] This isn't going to hit me. [*Pearson:*] Because this is theatre, this is not going to hit me, and I'm sure it comes from that sort of perception of things. [*McLucas:*] But I think the audience does get to know very soon. I mean when that old man walked into that shed where we were doing *Gododdin*, he realised there was something going on here that was real, it was a lot like a building site, it was a lot like a civil engineering works, he knew those places were real and you could tell he sensed that it was a danger...
>
> (Brith Gof 1995: 53)

Objects and activities were not primarily used because of their everyday familiarity or cultural significance, but because of their potential 'real' effect on performers and audience. Again, Brith Gof suggest that it was the reality of the venues in which the site-specific performances were staged that allowed for this effect to be recognized. The result is no longer theatre – it *is* reality. Only this time, 'reality' appears not as a given, but as the product of the 'real' work ('building site', 'civil engineering works') that had been invested to turn the location into a site of performance. It was the *energy* expended before and during the performance, an energy equivalent to 'real' physical labour, which for Brith Gof ensured that their site-specific performance work was being perceived as 'real'. This energy ensured a particular energetic or synergetic identification with the performance, based on the recognition of the symptoms of the 'real' work of the performer, and their potential 'real' [i.e. endangering] effect on the audience.[94] In the spectators' experience of the physical reality of this energetic performance within the reality of an industrial site, and the psychic 'Real' of the 'pedagogical' narrative of a momentous incident in the history of the Welsh people [i.e. the defeat of the Gododdin], an affective identification with both the (historical) narratives and the

[94] The violence and dangerous nature of the physical work has been criticized for its 'masculinisation' of the body in both the male and female performers in Brith Gof, see Quick, without date: 21, n.15)

(contemporaneous) objects and sites of the industrial age could take place that referred to both aspects as symptoms for Welsh cultural identity.

Using Conquergood's ternary model of cultural performance[95], a distinction can be made between Brith Gof's early work, in which performance was used primarily as mimesis or imitation, and their site-specific work, in which performance was used as poiesis or construction.[96] Turner's work on liminality serves Conquergood as an example for his definition of poiesis, and Brith Gof's site-specific performances can be described accordingly as opening a space of liminality, in which not the essence or origin of a culture, but its boundaries and delineations are being explored performatively. This change was inspired by Brith Gof's attempt to extend their delineation of Welsh identity towards the industrial, English-speaking aspects of Welsh culture. The company's intention was no longer just to affirm a given definition of Welshness, but to challenge this definition and reveal its ambivalence: the reactionary aspects of traditional culture, the devastating effects of industrialisation.[97] Their site-specific performance work thus also allowed for the potentially subversive force of its recursive nature – instead of concealing it in a quest for an origin – in order to emphasize the recurrence of domination and defeat (by the English) and rebirth in the history of the Welsh people.

Not all spectators, however, were able to transform the physical reality of the performative effects of *Gododdin*'s energetic performance and the psychic 'Real' of the historical narrative of defeat and rebirth into an affective identification with both. This

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95 See Chapter 1.

96 All the site-specific productions made during this period had as their themes the cultural construction (and destruction) of body and environment, whether it be the construction of the heroic body of the warrior (*Gododdin*), the making of industrial man and woman (*Haearn*), the development of the colonial body (*Y Pen Bas, Y Pen Dwfn*) or the destruction of the environment (*Pax*).

97 Quick has argued that there is a fundamental contradiction implicit in this attempt: 'Brith Gof's nostalgia, the performed yearning for place and home, is not only situated in the mythology of Celtic history but also in the processes and effects of industrialisation that have occurred in Wales during the last two hundred years. In short, theirs is a vision of a contemporary world in which past histories are reworked through the technologies of the present [...]. A disconcerting contradiction appears to be embodied in the work of Brith Gof as it presents clearly, if not polemically, the rejection of technology on the one hand while on the other seemingly fetishises the technological (with)in the performance aesthetic itself. (Quick, without date: 8–9) Following Houston, however, this contradiction can be related to a 'paradox within the system of industrial production' itself: 'the symptom of the worker's labouring body' [...] is a commodity which is absolutely essential to the outcome of this system' (Houston 1998: 242). Following his argument, the 'symptoms' of Brith Gof's energetic performance – the labouring body of the performer, the technological display of the scenography – can be regarded as essential to the working of this performance of energy.

became manifest in the case of the European tour of *Gododdin*. Brith Gof took the work to several sites in Europe prior to the formation of the European Union in 1992. The intention was to present a theatrical opposition to a centralised, homogenized, mainstream European culture (under the aegis of a progressing Anglicization).[98] In Wales, the depiction of a resistance to cultural and industrial defeat and the vision of a rebirth was regarded as a highly topical comment at a time when Thatcherism in Britain was at its peak and political opposition had begun to form in the shape of a resurgent Welsh nationalism.[99] When Brith Gof took the performance to Glasgow, Scotland found itself in a similar battle for political and cultural self-determination as Wales, which the pan-Celtic theme of *Y Gododdin* managed to emphasise. But in Germany[100] the representation of a heroic defeat with the help of a performative celebration of physical exertion created a strong antagonism. The critics saw in it an aesthetic glorification of war and sacrifice in the name of a national cause which for them contained traces of the ideology of German fascism [101] One reviewer analyses this response as an effect of the particular choice of location:

> Für *Gododdin* [...] hatte Brith Gof den vielleicht wichtigsten Ort auf dem alten Industriegelände der Schiffsausrüster- und Kranfabrik Kampnagel gewählt, das Zentrum der geheimen Erinnerung – jenes kahle, leere, tote Geviert am Ostrand der entkernten Hallen, wo [...] nun das Nichts des Raumes vom Verschwinden jener fernen Industrie-Epoche kündet, die solche Monstren aus Bolzen und Stahl noch brauchte. Drauf und drunter und drüber, vor und zwischen diesen Zeugen der Vergangenheit legte Brith Gof Zeugnis ab – und entwarf [...] das moderne Bild vom eigenen Ort mythisch verklärter Erinnerung. Wir verglichen nun diese mit unserer, grübelten vielleicht über die Nibelungen oder die letzten Stunden in der Reichskanzlei

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98 '1992. So what is this Europe? A Europe of centralised authorities, or an amalgam of cultural diversities where the voice of the minority finds a forum? They talk in a strange language about a history, about preoccupations, about an experience, about fears far from the mainstream in European culture. They should loud and hard, about national identity, cultural decay, radical humanism, pacifism, without restraint... Do not expect them to be part of a homogenised consensus of good taste. Do not expect to understand them... (Brith Gof and Test Dept. 1989b)

99 In Wales, *Gododdin* was celebrated as the most ambitious theatre project ever presented in the Welsh language, see Adams 1996: 56.

100 Brith Gof performed *Gododdin* at the Kampnagelfabrik in Hamburg, a defunct crane factory that had been converted into a theatre complex for international experimental work. The performance was shown as part of the *Performing Europe* festival, organised by the Internationales Sommertheater Festival Hamburg. Due to safety regulations the performance had to take place outside of the old factory halls.

101 See Walter Benjamin's influential thesis on the aesthetics of fascism: 'The logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life. [...] All efforts to render politics aesthetic culminate in one thing: war.' (Benjamin 1992: 234–5)

– entdeckten aber an diesem Ort und gerade hier urplötzlich uns: aufgehoben in vielerlei Altertum, in mancherlei Trauer und Terror und Tod.

(Laages 1995: 84)[102]

Laages's analysis paradoxically demonstrates the effectiveness of Brith Gof's performance: the effect he describes resembles the impact the company was aiming for when they created the work in Wales. In the spectators' experience of the physical reality of this energetic performance within the reality of a defunct industrial site, an identification was sought with the psychic 'Real' of communal history – only now, this history was connected with acts of extreme violation in the name of national identity, which severely disrupted the process of identification. Whilst in Wales, the reconciliation of a discourse of cultural identity with that of industrialization extended the traditional definition of Welshness, in Germany nationalism and heavy industry were historically married in the ideology of German fascism.

Employing Finter's model, this disruption could be identified as already inherent in the environmental approach of *Gododdin*, which established corporeal and affective identification with communality through an exclusion of otherness that for her betrays an implicitly fascist ideology.[103] The interesting aspect of the German reception of the show, however, was not its relation to otherness, but to difference – a difference in

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[102] 'For *Gododdin* Brith Gof chose probably the most important location in the old industrial complex of the ship's supply and crane factory Kampnagel [i.e. the venue for the performance], the centre of its secret memory – that bleak, empty, dead square on the eastern side of the defunct halls where the nothingness of the space tells of the disappearance of an industrial era which still required such monsters of bolts and steel. Above and below and beyond, in front and behind these witnesses of the past Brith Gof gave testimony – and created the modern image of one's place within a mythically transfigured memory. We compared this to our own, thought maybe of the Nibelungen or the last hours of the Reichskanzlei – but discovered at this very place all of a sudden ourselves: amidst many ancientness, amidst grief, terror and death.' (My translation)

[103] Traces of a similar model which devalues identification in favour of critical engagement can be found throughout the German press coverage of the performance: 'Unter dem Eindruck der Bilder und Klänge kann einem entgehen, was man beim späteren Nachdenken und – noch deutlicher – bei einem zweiten Blick auf das 'Gododdin'-Spektakel bemerkt: Jene Lobeshymnen auf Kampfesmut und Opferbereitschaft würden, brächte sie ein deutscher Regisseur auf die Bühne, zu Recht als faschistoid bezeichnet. Die Walisier greifen da auf eine andere Tradition zurück, dennoch bleibt am Ende ihres Gastspieles ein bitterer Nachgeschmack zurück.' (Müller-Schöll 1989) ('Under the direct influence of images and sounds one may overlook what one notices on a later reflection and – more clearly – on a second visit to the 'Gododdin spectacle': those praises of courage in battle and readiness for sacrifice would, if a German director put them on stage, be rightly called fascistic. The Welsh have a different tradition. But nevertheless, at the end of their performance a bitter aftertaste remains.' [My translation]) Müller-Scholl here distinguishes two kinds of reactions which he experienced whilst watching *Gododdin*: an immediate, direct and unmediated response to the materiality of the performance, and a delayed and more critical, reflective response, indicating that Brith Gof undermined and deferred the optical control and critical distance that traditionally allowed the theatre audience to reflect whilst watching.

culture and history that was in this instance not excluded as the performance's outside, but actually embodied in the identity of the audience. The spectators in *Gododdin* had transformed from an embodiment of members of the same community to one of antagonistic enemies. This antagonism can also be related to the inherent contradictions of environmentalism, or to what Chaudhuri calls the 'hyperinclusive theatrology of environmental theatre' (Chaudhuri 1995: 9). This theatrology is for her characterized by a 'dream of "togetherness"', which attempts to involve the audience as active co-participants in the performance, yet which also uses it as a semiotic element:

> The ideal of an intense, common experience, variously reflected in the names that certain major environmental theatre groups gave themselves – the Open Theatre, the Living Theatre – ultimately derived from Antonin Artaud's visionary Theatre of Cruelty [...]. The Artaudian assault on boundaries, which was to underwrite all later environmental staging, demolished that most enduring of all theatrical frontiers, the audience as disembodied gaze, and redefined it as embodied and performing coactor. [...] However, the spatial and performative resituation of the audience has another effect as well: [...as Schechner states,] "the audience itself becomes a major scenic element", [...creating an] unnoticed contradiction [...] between the audience as full and equal participant versus the audience as a semiotic element to be manipulated [...].
> (Chaudhuri 1995: 24)

This contradiction could help to explain the problems which Brith Gof encountered with the reception of *Gododdin:* spatially, the spectators were allowed to move freely around the performance space to create an impression of communality with the performers, and semiotically, they were positioned as witnesses to their defeat. In Germany, however, their semiotic positioning was interpreted as an antagonistic relationship, with the performers battling amongst the audience as embodiments of their enemies. As Houston has pointed out: '[t]he production's friction with the historical context of its German audience offered insight into the potential effects of antagonism between participants in the theatre event. The impossibility of certain exchanges between cultures, and the very Real effects of this impossibility as it becomes 'embodied', in the cultural identity of subjects, was to emerge as an instrumental concern in Pearson's development of a proto-theatrical form in the 1990s.' (Houston 1998: 230)

A second consequence of environmentalism is, according to Chaudhuri, the dream of 'fullness', which goes hand in hand with that of 'togetherness': 'The history of

environmental experimentation follows a fantasy of limitless theatrical signification, an infinity of meaning resulting from the infinite possible reconfigurations of theatre space.' (Chaudhuri 1995: 23) This fantasy of fullness does not in fact rely on the abolition of the stage–auditorium divide, but on the notion of spatial totality that is the foundation for both the 'kaleidoscopic' and the 'environmental' mode' of site-specific practice.[104] Pearson articulates such a fantasy of limitlessness of signification:

> These performances are extremely generative of signs: the multiple meanings and readings of activity and site intermingle, amending and compromising one another. They reveal, celebrate, confound, criticise and make manifest the specifics of the site which begins to resemble a kind of saturated space or scene-of-crime, where, to use forensic jargon, 'everything is potentially important'.
>
> (Pearson 1997b: 96)[105]

Houston[106] has followed Pearson in this evaluation by describing Brith Gof's site-specific practice as a work of inherently infinite meaning construction in which 'representation is not based on an absent entity' (Houston 1998: 224), but constituted by each spectator in potentially infinitely different ways. To my mind, he overlooks the fact that Brith Gof's site-specific performances may multiply their possible readings by activating a play of difference between its different 'architectures', or by placing the audience in different relationships to the performance. Yet the meaning construction remains limited by an absent entity, that of Welsh cultural identity, which continued to direct its possible readings. The German reviewer offers a more succinct reading of this

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104 In fact, one may argue that all of Brith Gof's site-specific shows stand in the tradition of environmental performance work. Although the company never directly refer to the example of Environmental Theatre, Schechner's *Six Axioms for Environmental Theatre*, formulated more than twenty years earlier, reads like a manual for their site-specific practice: '1. The theatrical event is a set of related transactions; 2. All the space is used for performance; all the space is used for audience; 3. The theatrical event can take place either in a totally transformed space or in 'found space'; 4. Focus is flexible and variable; 5. All production elements speak in their own language; 6. The text need be neither the starting point nor the goal of a production. There may be no text at all.' (Schechner 1969b (1968)) (See also Pearson's arguments against dramatic literature, 'The Script is not the thing' (Pearson 1995a)).
Brith Gof's site-specific practice presents a form of literal realization of the potentials of Environmental Theatre: in order to create an 'active environment' (Pearson in Brith Gof 1995: 45), the company often involved natural elements in their performance, such as sand, earth, water and fire, or attempted to recreate natural climatic occurrences, such as wind and rain. For a critique of the ideological implications of such infinite environmentalism from an ecological point of view see Chaudhuri 1995: 21–53.

105 The repercussions of this fullness of signification have concerned Pearson ever since. Its consequences for recording and documenting performance have been explored in his 'Theatre/Archaeology' project. (Pearson and Thomas 1994a; Pearson and Shanks 2001).

106 See also Kaye's interpretation of *Haearn* in Kaye 1996d.

issue: the narrative 'architectures' of all of Brith Gof's site-specific shows intersect at an absence, a bleak and empty point of defunctness and defeat, which the performance fills with the contemporary image of a transfigured cultural identity. As McLucas stated above: 'Being Welsh does mean something. (Savill 1990: 26–7) Indeed, in many of Brith Gof's performances of their middle period that entity is actually represented in the space of the performance, albeit outside the space of the performers: in *Gododdin*, Lis Hughes Jones recited the words of the poet Aneirin from a point high above the heads of both audience and performers, offering the audience a point of identification with this 'pedagogical' narrative of Welsh cultural identity. *Haearn* and *Pax* introduced similar narrator figures, often placed in an elevated position above the performance.

Although the problematic reception of *Gododdin* in Germany remained an extreme case among the responses to Brith Gof's site-specific shows, it hints at a fundamental contradiction in the company's aesthetic practice at the time: the attempt to create an energetic performance practice that would allow for a different form of identification between performers and spectators, a form that would be more direct and immediate than the distanced and reflective mode of conventional theatre, and somewhat less restrained and more open to multiple interpretations, whilst also at the same time remaining tied to an absent referent. Even more forcefully than was the case with their early work, Brith Gof proclaimed their site-specific performance practice to be the other to conventional theatre practice. The programme for *Gododdin* states boldly: 'Theatre without rules, above all. [...] Nobody asked them what theatre ought to look like, ought to be – is the answer suprising?' (Brith Gof and Test Dept. 1989b) Theatre in Brith Gof's thinking at the time appeared as 'ruled' by a representational apparatus, which the company not merely hoped to reorder, but from which it hoped to escape altogether by moving into non-theatrical, 'real' sites. 'The stage is like a plot that's been tilled so many times that there is not much else you could do to it.' (Pearson 1994c: 45) For Pearson, the space of conventional theatre is 'a field ploughed to exhaustion' (Pearson 1998a: 39) by the excessive use of its representational apparatuses. Theatre is a 'spatial machine that distances us from the spectacle and that allies subsidy, theatre

orthodoxy and political conservatism, under the disguise of nobility of purpose in a way that literally "keeps us in our place" (Pearson 1998a: 39). Theatre thus constructs a system of mastery over the relationship between performer and spectator, and prevents the 'authentic communication between one performer and one spectator – spatially, physically, emotionally' (Pearson 1998a: 39–40) that Grotowski has envisaged. Andrew Quick (Quick, without date) has analysed the contradictions in Brith Gof's site-specific practice in detail. He rightly points out that 'representation [does not] stop at the theatre's exit and is limited to the theatrical space', nor 'does everything contained within the limit of the theatre space placidly succumb to the orders of the theatrical representational matrix.' (Quick, without date: 18) In his opinion 'the work of Brith Gof can be seen to reinforce the representational apparatus, to reinscribe it within the mythology and ontology of national identity rather than call its being into question. What Pearson appears to overlook is the fact that the representational system is *invigorated* by the move into these non-theatre spaces as its dynamics are revealed to be more 'realistic' [*sic*] more 'truthful' than might ever be achieved in the 'artificial' space of the theatre.' (Quick, without date: 14) Yet Brith Gof's political and aesthetic project at the time was more complex than Quick gives it credit for. Indeed, in its attention to 'the manipulation to which performance subjects the performer's body', 'the manipulation of space', and 'the relation that performance institutes between the artist and the spectators, between the spectators and the work of art, and between the work of art and the artist', Brith Gof addressed the 'essential foundations of all performance' that for Féral (Féral 1982) allow it to break down representational relationships and establish a synaesthetic relationships between the performer's and the spectator's body that enables a free emotional flow of experience and desire.[107] It is not the move into non-theatre spaces, nor the abolition of the stage-auditorium divide that create the contradictions in Brith Gof's work. It is the unresolved tension between the performance and what it desires to represent, or its 'inside' and 'its outside' to use Lyotard's terminology.

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[107] See Chapter 2.

Lyotard has envisaged an energetic theatre not unlike the one Brith Gof was hoping to establish, and also linked its functioning to the spatial conditions of representation. He bases it on the abolition of two limits 'filtering the coming and going energies' in theatre: 'one limit (1) which determines what is "exterior" to the theater ("reality") and what is "interior", a second limit (2) which, on the inside, disassociates what is to be perceived and what is not to be perceived' (Lyotard 1997 (1977): 287–8). According to Lyotard, most contemporary experimental performance, like Brith Gof, 'addresses itself essentially to the problem of the second limit' (Lyotard 1997 (1977): 288) by moving into different locations or abolishing the hierarchized relationship between stage and auditorium. But for Lyotard, the work of an energetic theatre should concern itself primarily with the first limit, the hierarchized relationship of inside and outside. He uses as an example for this hierarchy the relationship between toothache and a clinched fist. 'I have a toothache, I clench my fist, my nails dig into the palm of my hand. [...] Shall we say that the action for the palm represents the passion of the tooth? That it is a sign of it?' (Lyotard 1997 (1977)) In the conventional order of theatre, the pain ('the outside') is represented by its symptom, the clenching of the fist ('the inside). Performance art since the 1960s has attempted to overcome this representational relationship by subjecting the performer's body to real danger and violation. Yet, as Elaine Scarry has shown, pain cannot be communicated: 'pain comes unsharably in our midst as at one that which cannot be denied and that which cannot be confirmed' (Scarry 1985: 4). According to Fischer-Lichte, in all performance art a 'gap opens up for the spectators between what is performed *on* the spectator's body (i.e., at its surface) and what happens *in* the performer's body, a gap that seems to be bridgeable only by way of imagination' (Fischer-Lichte 1997c). This gap between the outside and the inside of theatre, or the inside and the outside of the body, the toothache and the fist, the 'Real' and its representation cannot be overcome. Lyotard proposes an energetic theatre that does not attempt the abolition of representation by seizing the gap, but that is no longer dominated by its logic. 'Its business is to produce the highest intensity (by excess or by

lack of energy) of what there is, without intention.' (Lyotard 1997 (1977): 288)[108] His second condition for such an energetic theatre, an address to the 'hierarchized relation of inside/outside' (Lyotard 1997 (1977): 287), was to become one of the major concerns for Brith Gof's performance practice.

[108] For a full discussion of Lyotard's model of the theatrical-representational set-up and its relationship to a theory of libidinal economy based on Freud and Marx see Bennington 1988: 10–51.

IV Heterotopia

The change in their aesthetic and in the underlying concept of identity that distinguished the third phase in Brith Gof's *œuvre* is more difficult to date than the shift from the early to the site-specific works.[109] It was the effect of a long development that saw both artistic directors of the company progressively drifting apart in their artistic and political concerns. Whilst McLucas continued to develop their large-scale site-specific practice (*Y Pen Bas / Y Pen Dwfn* 1995, *Tri Bywyd* 1995)[110], Pearson became increasingly interested in the implications of environmental performance for a new form of theatrical communication, leading him to a radical reconsideration of theatre's representational apparatus. The resulting performances (the *Arturius Rex* cycle 1993–1994)[111] presented an often bleak picture of the politics of cultural identity, focusing

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[109] In the secondary literature on Brith Gof only Houston (Houston 1998) similarly identifies Pearson's work in the mid-1990s, which he terms the 'proto-theatrical' period, as a distinct phase in the company's history. For a full discussion of his model see below.

[110] *Y Pen Bas / Y Pen Dwfn (The Impossibility of Britishness)* [The Shallow End / The Deep End] and *Tri Bywyd (Y Goedwig, Y Goeden, Y Coed) Scissors, Paper & Stone* [Three Lives (The Forest, The Tree, The Wood)] continued Brith Gof's exploration of 'disappeared' places in Wales. *Y Pen Bas / Y Pen* combined accounts of the flooding of Cwm Tryweryn by Liverpool Corporation (see above) with Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe* in an investigation of British colonialism abroad and at home. The performance was originally devised for live presentation in a swimming pool in Liverpool and eventually realized as a TV adaptation for S4C and HTV Wales. *Tri Bywyd* was staged in Esgair Fraith, a ruined farmstead in an afforested area near Lampeter (see above) and explored the rural and the domestic by portraying three lives and three deaths from Wales: the fictional story of a rural suicide; the historical account of Sarah Jacob, the so-called 'Fasting Girl of Llandysul', who in the 1860s acquired national fame for living two years with no visible sustenance before starving herself to death at the age of eleven; and the much publicized and still unsolved murder of prostitute Lynette White in Cardiff's dockland district in 1988. Although the latter piece was set amidst a ruin in a rural landscape, rather than an industrial building, McLucas himself rejected the notion that by moving back to the rural environment of Brith Gof's early work the piece manifested a change of attitude to site. Instead, he interpreted it as the logical next step in an 'increasing sophistication of address to location, and the relationship between the "host" and the "ghost"' (Brith Gof 1995: 49) in his site-specific work. All of McLucas's subsequent pieces have been set in rural contexts in and around Lampeter, where, after the split with Pearson in 1998, he relocated a significant component of Brith Gof's operation. Performances such as *Y Dyddiau Olaf/ Y Dyddiau Cyntaf* (Lampeter 1998) and *Draw, draw yn.../ On Leaving* (Lampeter 2000) expressed McLucas declared intention to 're-engage the company with its Welsh language constituency' and to embark on a series of site-specific works in non-urban locations' (Kaye 2000: xi).

[111] At the same time as working on these large-scale ensemble performances, Mike Pearson began to develop autobiographical solo works (*From Memory - Taxonomy, Autopsy, Blood* 1991 and 1995), using traditional storytelling devices in an attempt to explore performative, but non-dramatic forms of theatrical narrative (Pearson 1995b). Although at first glance fundamentally different from the formal concerns of the large-scale works, these more intimate pieces presented the other side of the same impulse to question the workings of theatrical representation. They used the singularity of the body, voice and personal narrative of the performer to assert an authentic performative presence against what Pearson regarded as the inauthentic procedures inherent in theatrical representation: 'My object was to find a mode of performance which concentrated on manual rhetoric, to indicate, demonstrate, locate and shape the details of a 'writing' which was not separate from a 'telling'. [...] Its point of attraction is the voice of the performer [...] in modulations and intensifications of speed, tone, volume, rhythm,

on its aggressive nature, its use in political propaganda, and its role in genocide. Welsh cultural identity appeared as a fragmented, fabricated and fragile creation, potentially reactionary as well as emancipatory. But with his last large-scale work for the company, *Prydain: The Impossibility of Britishness* (1996), Pearson began to move toward a more optimistic politics: *Prydain* is a celebration of identity as heterogeneity, creation, fluidity, and of performance as the privileged space where this new identity can take 'place'.

The third Brith Gof booklet, published in 1995, once again offers an insight into this development. The form of the publication differs from its two predecessors, which both combine an artistic manifesto with documentary material on past productions. The 1995 booklet instead features the transcript of a conversation between the two artistic directors and one of Brith Gof's long-serving performers, Richard Morgan, which touches on every aspect of their artistic and political development since the publication of the previous booklet in 1988. As the introduction states, 'this discursive form is chosen as the most appropriate to address the complexities of a company, mature in its theoretical stances, its conceptual sophistication and its integrated practice' (Brith Gof 1995: 1) – a complexity that appeared to have outgrown the possibility of being summarized in a straight-forward artistic programme. The form of the booklet also reflects Brith Gof's experience with the difficulty of appropriately documenting their large-scale site-specific shows in the form of the written and pictorial account that they

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emphasis. [...] As a next step, it might be possible to devise texts which can be placed into the mouths of others yet which are free from the theatrical conventions of the auditorium and its attendant literature.' (Pearson 1995b: 79-80) For a critical discussion of Pearson's 'ontology of performance' in the light of a deconstructivist 'undoing of "Presence"', see Quick, without date. 'Within Pearson's argument it is a signature embodied through the material presence of its author, that articulate the work's authenticity and resists appropriation and yet, paradoxically, is always recognizable by those who read, watch or witness it.' (Quick, without date: 2)

Carlson has made a link between the development of large-scale site-specific shows and that of small-scale autobiographical shows in the case of US performance art by identifying both as parallel moves out of traditional theatre buildings: 'On the one hand, there was performance as it was, for the most part, developed in California and New York – the work of a single artists, often using material from everyday life and rarely playing a conventional "character", emphasizing the activities of the body in space and time [...], and turning gradually toward autobiographical explorations. On the other hand, there was a tradition [...] of more elaborate spectacles not based on the body or the psyche of the individual artist but devoted to the display of non-literary aural and visual images, often involving spectacle, technology and mixed media. Both approaches were often usually undertaken outside traditional theatre spaces, but one-person performance tend to favor "artistic" venues such as galleries, while the larger spectacles sought a wide range of performance spaces, both indoors and out. An important part of this latter activity came to be known as "site-specific" or "environmental".' (Carlson 1996: 104-105).

used for their previous publications.[112] In 1988, Mike Pearson describes the intention behind publishing a company profile as follows: 'we feel it is high time to contact old friends and to introduce ourselves to new ones' (Brith Gof 1988: 1). The aim of both of the earlier publications was above all to increase the visibility of the company's work and make it known to a larger audience. The booklet of 1995 articulates a very different attitude to the function of documentation: 'Well, devised performance has no record to authenticate it or to legitimise it, it doesn't produce play scripts, and so any effort to document work, to talk about our work, is a kind of political project.' (Pearson in Brith Gof 1995: 3) This project served primarily to make manifest the theoretical sophistication implicit in the work: 'It's not only concept and operation, I think we do try to mix theory and practice, and it's that theory that may often be completely hidden.' (Pearson in Brith Gof 1995: 62). At the time Brith Gof began to publish an increasing number of theoretical essays, exploring a variety of aesthetic and political aspects of their work, to accompany their performance output.[113] 'Theory' was not thought of as something extraneous to their artistic practice – on the contrary, it was

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[112] Both McLucas and Pearson have concerned themselves with the issue of performance documentation. Pearson has approached the subject from a theoretical perspective in his 'theatre/archaeology' project, suggesting the application of archaeological methodology for a 'retrieval and reconstitution of performance' (Pearson and Thomas 1994a: 134; see also Pearson and Shanks 2001). McLucas has explored new forms of live performance documentation, using the parallel projection of video, slides and diagrams and audio-recordings, in a series of lectures on Brith Gof's site-specific works. (See also McLucas's 'graphic documentation' of *Tri Bywyd*, 'Ten Feet and Three Quarters of an Inch of Theatre' in Kaye 2000: 125–137)

[113] Pearson 1993; Pearson 1994c; Pearson 1995a; Pearson 1995b; Pearson 1996a; Pearson 1996b; Pearson 1996d; Pearson 1996f; Pearson 1997b; Pearson 1998a; Pearson and Shanks 1997a; Pearson and Thomas 1994a; McLucas and Pearson, without date.

this marriage of theory and practice that for Brith Gof in their later phase formed 'the work': 'I think our big ambition with Brith Gof has always been to found the equivalent of a nation state. A theory and practice hand in hand, which is a complex being' (Pearson in Brith Gof 1995: 4). 'Theory' in Brith Gof's thinking appeared not only as a reflection of, but also an inspiration for performative practice: 'From my point of view I've found most stimulation in critical theory, in those interdisciplinary moves that are happening [...]. I think it might be on these slippery edges of the academic world that interesting things might be happening' (Pearson in Brith Gof 1995: 25). Brith Gof's extensive reading of critical theory at the time entered the work on all levels[114] – not least in the company's changing understanding of the nature of Welsh identity.

In the 1995 booklet, Welshness is no longer defined by its content (e.g. as 'non-English', 'traditional' or 'post-industrial'). During the course of their conversation McLucas and Pearson refer to Welsh cultural identity in the context of 'two kinds of worlds slipping against each other' (Brith Gof 1995: 9), 'half models' (Brith Gof 1995: 10), 'a constant renegotiation of identity' (Brith Gof 1995: 11), 'the development of double identities' (Brith Gof 1995: 11), 'slippages, fractures' (Brith Gof 1995: 11), 'a culturally fractured nation like Wales' (Brith Gof 1995: 66), 'endlessly problematised and negotiated' (Brith Gof 1995: 67), and, time and again, as 'hybrid' (Brith Gof 1995: 66). The notion of a fragmented, fabricated and fluid identity that was taking shape here evokes Bhabha's model of hybridity:

> [h]ybrid hyphenations emphasize the incommensurable elements – the stubborn chunks – as the basis of cultural identifications. What is at issue is the performative nature of differential identities: the regulation and negotiation of those spaces that are continually, *contingently*, 'opening out', remaking the boundaries, exposing the limits of any claim to a singular or autonomous sign of difference – be it class, gender or race.
> (Bhabha 1994: 219)

This understanding of identity as a negotation of differences that manifest themselves on the level of the subject as overlapping or competing subject-positions 'in-between

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114 *Patagonia* (1992), Brith Gof's exploration of the Welsh colonial project in South America and their only show to date designed for a proscenium stage, began with the sentence: 'Maybe Baudrillard was right...', evidence for critic David Adams that 'Mike Pearson was letting contemporary thinking set the agenda of the company's theatre work' (Adams 1996: 57).

which or in excess of which identity is formed' (Bhabha 1994: 4) allowed Brith Gof, for the first time in its history, to acknowledge the ambivalence that was inherent in its own position as a Welsh-language company which, after the departure of first-language Welsh-speaker Lis Hughes Jones in 1990, was run by two immigrants who had both been born and raised in England:

> It might be that for Mike or I [*sic*] living in Wales is a deeply complex thing because we're born and bred in England, we've been living in Wales for a long time, we've learned the language, we've come to know these two identities, and I think that naturally leads us to make fractured, complex work. It would not be possible for us to make simple work I don't think [*sic*] from that kind of a no-mans [*sic*] land, where the rules are not clear. The problem is I think, that if you live within the heart of the culture, it is possible to persuade yourself that you are 'authentic', and that you can speak with a single, clear tone in your voice, or something. Well I don't think that's true either, I don't know where this simple, clear, clean, authentic and stable identity exists.
>
> (McLucas in Brith Gof 1995: 69–70)

Welsh critic David Adams has accused Brith Gof therefore of 'the colonialist's taking from an exotic culture, selecting from a position of dominance, making Wales an English invention, creating an artificial Wales' (Adams 1996: 54–5). But his criticism relies on a simplified and static distinction between colonialism and exoticism, dominance and repression, English and Welsh culture which Brith Gof themselves had already begun to dismantle. Although the company continued to conceptualize culture in Wales as a binary compound of Englishness and Welshness – the multicultural make-up of contemporary Wales still played no role in the company's thinking – the notion of a mutual exclusiveness of both cultures gave way to a new concept of cultural hybridity, which acknowledges the '*Présence*' (to use Hall's term) of English culture right in the heart of Welsh culture as a product of the history of colonialism. In an article written at the same time as the 1995 booklet, 'The Dream in the Desert', Pearson states:

> I live in Wales. I work in two languages, Welsh and English. I am an immigrant, born in England, though strangely I chose to emigrate to a small nation, England's first colony. I feel all the tensions and uncertainties of the immigrant: the conflict of past and present, of wanting both to preserve my history and to belong to another; the desire to accept and embrace but also to question and refute the orthodoxies of my chosen land. 'Me in Wales' is the first hybrid.
>
> (Pearson 1996b: 5)

Identity here appears as a hybrid between birth and choice, past and present, affirmation and rejection, dominance and desire – a hybrid whose instabilities and irreconcilable tensions have to be borne by the individual.[115] This hybridity of identity is for Pearson not just the fate of the immigrant:

> Like all colonies, Wales has a tradition of inventing itself. The creation of identities – personal, communal, national – is a complex daily endeavour of negotiation and adjustment, of making choices between traditional and contemporary, religious and secular, indigenous and imported, minor and dominant, Welsh and English.... 'Welsh culture' is the second hybrid.
>
> (Pearson 1996b: 5)

As Pearson himself has pointed out, this notion of Welsh culture as a continuous invention and reinvention is 'at odds with the orthodoxies of the current nationalist discourse' (Pearson 1996b: 8). The events following the break-up of Yugoslavia at the time, where people were murdered in the name of nationalism and cultural difference, had a deep effect on Brith Gof's growing scepticism about essentialist identity politics, and became the focal point of Pearson's investigation into the complex politics of nationalism in the *Arturius Rex* cycle and *Prydain* (see below). As the programme for the latter states: 'After the break-up of former Yugoslavia, can the idea of nation have any credibility when unspeakable acts were committed in its name?' (Brith Gof 1996a).

> Brith Gof's works have always concerned history, politics and national identity. A couple of years ago, however, I became uneasy. In a period when others in the world use such familiar notions as nationalism to justify unspeakable crimes, when overnight your neighbour can become your enemy, when meaning slips and slides

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[115] The problem of the individual as the site of conflicting cultural influences was the primary concern of Pearson's solo-works of the period. In them, Pearson for the first time explored the many parallels between rural Welsh life and his own upbringing in rural Lincolnshire in North-East England: the intimate experiential knowledge of 'y filltir sgwâr', the square mile of one's childhood; the loss of located practices through the influence of industrialisation; and the ensuing nostalgia for 'home'. 'I began to feel that all I was qualified to speak about was the 'small narrative' of my own life and experience. [...] I wanted such work to be extremely personal, resembling a kind of taxonomy, that classification of the specifics of form, behaviour and habitat which define a separate identity.(Pearson 1995b: 78) See, for example, *From Memory*, 'an intimate reflection on family and landscape, tradition and change, a childhood in Lincolnshire and a death on the pampas of Patagonia' [...]. Presented on one night at various locations in the Welsh Folk Museum, it was inspired by the memoirs of D.J.Williams of his childhood in west Wales [...].' (Pearson 1995b: 79); and *Bubbling Tom – Walking in Hibaldstow 24th/25th April 2000*, 'a site-work at my site of origin – "on my own doorstep", "in my own backyard" – within, and concerning, the micro-landscape of my childhood, walking "as if" in the couple of years either side of 1955' (Pearson 2000), again using texts by D.J.Williams.

> and truth becomes relative, the 'grand narratives' suddenly seemed too complex, or perhaps too disguised, to address authoritatively in performance.
>
> (Pearson 1995b: 78)

Scepticism about the foundational discourses and totalizing politics of nationalism does not devalue the concept of cultural identity – if it is unmoored from the master narrative of the 'nation' as an a-historical, essentialist ideal of 'the people'. Welsh cultural identity for Brith Gof was no longer conceptualized as the 'other' to the English colonial project, but as its historical outcome, the product of the 'suffocating history and instabilities of a dominant neighbour searching for its post-colonial identity' (Pearson 1996b: 7). The actual title of the 1995 booklet, *Y Llyfr Glas* (The Blue Book), is a direct reference to this colonial history in Wales: the infamous *Blue Books*, the British Government's Education Report of 1847, openly dismissed Welsh Nonconformism and the Welsh language as vehicles of immorality and backwardness, which in return led to a resurgence of Welsh nationalism in chapel-attending, Welsh-speaking Wales.[116] Notions of national identity and cultural difference both appear as the response to the trauma of colonialism:

> Wales has a tradition of inventing futures for itself, or inventing itself, in ways in which England as a dominant cultural force in Britain doesn't have. England, with its expansionist project went out there, and those colonised nations were immediately put into a state of crisis about their identity. You can sense that in Wales, with its constant negotiation of identity, adjustment of identity, and indeed the development of double identities. As a dominated nation you've got to be able to operate within the dominant modes as well as within your own.
>
> (McLucas in Brith Gof 1995: 10–11)

This quote clearly reverberates with echoes of post-colonial theory, with Bhabha's notion of mimicry as an appropriation of the dominant discourse by the subaltern (Bhabha 1994), Anderson's widely-discussed concept of the 'imagined communities' of nationality (Anderson 1983), and Hall's description of identity as an 'imaginative rediscovery' (Hall 1990: 224). It also alludes to a theoretical discourse closer to home, Welsh historian Gwyn Alf Williams's influential theory on Welshness as a project of

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[116] See Williams 1988 (1985): 209; Davies 1994: 390–2.

invention: 'This is the first point to grasp about the history of this people. Wales is impossible. A country called Wales exists only because the Welsh invented themselves. [...] They survived by making and re-making themselves and their Wales over and over again.' (Williams 1988 (1985): 3, 5)[117] Brith Gof related this concept of Welsh identity as invention and re-invention to their earlier notion of Welsh identity as performance.[118] The function of performance was now no longer thought of as that of merely reaffirming or challenging an identity whose existence precedes it, but as actually creating this identity in the act of performing. 'Perhaps because the forging of identity here is a creative process, not the assumption of a series of given states' (Pearson 1996b: 7). It is important to point out that Pearson here equates the notion of identity as a performative construct with that of performance as a singular (and self-determined) act of creation, an equation which the theorists of performative identity such as Butler have been careful to avoid. For Pearson, this equation offered a new social and political *raison d'être* for his performance work: whereas Brith Gof's early work had represented cultural identity as the *object* of cultural erosion, and their middle period focused on the *process* of cultural domination and devastation as defining aspects of Welsh cultural

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117 It is important to point out at this point that the project of political invention for Marxist Williams ascribes a different value to the creation of identity, one that acknowledges the determining forces of social power and collective historical experience, than the more playful postmodern concept of identity as pure process and infinitely transformable.

118 Williams's notion was to become highly influential on Welsh theatre in the 1980s and 1990s, most notably on the work of Welsh playwright and director Ed Thomas. 'With Brith Gof, [Thomas's work] could only exist in present-day Wales because the nature and status of Welshness is what it is all about. Virtually everything Thomas writes addresses itself to the problem of cultural identity and he echoes Gwyn Alf's ideas about an invented Wales' (Adams 1996: 52). ' In a Wales that only exists in the hearts and minds of those who desire it and who see that existence based on constant re-invention, any new Welsh theatre must be a theatre of invention, with its own new language, form and style. It is a theatre based on a life imagined rather than reproduced, and naturalism can play no part in it. The argument for a new Welsh theatre of invention is part of the argument for a new and invented Wales. It demands boldness and imagination; it demands the new and the original, but above all it demands the will and desire to create it.' (Ed Thomas, 'Wales and a Theatre of Invention', in Wallace 1991: 17)
In their consideration and alliance of both the nature of Welshness and the nature of theatre, as well as in their explicit rejection of theatrical naturalism as a style deeply imbedded in English culture, Ed Thomas and Brith Gof are certainly comparable. The strategies which they have employed to create a new theatrical form that may help to create a new model for Welshness, however, have been very different. Thomas has never attempted to break with the conventional theatrical *dispositif* of character, dialogue and the stage-auditorium divide. Instead, he subjects it to relentless scrutiny in order to explore the possibilities of a model of identity based on the theatricality of role-playing (identity as fiction), audience's perception (identity as visibility) and narrative (identity as memory). (For a more detailed discussion of the use of theatricality in Thomas's work see Roms 1998).

identity, Pearson now turned his attention to the performative *creation* of Welsh cultural identity, a creation in which the artist himself hoped to play a central role.

> Performance might then follow other agendas, agendas of cultural invention and stimulation as opposed to reflection and representation. It might provide a valuable forum for the creating, challenging, and changing of identities whilst still remaining a theatre of distinct identity which speaks of, and for, a distinct identity.
>
> (Pearson 1996b: 5)

There is a significant development in Brith Gof's artistic policy from a theatre practice that is '*relevant and responsive* to the perceptions, experience, aspirations and concerns of a *minority culture*' (Brith Gof 1985: 2; emphasis added) to one that is 'relevant, responsive *and challenging* to the perceptions, experience, aspirations and concerns of a *small nation*' (Brith Gof 1988: 3; emphasis added) to one that is dedicated to the '*creating*, challenging, and *changing* of *identities*' (Pearson 1996b: 5; emphasis added). It was the performative creation of identities, exemplified in the creation of Welsh identity, that began to interest Pearson now. Using once again Conquergood's ternary model of cultural performance[119], a distinction can be made between Brith Gof's early work, in which performance was used primarily as mimesis or imitation, their site-specific work, in which performance was used as poiesis or construction, and Pearson's later work, in which performance is used a both poiesis and kinesis, invention and reinvention. Bhabha's work on hybridity serves Conquergood as an example for his definition of kinesis, and Pearson's performances can be described accordingly as a movement that disrupts and puts into motion the master narratives of the 'pedagogical'. This also allowed him finally to reconcile Brith Gof's political ambitions with their aesthetic concerns:

> 'Me in Wales' is the first hybrid. [...] 'Welsh culture' is the second hybrid. [...] 'Welsh theatre' is the third hybrid. All three hybrids overlap and inform each other in my theatre practice – in its forms, its preoccupations, its themes, its function, its placement. A practice fractured, problematic, unauthentic [*sic!*]. It can annex techniques from alien sources, it can experiment and invent.
>
> (Pearson 1996b: 5)

[119] See Chapter 1.

In a personal and cultural context characterized by hybridity, the formal hybridity which Brith Gof's theatre work had possessed from the start was no longer in danger of being seen as an inauthentic construction – it was precisely this constructedness that now constituted the 'Welshness' of the work. 'I think we carry with us, not a sort of Welsh flag wrapped round us and the work, but actually all the problematics and the awkwardness of that discourse that we are engaged in Wales.' (Pearson in Brith Gof 1995: 65) [120] The 'otherness' of Welsh performative practices to the normative theatrical conventions of the (English) mainstream now consisted of the freedom, and obligation, to formally experiment in the face of a highly problematized cultural identity: 'What we are saying is one can go to work with all those features, problematise any of them, put them under pressure, not from some modernist notion of the avant-garde, but because they may not actually be appropriate as a way of working on identities at the end of the 20th Century, particularly Welsh identities' (Pearson in Brith Gof 1995: 20). More importantly, Pearson also began to envisage a performance style that was different from the alternative, experimental tradition that his work had been part of since the early 1970s, and which in his opinion had become increasingly commercialized, marginalized and academic. When for the first issue of a new performance journal, *Performance Research*, the editors invited artists to respond to two questions: 'What are the current concerns in your work?', and 'How do they, or might they, relate to the context of the times in which we live?', Pearson responded with a passionate pamphlet outlining his criticism of the state of experimental theatre practice and his vision of a new performance style, which is worth quoting in full:

> I'm concerned that... we have allowed a political project to become a cultural industry; a set of oppositional stances to become an orthodoxy; a series of life wishes to become a profession; passion to become pedagogy; bad attitude to become reasonableness. ... we have reneged on our responsibility to suggest radical alternatives to normative practices. ... we have courted academic and critical approbation, causing us to be prudent, rational and logical about work which is

[120] 'Is this what makes Brith Gof's work, in contrast to some other Welsh works about Welsh issues somehow travel, because of its oblique stance. So much Welsh work that tries to address issues of Welsh identity are solely based on Welsh issues rather than small nation status or wider questions of identity, so that the oblique stance that Brith Gof takes doesn't say "This is our problem, can you see the relevance to your situation", it actually says "This is your problem", because it doesn't actually talk specifics about Welshness[...].' (Morgan in Brith Gof 1995: 68–9).

> naturally none of these. ... theatre is an anachronism: performed behaviours, social simulations and staged events may already have fled elsewhere.
> I have an urgent need to readdress my practice! I'm concerned to problematize the status of both orders of participant (spectators and performers); to renegotiate all three performance relationships (performer to performer, performer to spectator and vice-versa, spectator to spectator); to generate material in all four axes of manifestation (space, time, pattern and detail); to create 'hybrids' – of music, action, text and site – which defy conventional labels, and instant scrutiny, works of complication rather than simplification; to find new sites for performance where the laws and bye-laws, the decorums and learned contracts of theatre can be suspended; to create works which fold together place, performance and public, as a 'field' of activity, rather than a theatre 'object'; to constitute performance as a discontinuous and interrupted practice of different modes of expression, of varying types and intensities, in which different orders of narrative can run simultaneously, and which may include rapid changes in mode and focus ...
> Performance might then become a locale of cultural intervention and social innovation, a strip of anti-social behaviour and incoherent activity which can alter the perceptions and life strategies of all present, where extra-daily occurrences, sensual experiences and the suspensions of personal decorum are possible. It might begin to resemble a 'special world', all the elements of which – site, environment, technology, spatial organisation, form and content, rules and behaviours – are conceived, organised and ultimately experienced by its participants. An idealised world, a utopia, where wrongs can be righted, injustices repealed, new agendas set ... a critical stand.
> In a period when we are led to believe that the only safe place is 'at home', that the crowd is not only dangerous but illegal, performance might then become a contemporary arena for challenging and creating new identities: artistic, personal, communal ...
>
> (Pearson 1996f)

Pearson here evokes a practice that is distinguished as 'performance' by constituting itself as a radical 'other' – to theatrical convention, to experimental tradition and to the quotidian: discontinuous, interrupted, different, anti-social, incoherent, extra-daily, special, idealised, dangerous, illegal. In its anti-theatrical stance, its interest in non-conventional spaces, its hybrid and multi-narrative style, its attention to polysemy, this practice strongly resembles the aspirations of Brith Gof's earlier site-specific practice. But Pearson now places an even stronger emphasis on the involvement of the spectator as a co-'participant', and on the exploration of the possible relationships between spectators and performers and their implication for a politics of identification. He also implies a different notion of spatiality to the one previously explored by Brith Gof –

one emphasising the constructedness of the 'special world' of performance – which deserves a closer look.

Pearson develops his new ideas on spatiality in a number of articles (Pearson 1993, Pearson 1996b), largely drawing on Michel Foucault's essay, 'Of Other Spaces' (Foucault 1986) (see above). The appeal of Foucault's notion of heterotopias as 'other spaces' of difference and 'effectively enacted utopia' for Pearson's concept of Welsh identity as a constructed other and creative performance is self-evident. Although implying creative imagination, social idealization and projection into the future, Pearson's understanding of Welshness as performance is precisely not 'utopian'[121]: it remains deeply rooted in the existing locations and sites of Welsh culture. In an article published in 1993, Pearson suggests the following typology for Welsh heterotopias: *Y Gwely Bocs: The Box-bed*[122]; *Yr Aelwyd: The Hearth*; *Y Filltir Sgwar: The Square Mile*[123]; *Y Fro: The Neighbourhood Home district*[124]; *Cynefin: Habitat*[125]; *Y Capel: The Chapel; Y Maes Cenedlaethol/ Yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol: The National Field/ The National Eisteddfod; Par Yr Arfau/ Cardiff Arms Park*[126]; *Cymru/ Wales*; *Parc Treftadaeth Cwm Rhondda/ Rhondda Heritage Park*[127]; *Llun/ A Photograph*; *Y Lleill/ The Others*[128]. It is interesting to note that Pearson here conceptualizes Welsh heterotopias as a series of concentric spaces, which from the smallest (the box-bed) to

121 From the Greek *ou* (not) and *topos* (place), utopia translates as 'no-place'.

122 A small bed hidden in a cupboard, often found in Welsh cottages.

123 'The intimate landscape of childhood, the patch we know in detail. The site of discovery and putting names to things: people and places. The beginning of history and geography, difference and similitude' (Pearson 1993: 20).

124 'The site of cohesion, homogeneity, common outlook' (Pearson 1993: 20).

125 'A personal construct of land, language, history. The site of familiarity and identification' (Pearson 1993: 20).

126 Cardiff's former National Rugby Stadium, rebuilt in 1999 and rechristened The Millennium Stadium.

127 A mining museum built on the site of the former Lewis Merthyr Colliery in Trehafod in the Rhondda valley, once the heartland of the Welsh coal-mining industry. Whereas in another Welsh museum of this kind, the Big Pit in Blaenavon, the visitors are taken down into the actual mine by former miners, Rhondda Heritage Park offers a replica pit bottom just below the earth's surface, in which tourists are informed about the living and working conditions in a Welsh mining town with the help of animatronics and *son et lumière* tableaux. In his work on 'theatre/archaeology' Pearson has used both sites extensively as examples for the application of theatrical techniques in heritage contexts (Pearson and Shanks 2001).

128 Under the headline 'Y Lleill/ The Others', Pearson lists: 'Sites of disappearance, sites of loss. The lands of Cantre'r Gwaelod lost under the Irish Sea at the end of the last Ice Age. The forgotten farms of Rhydcymerau decaying beneath the sterile plantations of the Cothi Forest. The cemetery of Capel Celyn silent beneath the waters of the reservoir of Tryweryn.' (Pearson 1993: 21).

the largest (Wales) form a hierarchic model of social spatiality not unlike the one which Foucault describes for the medieval space of 'emplacement': '[...] in the Middle Ages there was a hierarchic ensemble of places: sacred places and profane places; protected places and open, exposed places; urban places and rural places [...]. It was this complete hierarchy, this opposition, this intersection of places that constituted what could very roughly be called medieval space: the space of "emplacement"'. (Foucault 1986: 22) The affinity of Pearson's model to Foucault's pre-modern socio-spatial organisation is not accidental: for Pearson, there is a strong correspondence between the pre-modern and the postmodern recognition of the importance of specific places: 'perhaps the postmodern and the pre-modern have much in common' (Pearson 1993: 19)[129]. Pearson here revisits his earlier theory on the localized nature of Welsh cultural identity, expressed in the cognitive and emotional relationship of the Welsh with the locations of their culture (Pearson 1985; see above). This time, however, the emphasis is on the constructedness of this relationship: Pearson describes each of the Welsh heterotopias as a product of social communication, cognitive intuition or phenomenological perception – according to him culturally informed practices. Thus, for Pearson the sites are created by the performances of Welsh cultural identity and in return function as sites where Welsh cultural identity is created. His theory of Welsh heterotopias does not strictly fit Foucault's description of an 'actually lived and socially created spatiality, concrete and abstract at the same time, the habitus of social practice' (Soja 1989: 18). The emotional, sensual, psychological and cognitive dimension of space for Pearson carries at least equal weight to the social aspect which Foucault identifies.[130] In his 1993 article, Pearson, by his own admission, uses Foucault's notion

[129] Pearson here makes manifests a weakness in Foucault's argument: Foucault's medieval space of 'emplacement' and his contemporary (i.e. postmodern) relational space indeed have a lot in common. Both are defined by the importance they ascribe to the spatial relations between sites – whether hierarchical, as in the Middle Ages, or heterogeneous, as in today's 'epoch of space' – in contrast to the relative irrelevance of spatial relations in the 'space of extension' of modernity (see Foucault 1986: 23). Foucault himself does not mention postmodernity, but he establishes a link between the pre-modern and the late-modern or post-modern *vis-à-vis* the modern via their comparable relationship to social space. This link resembles the attempt of postmodern theorists to lay claim to medieval social and cultural structures as their direct predecessors, see Welsch 1991.

[130] Pearson's notion of heterotopias betrays an equally strong influence of phenomenology and Gaston Bachelard's study of 'internal spaces' (Bachelard 1994).

of heterotopias first and foremost in a metaphorical manner in order to establish a poetics of theatrical performance that is recognisably Welsh: 'It is seductive, and even if no more than a metaphor, a way of thinking about what is happening in a Welsh performance around notions of place as opposed to text' (Pearson 1993: 19). He draws on Foucault's own description of the theatre as a heterotopia which 'is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible [... and which] brings into the rectangle of the stage, one after the other, a whole series of places that are foreign to one another' (Foucault 1986: 25). Pearson's Welsh heterotopias are thus above all

> the 'places', specific locations, perceptual frames, which are 'represented, contested and inverted' in Welsh theatre. Perhaps they are always and only present in Welsh theatre: that is how we recognise it. They provide our cognitive maps, our orientation. They reinforce our sense of place. In the world. Similar 'places' may be found in other theatres which call themselves 'national'.
>
> (Pearson 1993: 21)

In an article published three years later (Pearson 1996b) Pearson develops the relationship between Welsh heterotopias and theatrical performance further beyond the representational. Although remaining closer to Foucault's original model of heterotopia as social construction than in his previous article, Pearson now models this extended function for performance not on Foucault's notion of the theatre as heterotopia, but on one of Foucault's other heterotopias, the colony:

> Perhaps because it is a work of construction – this place, this landscape, these architectures – a world in which one feels the energy and optimism of the pioneer, and which finds its resonance in the similarly utopian ideals of 'devised performance'. And as sites of invention, performance and colony may have a natural affinity. Perhaps the forging of identity here is a creative process, not the assumption of a series of given states.
>
> (Pearson 1996b: 7)

For Foucault, the heterotopian function of theatre and colony are quite distinct – the theatre, as a heterotopia of illusion, 'exposes every real space [...] as still more illusory' (Foucault 1986: 27), whereas the colony's role, on the contrary, is 'to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy,

ill constructed, and jumbled' (Foucault 1986: 27). Pearson conflates the two on the basis of their 'natural affinity' as sites of invention, so that theatrical performance and the colony (or, in other words, Wales[131]) appear as heterotopias whose function is both to expose and to create (identity).

At that time Pearson began to stage his performances in venues that were no longer the traditional cultural locations of the early work, nor the defunct industrial sites of the site-specific phase, but empty multi-purpose sheds on new industrial estates, which had sprung up all over the country. This change can partly be explained by the fact that the old architectural remnants of the industrial age had gradually disappeared or had been transformed during the Conservatives' reign in Britain in the 1980s and early 1990s: coal mines were turned into museums, steel works gave way to new buildings housing the 'clean' industries of the computer age, and the sites of former car factories became sought-after locations for new luxury housing. But the change also reflected the development in Pearson's understanding of Welsh cultural identity and its locations. The history and cultural placement of the venues, of central importance to Brith Gof's work in the past, was no longer of primary relevance.[132] On the contrary, it was now not the site that invested the performance with cultural significance, but vice versa: It underlined the fact that the 'locations' and 'sites' of Brith Gof's previous work both had a cultural significance of themselves as 'given' or 'found' venues. Following Pearson's notion of Welsh heterotopias as constructed locales, any space could now potentially be transformed into a heterotopia through performance – given that the performance

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131 Although in his article Pearson refers explicitly to the Welsh settlement in Patagonia as 'the colony', he also suggests that Patagonia is 'Wales, in the southern hemisphere, practically on its head' (Pearson 1996b: 7). Patagonia, or, 'the colony', becomes a metaphor for Wales at large, itself 'England's first colony' (Pearson 1996b: 5). There are two different evaluations of the term 'colony' at work here: colony seen from the colonizers' point of view as a site for possible cultural re-invention, and colony from the colonizeds' point of view as a site for cultural exploitation. There is a strong tendency to overlook Wales' own implication within the British colonial project that goes right through Brith Gof's work. It manifested itself most notably in *Llais Cynan* (Lampeter 1999), under the direction of Cliff McLucas, a performance connecting the Welsh, the Irish and the Aboriginal peoples of Australia as common victims of 'English' colonialization in the nineteenth century, without referring to the role of Welsh people in the colonialization of Australia and the widespread anti-Irish sentiments in Wales after the rise in Irish immigration in the wake of the potato famine.

132 These venues were not strictly speaking 'neutral'. They signified the disappearance of heavy industry, which was 'localized' because of its dependence on natural resources, and its replacement with the new, delocalized industries of global capitalism.

'represented, contested and inverted' (Pearson 1993: 21) the specific locations and perceptual frames which for him constitute the Welsh sense of place. 'Space' as a practiced 'place'[133] is here explicitly constituted *in performance itself*. Performance could transform the 'neutral spaces' of its venues into truly liminal sites, or, to use Bhabha's term, into a 'third space' of cultural hybridity (Bhabha 1990a).

The relationship between performance and its place was no longer thought of as that of a mutual interrogation, as in the 'host/ghost' model of the site-specific work. Inspired by the works of architect and architectural theorist Bernard Tschumi[134], Brith Gof began to conceptualize the relation between performance and site, or 'event' and 'space' to use Tschumi's terms, in new and more complex ways. Tschumi's *Manhattan Transcripts* (Tschumi 1981) 'offers a reading of architecture in which space[135], movement[136] and events[137] are ultimately independent, yet stand in a new relation to one another, so that the conventional components of architecture are broken down and rebuilt along different axes.' (Tschumi 1990: 99).

> It is the contention of the *Transcripts* that only the striking relationship between the three levels of event, space and movement makes for the architectural experience. Yet the *Transcripts* never attempts to transcend the contradictions between object, man and event in order to bring them to a new synthesis: on the contrary, it aims to maintain these contradictions in a dynamic manner, in a new relation of *indifference*, *reciprocity* or *conflict*.
>
> (Tschumi 1990: 100; emphases added)

Tschumi speaks of *indifference*, when 'spaces and events are functionally *independent* of one another' and 'no architectural considerations depend on utilitarian ones' (Tschumi

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133 I am referring here to de Certeau's distinction between space (*espace*) and place (*lieu*): '*space is a practiced place*' (de Certeau 1988: 117).

134 For a discussion of Tschumi's work and its relevance for a theory of site-specific performance see Kaye 2000: 41–52.

135 According to Tschumi, 'space: a *cosa mentale*? Kant's *a priori* category of consciousness? A pure form? Or, rather, a social product, the projection on the ground of a socio-political structure? The age of modernity: architectural spaces can have an autonomy and logic of their own.' (Tschumi 1990: 99).

136 According to Tschumi, 'movement: the action or process of moving. [...] Also: the inevitable intrusion of bodies into the controlled order of architecture. Entering a building: an act that violates the balance of a precisely ordered geometry [...]; bodies that carve unexpected spaces through their fluid or erratic motions. Architecture, then, is only an organism passively engaged in constant intercourse with users, whose bodies rush against the carefully established rules of architectural thought.' (Tschumi 1990: 100)

137 According to Tschumi, 'event: an incident, an occurrence; a particular item in a programme. Events can encompass particular uses, singular functions or isolated activities. [...] Events have an independent existence. Rarely are they purely the consequence of their surroundings.' (Tschumi 1990: 98)

1990: 100)[138]; *reciprocity*, when events and spaces are 'totally *interdependent* and fully condition each other's existence', and 'the architect's view of the users' needs determines every architectural decision' (Tschumi 1990: 101)[139]; and *conflict*, a more complex, confrontational relationship, when movements violate buildings, and buildings challenge movements.[140] McLucas was the first to adopt Tschumi's ideas for Brith Gof's site-specific works (*Tri Bywyd*), because they offered a challenging and original way of thinking about the relationship between site and performance. But taken to its full conclusion, Tschumi's notion of indifference seriously undermined the concept of mutual reciprocity that lay at the very heart of McLucas's understanding of 'site-specificity'. It was the idea of 'indifference' between space and event that began to interest Pearson. It allowed him to conceive of a spatiality that was truly conceived *in performance*. This spatiality became the starting point of the new phase in his work.

The changed attitude towards the cultural significance of performance spaces may at first seem surprising, given Brith Gof's previous insistence on the connotative cultural wealth of their venues in comparison with the absence of such connotations in conventional theatre. The contradictions which Quick has detected between the different values attached to the history of the theatrical space versus that of the non-theatrical site, and to the neutrality of theatre versus the neutrality of site (Quick, without date; see above) were now addressed in Pearson's new concept of heterotopia. In the absence of any concrete locative connotations, the new venues offered a more abstract 'spatiality' and with it the opportunity to concentrate on what he called the 'three performance relationships (performer to performer, performer to spectator and vice-versa, spectator to spectator)' (Pearson 1996f): 'In the *Arturius Rex* project for instance, we chose to use fairly neutral industrial spaces, new industrial spaces, simply because it allowed us to constitute the audience in performance in the way that we wanted for that work.' (Pearson in Brith Gof 1995: 49) The five parts of the *Arturius*

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138 For example, the 'Crystal Palace and the neutral sheds of the great nineteenth-century exhibitions, which accommodated anything from displays of elephants draped in rare colonial silks to international boxing matches' (Tschumi 1990: 100).

139 For example, 'the idea kitchen installations of the 1920s Werkbund' (Tschumi 1990: 101).

140 'You can also sleep in your kitchen. And fight and love.' (Tschumi 1990: 101)

Rex (1993–4) cycle – *DOA* (Cardiff/Wales, Durham/England, touring 1993)[141], *Camlann* (Cardiff, Recklinghausen/Germany 1993–4)[142], *Cysanu Esgyrn* (Neath/Wales 1994)[143], *Pen Urien* (never performed publicly)[144], and *Arturius Rex* (Cardiff 1994)[145] – developed further the work on different audience configurations which Pearson had begun with performances such as *Gododdin* and *Pax*. Thematically, the project dealt with the ethnic war in former Yugoslavia, read through the narratives around the historical and mythical King Arthur[146], and focused on the antagonistic side of cultural identity, its abuse for political propaganda, and its role in genocide. The performances applied the promenade style of the earlier shows, but divided the standing and moving audience along the lines of cultural or gender affiliation, playing self-consciously with audience placement, perspective and the complicity inherent in the process of watching. *DOA* was presented in a wooden box-like structure (that could be built into any auditorium) which allowed fifteen members of the audience to be in close proximity to the performers at ground level, with the rest of the audience watching the performance from a scaffolding structure above. In *Camlann*, the spectators were assigned to two separate, and opposing, groups of performers according to their linguistic preference

141 'Based upon the last few hours in the life of Arthur at the Black Chapel after the battle of Camlann – three frightened men in a frightening situation – with a collage of different orders of material: romantic texts, archaeological evidence and contemporary imagery. [...] Its dramatic form was unusual, beginning at the highest point of physical dynamism and gradually running of to the almost conversations. Part physical performance, part lecture, part political diatribe.' (Brith Gof 1995: 18)

142 'Using the scant evidence for Arthur's final battle [at Camlann], it examined the genesis of conflict, techniques of propaganda and incitement' (Brith Gof 1995: 17)

143 *Cysanu Esgyrn* [Kissing Bones] was devised for presentation at the National Eisteddfod Vale of Neath in August 1994. The performance was based on a Welsh adaptation by Sêra Moore Williams of Euripides' *Trojan Women*. It involved six female performers – three actresses and three electric guitarists. 'It focused upon the degradation and personal ignominy of the bereaved women with men remaining only as traces, as piles of clothes and shoes, and as stains on walls and bed sheets.' (Brith Gof 1995: 49)

144 *Pen Urien* [Head of Urien] was devised for two performers – one playing a corpse, the 'Dead', the other, 'The Living', manipulating, carrying, stripping, washing, abusing, bandaging, torturing him. The text used eyewitness accounts from the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The audience was to be involved by holding the body at various points during the performance. Pearson intended the work to be performed anywhere, 'around a car; a canvas screen; in a forest at night; hoisted from a tree' (Pearson 1994). The show borrowed its title from a poem about one of Arthur's contemporaries, the northern king Urien:
'Penn a borthaf ar vyn tu, / Penn Uryen llary llywyei llu, / Ac ar y vronn wenn vran du.' (Williams 1935: 12) ('I carry a head against my side, / The head of Urien the generous; he used to captain a host; / And on his white breast a black crow.' (Williams 1980 (1933): 143))

145 The culmination of the *Arturius Rex* project, using text, imagery and actions from the previous four manifestations. The show was performed in a gantried space resembling a hospital ward with two rows of beds, on and around which the performance took place.

146 For a discussion of the historical and the mythical Arthur with particular reference to Welsh sources see Bromwich, Jarman and Roberts 1991.

(Welsh or English). The spectators were thus asked to reveal aspects of their identity, which became constitutive for their experience of the performance. They were invited to literally 'take sides' and to participate physically in a sequence of actions, which rapidly escalated into a furious battle between the two opposing groups. *Camlann* used elements from the repertoire of images and movements of *Gododdin* (the entry of the war wagon, heroic games and confrontations, berserking and battle re-enactments) – only this time there were no longer easily identifiable 'heroes' and 'witnesses' or 'enemies' represented: both 'sides' in *Camlann* were given the same actions and texts (albeit in different languages)[147]. In *Cusanu Esgyrn*, a show about the experiences of women in times of war, female spectators shared the space with the three female performers while the male spectators looked down on the action from a scaffolding tower. *Arturius Rex* used a similar device, though this time the audience was separated at random between thirty spectators who watched the show amongst the performers at ground level, whilst the rest looked on from above. The audience here were literally co-performers, not merely in the sense of joining the performers in their actions, but in joining the performers in being watched by the other spectators. Furthermore, the semiotic implications of audience placement as a literal embodiment of viewpoint or 'stance', which had haunted the site-specific shows, now became the focal point of the work. The audience was no longer addressed as a homogenous community, but as one that was deeply divided along cultural or gender lines. But the *Arturius Rex* project also pointed to the cultural construction of these divisions, and to the absence of any inherent and ahistorical value that could be ascribed to them. Identification was revealed in its very dependency on the exclusion of otherness and difference. The project argued for the impossibility of occupying a neutral vantage point in theatre – and, implicit within this claim, the impossibility of being an 'innocent bystander' in any antagonism of identity.[148]

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[147] It is important to note that the two 'sides' were never presented as mirror images: the English-speaking audience almost always outnumbered the Welsh-speaking spectators, which created a different impression for the smaller crowd facing the larger crowd than the other way round.

[148] It is interesting to compare the reception that *Camlann* experienced in Germany to that to Gododdin five years earlier (see above). Whereas *Gododdin* was interpreted as a glorification of brutal defeat akin to

The play with the mechanisms of watching and the spectators' active involvement was taken further in *Prydain: The Impossibility of Britishness* (Cardiff, Glasgow 1996), Pearson's last large-scale performance for Brith Gof. Every night fifty special tickets were sold to so-called 'audience–participants' who were instructed in a series of physical tasks during the course of the show. The distinction between audience and performers was reduced to the greatest minimum, with spectators watching other spectators perform, and spectators performing whilst performers watched. The interaction between them was no longer designed on the basis of pre-existing cultural or spatial codes, but created in an impromptu fashion during each performance. *Prydain* assumed no a priori sense of communality based on a shared cultural identity – though the work also spoke of the desire to create such a community in performance, albeit one which might only have relevance in the space and time in which it happened. *Prydain* thus shifted its focus from site and its concomitant narratives to the spatial, corporeal and perceptual relationships between performers, audience and space as the basic material for its dramaturgy:

> It begins with an empty space[149] – a field, a room, a shed... And into this space we put a group of people, just standing: they have the status of a crowd. As yet, there is no formal arrangement of performers and spectators, no preordained acting areas – nothing that resembles a stage, no fixed viewpoints – nothing to focus our attention, no framing devices – no proscenium arch to tell us how to orientate ourselves. There may be interesting things to look at – other people ('Ur, look at 'im'), the architecture ('Cor, look at that') – but no clues what to watch. The single conditioning factor is of course size. The experience for ten people standing in a toilet cubicle is somewhat different from that for ten people standing in the nave of a cathedral! What we have is a 'field' within which to place and disperse our activity, our performers and

the ideology of fascism, *Camlann* was celebrated as a moving testament to the horrors of war. Following the reviews, this was primarily the effect of the different ways in which the two performances staged the audience (see also Koch 1998): ' Denn der Zuschauer, der zunächst orientierungslos in einer Mad-Max-Atmosphäre zwischen Ewigkeit und Endzeit, mythischem Nebel und modernen Ölfässern umherbummelt, wird immer mehr involviert; hört Hetzreden, wird von Trillerpfeifen zurückgepfiffen und von dröhnenden Keulen weggetrommelt; kann sich nicht mehr entscheiden, wird Mitspieler, Partei, Gegner, wird angefeuert, wird gejagt, wird Zeuge, Täter, Opfer.' (Bartel 1994) ('The spectator, who at the beginning of the performance wanders without orientation around a Mad-Max scenario between eternity and apocalypse, mythical fog and modern oil drums, gets increasingly involved; listens to rabble-rousing attacks, is pea-whistled back and rounded up; cannot decide, becomes co-player, party, enemy, is spurred on, is hunted down, becomes witness, perpetrator, victim.' [My translation])

149 Pearson's notion of the empty space clearly alludes to Brook's famous definition of theatre: 'I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and that is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged.' (Brook 1972: 11)

> spectators. But no architectural diagram is available to plan the field: we are operating at 'ground-level', face-to-face.
>
> (Pearson 1998c)

The abolition of the stage–auditorium divide, the address to the audience as crowd, the multiplication and mobilisation of possible viewpoints, the use of visual disorientation and selective inattention, and the emphasis on the performance as a 'field' rather than an object are all familiar concepts from Brith Gof's site-specific phase. But Pearson here implicitly rejects two of the central premises of site-specificity. The first premise is that of the 'totality' of space – i.e. that a space is never 'empty', but always already filled with a variety of referents with which the work must engage. Instead, the new theatrical spaces that Pearson used had no direct referent, but functioned as a signification-potential, which was constituted in its difference to both theatrical and quotidian codes of spatiality. The second premise is that of its 'fullness' – i.e. the fantasy of a potentially limitless theatrical signification. Instead of a dramaturgy based on an 'architectural diagram' – which for Pearson in effect already 'plans' the field, i.e. regulates meaning–production, despite its claims of unlimited signification – Pearson puts forward a new dramaturgical concept for *Prydain* which replaces spatial–architectural structures with the phenomenology of spatial experience and perception.

> Suddenly, within the mass, an incident occurs: a fight breaks out.[150] And simultaneously several things happen. The crowd steps back, withdraws, to give the action space. They take up the best position for watching: a circle. Why? Well, it's democratic: everyone is equidistant from the centre, there are no hierarchies of viewpoint, no best seats. There may be a struggle to see better but the circle can expand to accommodate those who rush to see what's happening. Or it can thicken. A proto-playing area – a temporary space – is created, constantly redefined by the activity of the combatants, who remain in three-dimensions. The crowd may be active, shouting encouragement, pushing in to jostle the participants, encouraging, engulfing the area. Or they may constantly withdraw to try and avoid the combat.
>
> (Pearson 1998c)

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[150] Pearson's 'fight scene' is strongly reminiscent of Brecht's 'Street Scene - A Basic Model for an Epic Theatre', which served as a model for Brecht's attempt to radically query the theatrically representational apparatus: 'It is comparatively easy to set up a basic model for epic theatre. For practical experiments I usually picked as my example of completely simple, "natural" epic theatre an incident such as can be seen at any street corner: an eyewitness demonstrating to a collection of people how a traffic accident took place. The bystanders may not have observed what happened, or they may simply not agree with him, may "see things a different way"; the point is that the demonstrator acts the behaviours of driver or victim or both in such a way that the bystanders are able to form an opinion about the accident.' (Brecht 1978: 121)

The fight scene for Pearson encapsulates the essence of his concept of performance: an energetic moment of physical exertion, leading to a temporary creation of space, an on-the-spot separation between active participants and watchers, a non-hierarchical multitude of perspectives, a resulting three-dimensionality of performance. Pearson places a strong emphasis on both the constructedness of this performance situation and on its fleetingness:

> In this incident, the essential contract of theatre already springs into being. There is a change in status and suddenly the division of watchers and watched. We have playing space and an 'inside' and an 'outside'. And the nature and quality of the activity, the way it occurs, is even now mediated – by surface, by climate and by context. Then, just as quickly, the incident ends, the playing space disappears and there are no clues what to watch.
>
> (Pearson 1998c)

Pearson seems to suggest that the representational apparatus of theatre, its 'essential contract' – defined by Lyotard as 'the hierarchized relation stage/house' and 'the hierarchized relation of inside/outside (Lyotard 1997 (1977): 287; see above) – is constructed and again dismantled during the course of the incident. This implies a new model of performance which subverts theatrical representation not by attempting to reorder it or abolish it altogether, but by revealing its mechanism.

> And then we rewind... Let's say then in our concept that only the fight is essential. But that it is the climax or mid-point of a drama which is elaborated anew in each performance. What comes before and after? How are [*sic*] the audience involved? Jets and Sharks?[151] The task is now to develop a narrative structure from this one incident which can involve the audience totally. Of course we will have pre-prepared material – choreographed sequences, soundtracks – but also the possibility to create fragments of narrative in the moment. And that's it! Fast and loose!
>
> (Pearson 1998c)

This involvement of the spectators as actual co-performers suggests an even closer corporeal and affective identification between them and the proceedings than was the case in Brith Gof's site-specific works, an identification registered psycho-somatically as an effect of the inter-corporeal nature of the incident, the physical relationship and

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[151] The two rival gangs in *West Side Story* by Arthur Laurents (Book) and Leonard Bernstein (Music).

relative proximity between performers on the one hand and performers and spectators on the other.

I would like to explicate Pearson's approach to spatiality and identification in his most recent work for Brith Gof by taking a closer look at his last large-scale production for the company, *Prydain: The Impossibility of Britishness* (1996). Following the study of antagonism between different cultural identities in the *Arturius Rex* project, Pearson now turned his attention to the very construction of identity itself. 'Prydain' is the Welsh word for Britain – and it was the creation of British national identity in the eighteenth century[152], which paved the way for the rise of imperialism and industrialization in the nineteenth century[153], and its current 'impossibility' as a viable political concept in a post-colonial, post-industrial age, which began to interest Pearson.

> What do you know about Britain? It's an island. It rains. It's violent. Shakespeare. The usual cliches about a post-colonial, post-industrial Britain exhausted by its own history. But as one Britain ends, so another might begin. Exactly two hundred years ago poets, politicians and preachers began to imagine new futures for this country. In a Europe in turmoil, visionaries such as William Blake[154] and Iolo Morganwg[155] dared to construct new utopias, to invent nations. Prydain is inspired by their vision, proposing new agendas in performance and politics. A theatre in the making, a work of invention. Not for the faint hearted, Prydain urges participation. For deep in the crowd something is stirring....
>
> (Brith Gof 1996b)

The promotional leaflet for the show describes the range of issues *Prydain* set out to investigate: '"The Body Politic", Enfranchised, Empire and After, New Futures, Identities, Hybrid, Imagined Communities, Utopias, Vision, Hopes for Great Happenings, the Crowd, New Agendas in Performance and Politics, Dissenting Theatre' (Brith Gof 1996a). At first, Pearson had planned to ask one hundred British artists, politicians, historians and opinion-formers, from Prime Minister John Major to *Sinn*

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152 See Colley 1992.

153 See Anderson 1983, above all his chapter on 'Official Nationalism and Imperialism' (Anderson 1983: 83–111).

154 William Blake (1757–1827), English poet, painter, engraver, and visionary mystic.

155 Iolo Morganwg (i.e. Edward Williams, 1747–1826), Welsh writer whose *œuvre* encompasses a vast range of literary and historical studies, many of them forgeries of medieval Welsh literature in an attempt to enrich the Welsh cultural past. Iolo invented the *Gorsedd* of the Bards, whose members include some of the most prominent Welsh artists, politicians, athletes and clergymen and which is closely linked with the *eisteddfod*, and was associated with the *Gwyneddigion*, a society of Welsh patriots founded in London in 1770 which was inspired by the political radicalism of the French Revolution.

Fein's Gerry Adams, from protest singer Dafydd Iwan to poet R.S.Thomas, from film-maker Peter Greenaway to comedienne Jo Brand, to contribute a brief definition of Britain. In the end Pearson discarded the idea and instead used a collage of various writings, both poetic and theoretical. The texts included extracts from Shakespeare's patriotic celebration of victorious Englishness, *Henry V* (1599); William Blake's symbolist epic *Jerusalem* (1804–20), with its prophetic depiction of the giant Albion's (i.e. England's) spiritual rebirth; two of the most popular novels on political utopianism and colonialism, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719); the first historical account of Britain in Tacitus's *Agricola* (97–98); the *Law of Wales* laid down by Hywel Dda (Hywel the Good) in the mid-tenth century, a 'systemization of the legal customs which had developed in Wales over the centuries' (Davies 1994: 88) and a symbol of Welsh unity and identity; *Armes Prydain* (The Prophecy of Britain), a collection of Welsh poems from the *Book of Taliesin*, published in the early decades of the same century; Sir Thomas More's philosophical essay on the ideal state, *Utopia* (1516); the so-called *Welsh Act of Union* (1536), a piece of legislation cementing the incorporation of Wales into England; the infamous *Blue Books* (see above); and the *Criminal Justice Act*, a law passed in the early part of 1995 to regulate such 'offences against the public order' as trespass, raves, travelling, squatting, and camping. Some of the texts were included in the soundtrack, others were spoken live by performers using megaphones.

The performance was divided into two sections with very different atmospheres: the first part, entitled 'Critique', dealt with issues such as 'empire, heritage, event, museum, borders, authenticity, dissent, monoculturalism' (Brith Gof 1996a). Its mood was dark and pessimistic, with a dominance of black and white colours, and featuring aggressive, often violent movements. The action was accompanied by a hard 'trash-metal' soundtrack by German–Slovene composer Robert Merdzo, who had previously collaborated with Pearson on the *Arturius Rex* project. The second section, 'Construct', was designed as the direct opposite of the first: dealing with the 'post-colonial [versus empire], contemporary [versus heritage], process [versus event], imagination [versus

museum], network [versus borders], hybridity [versus authenticity], communality [versus dissent], multiculturalism [versus monoculturalism]'. Its atmosphere was light, colourful and celebratory, with a 'jungle' dance-track by Welsh DJs Reu-vival. Pearson himself claimed that 'Part Two exemplifies a new set of optimistic attitudes in Brith Gof' (Brith Gof 1996a). And indeed, *Prydain* depicted a self-conscious shift in the aesthetic of the company. The first section used the aggressive and confrontational style of works such as *Gododdin* or *Arturius Rex*, with which Brith Gof in the past had expressed the antagonistic politics of cultural identity. The second section introduced a different performance style, one that attempted to express the contemporary world of fluid, heterogeneous and fragmented identities, in which cultural difference was no longer merely a source of violence, but also a source for celebration of a multicultural future. The intention of *Prydain* was not just to criticize the past or present, as was the case with Brith Gof's earlier work, but to help construct this future. *Prydain* was performed several months before the British General Election of May 1996, which was to endorse Labour's plans for a Welsh assembly, the first national institution of political self-representation in Wales in over seven hundred years, albeit one with restricted powers. But a growing demand for self-government was certainly already tangible in Wales.

The most striking aspect of *Prydain* was its involvement of the audience as co-performers. Every night fifty special tickets were sold to so-called 'audience–participants'. They were distinguished from their fellow audience members by wearing jackets with fluorescent orange shoulder panels, which they were handed at the entrance to the performance. (Brith Gof's six professional performers were wearing similar jackets with green panels.) The audience–participants carried out vital parts of the physical choreography of the work: they were asked to lift performers, pull parts of the set, join in a staged political protest, etc. All rehearsals for these actions were conducted during the performance, led by Brith Gof's performers, in full view of the rest of the audience. At times, one group of participants was preparing while another was performing. At other times, all audience–participants were involved at the same time. A

major part of Brith Gof's rehearsal process had been devoted to developing the techniques necessary to instruct and animate a group of participants in a short period of time.

Although the audience was thus separated into participants and onlookers – the 'silent majority' (Brith Gof 1996a) – *Prydain* was less concerned with the antagonistic confrontation of two groups of spectators, divided along cultural lines, as featured in *Arturius Rex*. Instead, its emphasis lay on the participation of spectators as co-performers. The model for the kind of performative participation that the work attempted to emulate was that of 'rave culture', with its ad hoc gatherings of large, participatory crowds . In the 1995 Brith Gof booklet, Pearson explains his interest in rave culture:

> Recently I was very taken by what Dick Hebdige has been writing about 'rave' culture. The notion that in a period when we have been led to believe that the only safe place to be is in one's home, here is actually a conscious rush to the communal. I like that very much, actually, to put oneself at risk in a way, both as a performer and as a spectator, in what I think we can begin to define as a 'special word', when all sorts of relationships and identities are up for renegotiation.
>
> (Pearson in Brith Gof 1995: 23)

The political aspect of audience configuration for Pearson here consisted no longer in the creation of a particular form of communality, modelled on an example of social interaction that was culturally determined, but politically marginalized, as in the early shows of Brith Gof. It was more generally the very act of bringing people together in one space and at one time that for Pearson had become inherently political, an act which offered the opportunity to transform communal energy into political change.[156]

[156] The inherent political potential of this form of communality was also recognized by the law. Section 63, 64 and 65 of the *Criminal Justice and Public Order Act* 1994 regulates 'powers in relation to raves'. A 'rave' is defined as: 'a gathering on land in the open air of 100 or more persons [...] at which amplified music ['includes sounds wholly or predominantly characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats'] is played during the night (with or without intermissions) and is such as, by reason of its loudness and duration and the time at which it is played, is likely to cause serious distress to the inhabitants of the locality [...].' (Morton 1994: 119)
Section 63 gives the police the power to order people to leave the land if the police believes 'two or more persons are making preparations for the holding' of a rave, 'ten or more persons are waiting' for a rave to start or 'ten or more persons are attending' a rave (Morton 1994: 119). Ignoring this direction, or returning to the land within a week, are both offences, liable to imprisonment or a fine. Section 64 authorizes police officers to enter the land in question without a warrant and to seize and remove any vehicles or sound equipment. Section 65 lets any uniformed constable who believes a person is on their way to a rave within a five-mile radius to stop them and direct them away from the area - failure to

Prydain was performed in a vacant warehouse on a new industrial estate in Cardiff. At the start of the show the performance space was empty apart from two giant monochrome cubes built out of scaffolding, which were facing each other on a diagonal line cutting across the room.[157] While the audience was waiting on one side of the space, on the other a van entered through a large doorway. Subsequently everything that constituted the 'performance' – performers and musicians, technicians, all equipment, building materials, props, lighting – was brought out of the back of the vehicle into the performance space.[158] The whole show was constructed from scratch in front of the spectators' eyes using only those materials. The 'backstage' team, including the two artistic directors, Pearson and McLucas, also became active participants: they serviced the performers' activities, drove vehicles, constructed the scenography, operated sound and light, always in full view of the audience.

The action for the first part, 'Critique', was predominantly oriented along straight rectangular lines that were aligned with the walls of the building - this remained the only reference to the given architecture of the venue. The choreography for the second part, 'Construct', also incorporated activities with a diagonal orientation which set them in conflict with the architecture of the cubes, which frequently 'got in the way' and disrupted the flow of the action. The relation of the performers and the audience–participants to the cubes was modelled on Tschumi's three axes of address: indifference, reciprocity and conflict. Most of the early action ignored the presence of the cubes, later activities were carried out despite being hindered by the cubes in their way, and towards the end, performers were climbing one of the frames, cloaking it with Perspex sheets covered in writing and throwing down pages set on fire. The sequencing of these

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comply can lead to a fine. (see Morton 1994: 199-121) Pearson used extracts from the Act in the text collage for *Prydain*, see below.

[157] McLucas had used two similar scaffolding cubes in *Tri Bywyd*, only there they signified two of the three houses in which the different stories took place, with the ruined farmhouse into which the cubes were built representing the third. See Kaye 2000: 125–37.

[158] The image of the van possesses several resonances: first, it refers to the state of Britishness – in the *Prydain* production notes Pearson defines the British economy as 'Negative equity, the National Lottery and three blokes in a rusty Transit van...' (Brith Gof 1996a). Secondly, it alludes to a re-assessment of some of the performance values of Brith Gof's pre-site-specific work. Pearson once described his early work as 'being defined by what you could get in the back of a Transit van. Not only was it defining the material of theatre, but also the aspirations as well. Something you could prepare in 3 hours, do it, put it all in the van and go home [...]' (Brith Gof 1995: 8).

various addresses represented the physical 'programme'[159] for the performance: contrasting the horizontal dimension (combining linear movements such as lines, queues, processions, demonstrations with circular movements such as forming a circle, dancing, attacking) with the vertical (suspension, erection, hierarchy). So-called 'passages', involving performers and audience–participants, alternated with 'events', involving only performers. The 'events' were pre-rehearsed elements which punctuated the performance and helped to reassemble it after the dispersed action of a 'passage'. Both passages and events were based on the model of the fight incident, involving eruptive and energetic moments of physical exertion, a temporary creation of performance space, and an ad hoc separation between active participants and watchers. In summary, *Prydain* was composed by Pearson as a 'kit' of physical sequences, movements and occurrences, which were reordered anew in each performance.

The physical programme of the performance no longer functioned as a metaphorical representation of cultural identity, nor as a symptom for the physical materiality of the performer's body alone. Brith Gof's site-specific work had inspired a new interest in Pearson in the performative use of the body:

> [...] I began to realize that if in our work performers were working in three dimensions and that there may be in many different physical relationships with each other, and with an audience, and that if we were putting pressure on all three of those sets of relationships, performer to performer, performer to spectator and spectator to spectator, then we might be able to work with the other elements, and the under-considered elements I think, [*sic!*] of physical communication. Almost every theatre practice uses gesture, kinesics, physical movements, but I also began to think that perhaps we could begin to generate material which was entirely based on proxemics, the distances between people. [...] Equally to begin to work with haptics, which is the touch of self and others [...].
>
> (Pearson in Brith Gof 1995: 54–5)

Pearson had begun his exploration of proxemics[160] and haptics in performance with the *Arturius Rex* cycle, with performances such as *DOA*, in which the audience was

[159] Programme, according to Tschumi, is 'a combination of events' (Tschumi 1990: 104). In order to represent the complexity of the relationship between event and space, Tschumi devises hypothetical programmes - sequences of events, usages, activities, incidents - and projects them onto autonomous spatial architectures - frame after frame, room after room, episode after episode - as a form of motivation.

[160] For a discussion of proxemics in theatre see Elam 1980: 62–9. '[T]he organization or architectural, scenic and interpersonal space [...are] factors which the American anthropologist Edward T.Hall has termed *proxemic* relations. [*Proxemics* is] defined by Hall himself as "the interrelated observations and

confronted with the sweat and the smell of the performers in the intimate setting of the box, and *Camlann*, which prefigured many of the techniques of audience participation used in *Prydain*. The work was influenced by his collaboration with David Levett (now Lyn Levett), a performer, composer and musician with cerebral palsy.[161] Levett first worked with Pearson in the physical duet *In Black and White* (1992)[162] and later was King Arthur in the *Arturius Rex* cycle.[163] Levett's disability is customarily described as 'making jerky or uncontrolled movements', but, according to Pearson, 'we do know what Dave means, is intending, despite the fact that he is not making conventional signs in any way at all' (Pearson in Brith Gof 1995: 59). Once again, Pearson seems to imply a complex semiotic argument, one which distinguishes between what the performer intends and what he or she signals or presents. He refers in this context to Eugenio Barba's concept of 'pre-expressivity', 'the level which deals with how to render the actor's energy scenically alive, that is, with how the actor can become a presence which immediately attracts the spectator's attention' (Barba and Savarese 1991: 188). With the help of training, which Barba distinguishes as an extra-daily *acculturation* of the body from the *inculturation* of daily behaviour, a performer is able to organise physical action

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theories of man's use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture". (Elam 1980: 62) Hall distinguishes between *fixed-feature*, *semi-fixed feature* and *informal* as three principal proxemic relations. Elam concludes: 'Much modern theatre has tended [...] to transform architectural fixity as far as possible into dynamic proxemic informality. The centre of the theatrical transaction has become [...] less an absolute stage-auditorium divide than a flexible and, occasionally, unpredictable manipulation of body-to-body space' (Elam 1980: 63).

161 For a in-depth reflection on his collaboration with Levett and its consequences for the theory of physical performance see Pearson 1996d (partly reprinted in Pearson 1998a): 'Son existence physique est si compliquée qu'on a du mal à l'imaginer. Il ne peut se nourrir, se laver, s'habiller, sortir de son lit, se torcher ... Il doit compter sur les autres pour le lever, le porter et l'installer. En cela, il fait preuve d'une grand confiance. Il touche les autres et il est touché par eux; il connaît donc le contact intime avec autrui, brisant ainsi les conventions sociales auxquelles nous sommes conditionnés. Il est nu aussi bien avec les hommes qu'avec les femmes. Il communique ses désirs et ses intentions avec les gestes et les postures les plus subtils: ouvrant la bouche pour accueillir la cuiller, ou se penchant d'un côté, le bras rigide, prêt à recervoir la manche du manteau.' (Pearson 1996d: 61) ('Dave lives in a sophisticated physical culture, which few of us can imagine. He cannot feed himself, wash himself, clothe himself, get out of bed by himself, wipe his arse...He relies on others to lift, carry, position him. In this, he shows immense trust and confidence. He touches and is touched by others; he comes into intimate proximity with others in ways which break the everyday conventions of socialisation and conditioning. He is naked with both men and women. He operates and is operated upon. And he communicates desire and intent with the subtlest of gestures and postures: of opening the mouth ready for the spoon; of leaning to one side, arm rigid ready for the coat.' (Pearson 1996e))

162 'The confrontation of two different physicalities, with Levett working both in and out of his wheelchair: shadowing, imitating, mirroring, supporting, fighting, lifting, carrying... [...] Questioning notions of ability and disability in performance.' (Brith Gof 1995: 59)

163 The decision to place audience members above the action in the Arturius Rex cycle was motivated in parts by Levett's disability – the audience was able to watch him perform out of his wheelchair on the floor or on a bed.

into a physical 'score' ('a precise and iterable sequence of actions performed by the body or voice' (Stewart 1993: 379), the smallest unit from which a performance is built. A physical score thereby has both a semiotic dimension, referring to a meaning or content which it signifies, and a somatic dimension, relating to its physiological or biological aspects. Pre-expressivity is the capacity of the physical score to communicate on a somatic level as a force felt in the body. Nigel Stewart (Stewart 1993) has considered Barba's theory of pre-expressivity in terms of Derrida's analysis of Freud's model of the neurological aspects of consciousness. For Freud, an event does not enter consciousness directly, but is first 'represented' as an electro-chemical resistance in a neuron, before selectively acceding to consciousness. For Derrida, it is this resistance that is the signifier, a 'force' (Derrida 1978: 236) operating independently of and prior to consciousness. The 'perceived' is thus always already a *reproduced* event (Derrida 1978: 211). Similarly, for Barba, the physical aspect of performance is not a mere representation of a conscious intention made beforehand by the performer. What the audience perceives is a reproduced event, in which the 'original' intention has been displaced and made significant by the work of the accultured pre-expressive properties of the performer's body. Stewart argues that 'in creative work there is always a gap – indeed, an *aporia* – between what the performer *intends* and what the performer *presents*.' (Stewart 1993: 383) The hierarchical relationship between intention and presentation, consciousness and body is reversed. According to Pearson, Levett offers a model for such a reversal. Although 'decided' (cf. Barba and Savarese 1991: 18) on a level of intention, the presentation of the movements of Levett's body would often be random and unpredictable. Levett works with the actions his body wants to make, rather than training his body to make the actions he wants. He nevertheless manages to communicate through the complex semiotic and somatic aspects of the physical co-presence of his body and those of the audience.[164] The experience of the disabled

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[164] In an article on the future of the human body and its relation to new technologies of representation, Sally Jane Norman discusses Pearson's collaboration with Dave Levett in the context of the development of new hybrid models of subjectivity in performance. She puts Levett's disabled physicality in a line with the use of puppetry, grotesque and monstrosity as examples for the way in which theatre stages different 'registers of presence' in an attempt to undermine the imaginary unity of the body: 'Die total fremden

performer thus highlights the gap between intention and presentation and reverses their hierarchy.[165] This is the hierarchy of the outside and the inside of theatre, or the inside and the outside of the body, the toothache and the fist, the 'Real' and its representation that Lyotard has identified as the basis for representation in performance (Lyotard 1997 (1977); see above). Levett's performance style offers a possible example for Lyotard's 'energetic theatre', producing 'the highest intensity [...] of what there is, without intention.' (Lyotard 1997 (1977): 288)'. In order to reproduce this form of energetic performance in the abled-bodied performers, Pearson attempted to make performance conditions ever more difficult in order to increase the gap between intention and presentation. He became interested in ergonomics, the study of the relationship of humans to their working and living environments:

> It may be that the constructed environment of performance is 'active', much better, or much worse, than that of everyday life in 'real Wales'. And it may change from moment to moment – from acceptable, to unacceptable, to optimal. The substance of performance may be no more than the performers dealing with the ergonomic extension or restriction of their clearance, reach, posture and ability to apply strength. The methods and organization of effort, flexibility or response through improvisation, use of tools, both designed and improvised, their symptoms may be as fascinating as the fictional fate of dramatic characters.
>
> (Pearson 1997b: 93)

Beziehungen zwischen dem Körper, der Oberfläche, dem Objekt und der Umgebung, die Dave sichtbar macht, schockieren und kommunizieren dadurch eine machtvolle und durchdringliche Sinnlichkeit. [...] seine spektakuläre Bekräftigung des Seins in seiner starken Andersartigkeit ist in sich eine dramatische und bewegte Erforschung alternativer Existenzformen.' (Norman 1996: 149) ('The completely alien relations between the body, the surface, the object and the environment which Dave makes manifest shock and thus communicate a powerful and penetrating sensuality. [...] Levett's spectacular affirmation of Being in its strong otherness is in itself a dramatic and moving exploration of alternative forms of existence' [My translation])

This appropriation of the disabled body as a metaphor for physical otherness is not without its problems: In a series of reviews of the *Arturius Rex* cycle for *Disability Arts Magazine*, Kaite O'Reilly has pointed to its ambivalence: 'What purpose does a demonstration of disablement serve other than horror resulting in catharsis? [...] do we want or need images of disability and disablement to purge our colluding souls? [...] disability as victimisation – our physiology representative of inhumanity in the chaos of bewildering times.[...] When a disabled performer is representing the wounded hero, disability becomes a metaphor for that wounding. [...] When this is paralleled with disabling sequences from contemporary wars, by association, disability merely becomes a metaphor for disablement.' (O'Reilly 1995: 12–14).

[165] In an article on the influence of Antonin Artaud on his aesthetic (Pearson 1998a), Pearson discusses his work with Levett alongside his collaboration with German free-jazz saxophonist Peter Brötzmann (*Der Gefesselte/The Bound Man* Hamburg/Germany 1992, *Angelus* Hamburg/Germany 1994). Brötzmann for him presents the other side of this gap: the point of 'conflation of impulse and action, energy and form, in the moment of execution' (Pearson 1998a: 37), when intention and presentation fall together in one moment.

As Stewart has argued in response to Barba's work, '[n]ot only did the gap between intention and representation problematize the notion of a free and autonomous self, [...] but the performer's identity and integrity was seen to reside in the pre-expressive capacity of her/his tradition [i.e. the somatic level] rather than in the personal or cultural meanings which that tradition expresses [i.e. the semiotic level]' (Stewart 1993: 385). It was this 'body-as-identity', or 'identity-as-body' that Pearson searched for in *Prydain.* For him, too, identity resides in the somatic, in the repeated acts of 'performance preserved in the bodies and memories of its varying orders of participants' (Pearson 1996e).[166] But it was the body in its identity as an *incultured* body rather than an *accultured* one, i.e. the body in its 'daily', cultural differentiation rather than its extra-daily, meta-cultural behaviour[167], that interested Pearson: exploring performers' physicalities 'not only in their coded, theatrical behaviour but in what is actually happening' (Pearson 1996e).[168] For Houston, Pearson's new emphasis on physical presence in his work presented a shift from considerations of space towards a revived focus on the body. I want to argue, however, that Pearson still remained primarily interested in the spatial dimension of this presence. Following Lyotard, the distinction between intention and presentation is not located in the singular body of the performer, but inscribed in the spatial conventions of theatre's representational apparatus. It was not so much the singular body, but its relationship to the space around it that preoccupied Pearson's thinking in ways that went beyond the body-centric theory of Barba's Theatre Anthropology. This interest included the spatial and inter-corporeal relationship between the performer and the audience, the foundation for the spectator's 'fascination' with the body of the performer. With regard to Levett, Pearson described

[166] The French original says: 'une performance conservée dans les corps et les mémoires de tous se participants' (Pearson 1996d: 64).

[167] Feminist theatre and performance critiques have criticized the differentiation between acculturation and inculturation in Barba's theory as a romantic search for a pre-differentiated state before all conflicts of meaning and identity, see, amongst others, Munk 1986; Phelan 1996.

[168] The French original says: 'non pas dans leur comportement théâtral et codé, mais dans ce qui se passe effectivement' (Pearson 1996d: 63) Pearson developed his theory of intention versus presentation in the case of Levett's performance practice as a critique to Barba's distinction between extra-daily and daily behaviour, and his notion of training as an acculturation of the body: 'Quel est le but et la nature de l'entraînement pour un corps infirme qui ne pourra jamais devenir athlétique' (Pearson 1996d: 63) ('What is the purpose and nature of training for the disabled body which will never achieve athleticism?' (Pearson 1996e))

the 'attractiveness' of the performer as a 'kind of heat' (Pearson in Brith Gof 1995: 60). Susan Melrose has developed a theory of signification in theatre based on a theory of energetic perception, 'an intersection of electro-magnetic fields, something like the clash and blending of body-heat' (Melrose 1994: 217), that draws in the spectator into the force-field of the performer.[169] If Pearson managed to 'engage spectators in the force of pre-expressivity by bringing them actively into the performance space' (Houston 1998: 251), it was thus through the *inter*-corporeal dimension, the psycho-somatic co-presence of bodies in performance, as the foundation of communication and identification in performance. Whereas the metaphorical style of the early work represented a culturally significant activity, and the symptomatic style of the site-specific work attempted to present the energy with which the activity was performed, the energetic style of Pearson's later work attempted to evoke cultural identity as an effect in the body within the physical presence and co-presence of participants involved in the same activity in the same space at the same time.

> Instead of making a performance which is meant to be *about* something – about the conflict of these many opinions and perspectives of Britain – we decided we had to make a performance which *is* something, that *is* the experience of this situation. It occurred to me that perhaps the only way to deal with these conflicting opinions and perspectives was to try to 'embody' what is going on in Britain. That is, to create a situation where some people are willing to participate, and push things a little, and some people are more likely to watch. I'm not making a pejorative distinction between the two; what I'm thinking of is that in the reality of experiencing events, there is a multiplicity of involvement and perspective. Some things you see close up, some are far away, some are half hidden, some you see clearly but you don't know how to cope with them, and so on. In terms of exploring 'the impossibility of Britishness', ultimately we decided to go to work on the *form* of an experience rather than trying to find a line on the subject matter.
>
> (Pearson as quoted in Houston 1998: 255)

The experiential *form* of *Prydain* also changed the relationship between text and action, or language and body[170] – or, in a wider sense, between the pedagogical and the performative – in Brith Gof's work. The earlier works juxtaposed the reality of objects and actions taken from daily life with classical writings in Welsh in order to invest the

[169] Melrose too discusses Derrida's theory of force in this context, see Melrose 1994: 217 ff.
[170] See also Lehmann's analysis of Greek tragic discourse as a tension between its corporeal and textual referent in Chapter 2.

former with the same cultural signification that the latter possessed. The site-specific shows offered a sophisticated use of bilingual material which accompanied a highly energized physical choreography, and thus invested the actions with the different cultural connotations that distinguishes the two languages in Wales. In the *Arturius Rex* cycle the confrontation of different languages was staged as an antagonistic conflict, but one in which the positions were not as easily identifiable as in site-specific performance such as *Y Pen Bas, Y Pen Dwfn*, where English was the language of colonialism and Welsh the language of the colonised. Instead, in *Camlann* the two languages were indistinguishable (see above), in *Arturius Rex* the harrowing victim accounts from the Bosnian-war were delivered in English, and in *DOA* English performers struggled to speak Welsh, mirroring their desperate attempt to communicate the horrors of war. As Pearson argued at the time:

> Ond os ydym am gyfleu y gwrthosodiadau a'r gwrthdaro ieithyddol yn y Cymru gyfoes, efallai fod angen i ni roi mwy o rwydd hynt dramatig iddynt. Efallai mai y rhai 'annilys' yn ein mysg, y rhai hynny ohonom sydd wedi dysgu Cymraeg, ddylai ysgwydddo'r cyfrifoldeb hwnnw. Roedd y profiad o weithio yng Nghaerdydd, ble mae cynulleidfaoedd yn cynnwys siaradwyr Cymraeg a sioradwyr di-Gymraeg a phob amrywiad rhwng y ddau begwn, wedi ein harwain at ffyrd eraill o drin o gwrthdaro a'r dadelfennu ieithyddol o fewn perfformiad. Maen' ddigon tebygol fod yma ddysgwyr o amrywiol lefelau.
>
> (Pearson 1997d: 17)[171]

The *Arturius Rex* cycle, however, did not merely represent cultural antagonism in the struggle of different languages. In its juxtaposition of medieval poetic representations of the conflicts surrounding the death of warrior-king Arthur with contemporary mass media war coverage it also queried language's general ability to represent 'truth', in particular the truth of suffering and death. 'The truth becomes that which does not speak, it works.' (Houston 1995: 2). *Prydain* took this problematic relationship between language and action, text and performance one step further by problematizing

[171] 'But if we are to truly reflect the juxtapositions and clashes of language in contemporary Wales we may need to bring them into freer dramatic play. Perhaps it falls to those of us who are by nature unauthentic [sic!], those of us who have learned Welsh, to do this. The experience of working in Cardiff, where audiences include Welsh-speakers, non Welsh-speakers and all shades in between, has lead [*sic!*] us to new approaches to the collision and fragmentation of language in performance. Here there are those who are likely to be learners of varying abilities.'(Pearson 1997e)

the relation between utopian writing to the (political) action it is meant to motivate. Text in both Welsh and English was shouted through megaphones, whispered in ears, scrawled on walls and floors, inscribed on the naked bodies of the performers, set on fire.[172] Houston interprets the use of bilingualism in *Prydain* as follows: 'The effects of *antagonism* here were between performers speaking different languages, and represented a traumatic social division between Welsh and English culture in Britain.' (Houston 1998: 256) Although the use of English and Welsh certainly alluded to the linguistic, cultural and social division that undermines the imaginary unity of 'Britishness', the effects of antagonism Houston identifies were to my mind of lesser importance in this performance than in the *Arturius Rex* cycle. In *Prydain*, the performers were able to choose the language in which they wanted to deliver their speech, revealing aspects of their individual identity.[173] Instead of illustrating text, scenario, plot or story with gestures and movements, the sequences of action and interaction, events and episodes of encounter, movements and passings carried their own meaning. Actions overlaid and compromised the text, no movement or speech was allowed to reach conclusion or resolution. To give an example[174], at the beginning of the show one of the performers recited William Hodgson's eulogy on equality, freedom and human rights of 1789:

> All men, when they come out of the hands of nature, are equal and free. This freedom and equality they can never infringe without committing injustice to themselves; they ought always to remain equal and free: no distinction ought to exist amongst the citizens but what is conducive to the general utility and happiness of

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[172] The image of fire alludes to both the fervour of revolutionary action ignited by the passion of writing, and the anti-intellectual stance of the NSDAP who burned the books of so-called 'anti-German' authors in Germany in 1933.

[173] 'Mi awgrymodd Zygmunt Bauman [*i.e.* Bauman 1995] fod pob cyfarfyddiad mewn cymdeithas ôl-fodern yn cael ei berfformio heb adael unrhyw beth o'i ôl. A'r amwysder hwn ydi melltith a chyfle'r creadur moesol. Maen' cynyddu dwyster cyfrifoldeb yr actor yn ogystal a goblygiadau ei ddewisiadau. Ac mae'r amod yma o for-er-mwyn – 'y 'cyfrifoldeb dros' yr arall – yn gefndir i'r 'olygfa fore'. Gan ddylin syniadauu o'r fath mewn perfformiad, mi all y perfformiwr orfod penderfynu yn y pendraw pa iaith neu ba iaith mae am siarad gyda phwy – cyd-berfformiwr, cyd-wyliwr – a hynny yn union yn yr ennyd o gyfarfyddiad theatrig, yr olygfa wreiddiol.' (Pearson 1997d: 18) ('Zygmunt Bauman [*i.e.* Bauman 1995] has suggested that in a post-modern society, each episode of encounter is performed as if leaving no lasting trace. This ambivalence is the moral person's bane and chance at the same time. It makes the responsibilities of the actor more profound and consequential than ever before. And this condition of being-for – this 'responsibility for' the other – frames what he calls the 'primal scene'. Following such notions in performance, it may be that the performer may finally have to decide which language or which version of which language they will speak to which person – fellow performer, fellow spectator – in the very moment of theatrical meeting, the primal scene.' (Pearson 1997e)

[174] The following uses my own memory of the performance and Houston's description (Houston 1998: 257–8).

society; any privilege, therefore, granted to a member of society for his own particular advantage becomes an injustice to the rest of the citizens.

(Hodgson, as quoted in Brith Gof 1996a)

Whilst this text was spoken, the other performers were approaching the audience–participants with gestures of caress and embrace, establishing a sense of camaraderie and inviting the audience to listen to the words, as if to impress their meaning onto their bodies in order to transform the writing into action. The first performer then began to take off his clothes, emphasizing each passage of his oration with the ripping away of garments. While gradually exposing his flesh he was simultaneously revealing the markings of text written all over his body. He was then blindfolded, two open books were placed in his hands, and the books were set on fire. The performer began to move across the space with his arms stretched out, balancing the two burning books in his hands, thus restricted in his movements by cold, darkness and fire. 'While this may seem a betrayal of [the performer]'s physical score, in fact it encouraged a manifestation of somatic "force", and with this force came the revelation of unconscious meaning from behind the conscious narrative of eulogy and physical anecdote. For the audience the effects of this event had as much meaning through their proxemic and haptic experience as the signifying process of [the performer]'s narrative.' (Houston 1998:258) The utopian writing which inspired the performance, with its anticipation of an ideal nation and its implicit call for political action, was thus transformed above and beyond its constative contents into a performative event. The performers were literally carrying the marks (and thus the burden) of these historic visions on their bodies. In return, their bodies became the sites where the textual referent was evaluated, contested or affirmed. Utopian significations became psycho-somatic enactments and thereby performative experiences. By thus transforming the text (pedagogy) into an event (performance), a utopian vision into a heterotopia, an imagination into enactment, in which the audience was involved through active engagement and performative experience.

Nigel Stewart has described the meaning constitution of pre-expressive theatrical practice as 'neither *controlled* within a cultural signifying *system* nor seen to be

supplanted by some purely 'natural' animal essence [or, in the case of *Prydain*, 'the purely anarchistic fit of antagonism' (Houston 1998: 263)]. Rather meaning is *disseminated* by an outward material and heterogenous *somatic-semiotic process*, operating dynamically and independently beyond the authorial control of either director or performer, which transgresses the sign's systematicity.' (Stewart 1993: 385) Exploring the body-as-identity for Stewart shapes a way of 'revolt' against both the 'inward law and rational principle' of signification and representation *and* the 'semiotic logic of the sociality in which the (speaking, historical) subject is embedded' (Stewart 1993: 385). By 'revolting' against the principle of representation through establishing a psycho-somatic form of interpretation, *Prydain* also 'revolted' against the discourses that constitute the subject in its identity as a member of a culture. As Houston has argued in response to Stewart, '*Prydain* offered the signifying work of the body which created an *aporia*, a liminal presence, hovering *between* pedagogy and performative subjectivity, a site of paradox and revolt, a liminal place in which identity was lost and curiously discovered.' (Houston 1998: 263).

Again, this element of the work can be extended from the level of the corporeal to the level of the spatio-representational aspect of the performance. *Prydain* suggested that performance could reveal the mechanisms with which cultural identity is constructed by revealing the mechanism by which performance itself constructs its representation of identity. In *Prydain*, the whole apparatus of theatre was taken apart and reassembled. Pearson's intention seemed no longer merely to abolish representation in theatre and replace it with a non-representational performance, but to exhibit the working of theatrical representation in its constructedness: from the creation of space, to the structure of the audience–performance relations, to the use of body and text. Houston has called this technique 'proto-theatrical' (Houston 1998: 244), referring to Pearson's well-documented interest in non-theatrical forms of performative expression, encounter and display which informed his work on *Prydain*. But this work was also 'post-theatrical', a performance after theatre, or, better still, a performance at the margins of the theatrical, exposing its 'under-side', 'giving the audience a glimpse of its inside, its

reverse side, its hidden face.' (Féral 1982: 176) Though *Prydain* did not stop at merely critiquing the representational apparatus of theatre, its ambitious intention was to construct new models of identity in the very act of this performative critique: 'This is transitive theatre: something is actually being built here. Creative acts as opposed to reflective acts. It is about creating new hybrid identities – culturally and artistically – and the blurring of old genres. [...] "We deserve the nation we can create."' (Brith Gof 1996a) As mentioned above, Lyotard has linked the spatial set-up of representation in theatre with the organisation of political space, which too is structured by three limits through which political energy is filtered: 'Here again, in the set up of the *politeia*, you have first of all the enclosure of a space [...]. [...] Within, there is this central space, which is found already in the communities of warriors in Homer, *es meson*, in the middle. When one speaks as a politician, one comes to speak in the middle [...]. [...] And then there are also *processes of effacement*: in fact, wealth, connections, pressure groups, rhetoric will be ways of getting to talk in the middle, scenographies, but they will be effaced and must be effaced for the political stage to be constituted' (Lyotard, as quoted in Bennington 1988: 12–13). Making visible the workings of the theatrical-representational *dispositif* of politics may release a different political energy.[175] *Prydain* shared this hope for a different politics, one which would break with the exclusion of otherness and the division between centre and margin on which representational politics relied.[176]

[175] The context of this thesis does not allow to give full credit to Lyotard's very complex theory of 'affirmative' politics and aesthetics. For a full discussion see Bennington 1988; Carroll 1987.
[176] 'Their *Arturius Rex* project divided audiences: some were greatly moved, others found it simplistic, poorly realized and repetitive and such conflicting responses to the company's work have started a debate about the nature of postmodernist theatre and its ability to address cultural and political issues. I should admit, perhaps, that personally, while I do not think I have any problems coming to terms critically with a theatre that rejects conventional theatre spaces, that places the audience in the "action", that denies authoritative meaning, that accuses the audience of complicity, that uses discontinuity, ambiguity and ambivalence, I simply did not engage with productions like *Camlann*, *DOA* or *Arturius Rex*, partly because in addressing the Bosnian war they seem to me transparent, clichéd, trite.' (Adams 1996: 57) What Adams fails to recognize is that the decision to perform in unconventional theatre spaces, to place the audience in the 'action' and work with its complicity, to use discontinuity, ambiguity and ambivalence, actually constituted the performative address to the issues raised by the Bosnian war. Adams's critique implies a distinction between 'content' and 'form', which Brith Gof were attempting to transgress. Adams thus echoes a long tradition of modernist objections to postmodernism on the basis of the latter's tendency to equate aesthetic concerns with social issues.

However, *Prydain* encountered such negative responses from spectators and critics upon its première in Cardiff, that Pearson thought it necessary to insert a number of 'asides' into the performance when Brith Gof took the show to Glasgow. These asides were spoken by himself in a direct address to the audience during the performance, and they offer an insight into his own interpretation of his work:

> There's a performance I've struggled to make...and failed. Why? Perhaps because it concerns a theme which is already too 'picked-over', too 'thread-bare', too 'close-to-home' for further comment – the impossibility of Britishness. Perhaps because theatre itself is knackered, on its knees, ill-equipped to deal with the complexities of post-colonial society, a society where we've been lead to believe that the only safe place is 'at home'. Perhaps because after twenty-five years of practice I suspect that all my theatrical instincts have finally deserted me. But here you stand, the crowd, expectant. So perhaps I'd better show you what I would have done, had I been able to make a performance. Perhaps I would have started with some text like this [...] [*followed by delivery of text by William Hodgson, see above.*]. But sooner or later, inevitably, something always happens. And it begins like a whisper in the wind. [...] Unfortunately, however exciting the choreography, you get stuck in the same institutionalised relationship with what's going on. And we all know our place. [...] Unfortunately, it's all beginning to fall to pieces. And theatre is disappearing. And the critics don't know which way to turn. And who is watching who? So, perhaps I would have done what I always should have done, what was expected of me all along. Unfortunately, when you do that, it always comes out like this. [*This was followed by a staged reading – in the form of a shouted chanting – of deconstructed texts from Shakespeare's Henry V*]
>
> (Brith Gof 1996c)

For Pearson, *Prydain*'s problems stemmed from the theatrical expectations[177] on the part of both audience and critics[178]. Lyotard's theatrical-representational apparatus proved to be too strong a psychic 'Real' presence to be demolished in a singular act of performative intervention. But Pearson's diagnosis also confirms what theorists of

[177] The aesthetics of reception has theorized this phenomenon under the term of 'horizon of expectations' ('Erwartungshorizont', Jauss), see Elam 1980: 94; Bennett 1997: 48–52.

[178] Not all reviews of *Prydain* have been negative: 'In Prydain, Cardiff's Brith Gof sets about proving the impossibility of Britishness. To do this it tries to prove the impossibility of theatre. And in doing so it creates a piece of impossible theatre. I've never seen anything like it. [...] Imagine the feeling you would have got stumbling accidentally on a Sex Pistols gig in 1976 or having your first art class with Pablo Picasso in 1910 and you'll have some sense of the bewilderment produced as Brith Gof runs rings about you, bellowing incomprehensibly down megaphones, stripping naked, setting fire to open books, and performing pummelling routines akin to prime period DV8. [...] There's more passion spent than meaning conveyed and the soundtrack often covers up for periods when not a lot is happening but it's chaotic, vigorous, exceptional and quite, quite impossible.' (Glasgow Herald, as quoted in Pearson 1998c)

performativity have tried to explicate: that performance creates both a subversion *and* an affirmation of a pre-existing cultural apparatus.

> *Prydain* probably finally succeeded by doing all the things it shouldn't have, like 'pulling itself together', becoming 'theatrical'. And that for me was a disappointment. After all, I knew all along how to make theatre! [...] I may need to challenge the very event-ness of performance as a real-time occurrence which engenders such expectation, such a sense of occasion, and which necessitates such conventions of organisation and practice. And that's what comes next...
>
> (Pearson 1998c)

CHAPTER FOUR

GUILLERMO GOMEZ-PENA & COCO FUSCO (USA): HYBPERBOLE, DISSONANCE, CONFUSION – EMBODYING OTHERNESS IN PERFORMANCE

In 1992, the year of the quincentenary celebrations of Christopher Columbus's so-called 'discovery' of North America, an unusual human exhibit, touring museums, art galleries and civic spaces in Europe and the United States[1], caught the public's imagination and attracted the attention of the media. On display was a couple of 'Amerindian' aborigines, inhabitants of an island called Guatinau[2] in the Gulf of Mexico, which for centuries had remained overlooked by colonialists and anthropologists alike. The two, a male and a female, were displayed in a ten feet by twelve feet gilded cage for a period of three days in each location they visited. The male was dressed, like an 'Aztec wrestler from Las Vegas' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 97), in a highly ornamental metallic breastplate and loincloth, with similar adornment around his forearms and thighs, snake-skin cowboy boots and a feather head-dress. His face was covered in a leopard-skin Balaclava and a pair of sunglasses. The female, looking like 'Taina straight out of *Gilligan's Island*'[3] (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 97) was dressed in a straw skirt with little bells around her waist, a leopard-skin bra, trainers on her feet and a chain of animal teeth around her neck. Her face was painted red and yellow, and she too wore a pair of sunglasses. The audience was invited to observe the two aborigines as they engaged in 'traditional' activities such as watching TV, working on a laptop computer, lifting weights, sewing voodoo dolls and listening to Latin American rock music. For a small fee, the Amerindians would also dance, sing or tell stories in their native 'Náhuatl', or

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[1] Venues included the Columbus Plaza in Madrid, London's Covent Garden, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, the Field Museum of Chicago, New York's Whitney Museum of American Art (at the opening for the *Whitney Biennial*), the Australia Museum Sydney, the Fundacíon Banco Patricios Buenos Aires, the Walker Arts Center Sculpture Garden, the University of California at Irvine Art Gallery.

[2] 'Spanglishization of "what now"' (Gómez-Peña 1996a). 'Spanglishization' refers to the changes the pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar of American English is undergoing through the influence of Latin American Spanish-speaking immigrants.

[3] A popular US television comedy (1964–67) about a group of people shipwrecked on an unchartered tropical island.

have their photos taken with the visitors. For a larger amount, the male would expose his genitals. Zoo guards were tending the cage, translating, feeding, or taking the two exhibits to the bathroom on leashes fixed to dog collars worn around their necks. They also sold authentic souvenirs such as hair and toenail samples. A plaque in front of the cage displayed a map indicating the island's location in the Gulf, next to a text marked as an 'Encyclopedia [*sic*] Britannica' entry with taxonomic details about the etymological origin and the physical characteristics of the Amerindians, including information on their clothing, ornamentation, food habits and sexual behaviour. The entry offered two possible sources for the term 'Amerindians': '1. A mythical people of the Far East, connected in legendary history with Seneca and Amerigo Vespucci. [...] The most that can be said is that *amerindians* may be the name of an indigenous American stock that the ancients knew no more about than ourselves.' and '2. One of the many English terms for the people of Guatinau':

> They are a jovial and playful race, with a genuine affection for the debris of Western popular culture. [...] The male and female specimens here on display are representatives of the dominant tribe from their island, having descended from Mintomani stock.
>
> (Gómez-Peña and Fusco 1993b)

The two specimens on display were Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco, two Latino[4] performance artists, writers and activists based in Los Angeles, and their

[4] 'Whom did we refer to when we used the term "Latino"? Historically, the term designates peoples of "Hispanic" descent who were born or live permanently in the United States. Politically, however, the term Latino is often used as antagonistic to, rather than synonymous with, the term Hispanic. Latinos, as defined by spokespeople such as Luiz Valdéz, Cherrié Moraga, Gloria Anzaldúa, Sandra Cisneros, Dolores Prida (to name a few), tend to identify ideologically with the so-called "third world", with "people of color", or economically and politically disenfranchised minorities. They take pride in their indigenous and African origins. Hispanics, on the other hand, emphasize their peninsular roots and often think of themselves as "white", European "First Worlders". This ideological divide has been complicated by the fact that Latinos come from very different cultures. Puerto Ricans are not the same as Nuyoricans – the former still live on the island or at least consider it "home" or home-away-from-home, while Nuyoricans have transplanted their culture to New York and feel more or less estranged both from the United States and from the island. On the island, they are considered "Americans"; in the United States, they are considered "Puerto Ricans". The displacement or *in-betweenness* Nuyoricans experience, however, is not limited to Puerto Ricans in New York. Thus, the term "Neoricans" has recently come into use to refer to those who live in other regions of the country. None of those groups have much in common with U.S.Cubans but, again, for different reasons. Both islands have been under United States control for the greater part of this century, yet while many U.S. Puerto Ricans long for political independence, U.S.Cubans by and large adamantly oppose Cuba's break from the United States "sphere of influence" and its frustrated, though tenacious, pursuit of national autonomy. However, even the U.S. Cuban community, long considered the most politically conservative and economically successful "Hispanic" group in the country, is currently undergoing transformation. The younger generation, born

performance *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...*[5] became one of the most widely discussed examples of performance art in the 1990s, declared a paradigm of 'identity performance' (Carlson 1996), 'cultural performance' (Fischer-Lichte 1997b) or 'intercultural performance' (Bennett 1997), and interpreted as a critique of colonialism and ethnographic practice (see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998b and Taylor 1998).[6] In her own account of the performance, Fusco describes her intentions as follows:

> My collaborator, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, and I were intrigued by this legacy [i.e. the history of ethnographic exhibition of human beings] of performing the identity of an Other for a white audience, sensing its implications for us as performance artists dealing with cultural identity in the present. [...] Our original intent was to create a satirical commentary on Western concepts of the exotic, primitive Other [...]. We sought a strategically effective way to examine the limits of the 'happy multiculturalism' that currently reigns in cultural institutions, as well as to respond to the formalists and cultural relativists who reject the proposition that racial difference is absolutely fundamental to aesthetic interpretation. [...]
> We worked within disciplines that blur distinctions between the art object and the body (performance), between fantasy and reality (live spectacle), and between history and dramatic reenactment (the diorama). The performance was interactive, focusing less on what we did than on how people interacted with us and interpreted our actions.
>
> (Fusco 1994: 143, 145, 148)

Fusco here draws a link between performance, identity, representation and the body which will concern me in this chapter. More precisely, it is the question of 'Otherness', and its complex relationship to identity, that interests Gómez-Peña and Fusco. The construction of the 'Other' as a 'supplement' or 'negativity' of a dominant model of identity, the ethical question of how one can relate to the Other and establish communication across cultural difference, and the influence of stereotyped notions of Otherness on the identity-formation of the subaltern are all themes which the two

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and raised in this country, tend to be far more liberal than their parents. Mexican-descended Chicanos, to name another Latino group, are themselves split between those recently arrived from Mexico and those who have lived in California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas before their land became a part of the United States in the nineteenth century. But again, as in the Latino/Hispanic case, the term "Chicano/a" is ideological rather than biological; it goes beyond the hyphenated, negotiated nationality-based, ethnicity of Mexican Americans to signal a relatively new ideological position of self-affirmation that took shape with the Raza movement in the 1960s.' (Taylor and Villegas 1994: 4–5)

[5] The performance also appears in the literature under the titles: *The Year of the White Bear: Take One – Two Undiscovered Aborigines Visit...* (Sawchuk 1992: 22), *The Couple in the Cage* (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998b, after the video-documentation of the performance, see Fusco and Heredia 1993), *The Guatinaui World Tour* (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 96, Rogoff 2000: 119).

[6] See also Atzpodien 2000, Fischer-Lichte 1998b, Gablik 1995, Rogoff 2000, Sawchuk 1992, Schröder 1999, Wolford 1998 and the performers' own accounts in Fusco 1994 and Gómez-Peña 1996a.

artists explore in their performance work. Otherness is thereby defined first and foremost in racial or ethnic terms. As Fusco herself has pointed out, 'it is the construction of ethnic Otherness as essentially *performative* and located in the body that I here seek to stress' (Fusco 1995a: 149). Gómez-Peña and Fusco are concerned primarily with a parodic and subversive deconstruction of this 'Otherness' as constructed in performance.

Gómez-Peña and Fusco are two of the leading representatives of contemporary American performance art, which, despite its formal diversity, can be generally described as being concerned with an exploration of the performative dimensions of identity. Carlson (Carlson 1996) offers a useful overview of the development of American performance art in the last thirty year. He identifies two major streams, which he terms 'identity performance' and 'resistant performance'. The two types of practices are in fact closely related, as both are concerned primarily with the politics of identity: Carlson calls the relationship between performance and identity 'in many ways central to how modern performance has developed and been theorized, particularly in the United States' (Carlson 1996: 8). 'Identity performance' is defined by him as 'performance involved with the concerns, desires, and even the visibility of those normally excluded by race, class, or gender' (Carlson 1996: 144). Such performance practice has allied itself with the political and social concerns of US identity politics, 'despite the tendency in both modernism and postmodernism to de-emphasize or even reject such specific social or political activity'. (Carlson 1996: 144) Carlson traces its history from the predominantly autobiographical performance works of the 1970s, which relied heavily on 'theatrical' means such as character play and monologue, to contemporary extreme body art, and from an early concern with gender and sexual politics to a recent shift to issues of class and race.[7] These performances are linked by a reference to what he identifies as basically essentialist notions of identity, which they seek to affirm. 'Resistant performances', on the other hand, reflecting recent shifts in identity theory and politics, treat identities 'as markers in an ironic play whose goal is

[7] Bennett gives a similar account of what she calls a recent 'obsession' with race and ethnicity in performance, see Bennett 1997.

really to question the process of representation itself, to ask what is at stake in the performance (social and theatrical) of ethnicity, gender, or sexuality – for whom, by whom, and to what end representation is taking place' (Carlson 1996: 183). Carlson himself admits that the two streams are ideal types, and that a separation between the two in practice is not so easily made: 'Most modern politically oriented performance is flexible [...], slipping back and forth between claiming an identity position and ironically questioning the cultural assumptions that legitimate it.' (Carlson 1996: 183). Thus, Guillermo Gómez-Peña's and Coco Fusco's work appears as an example of both an affirmative and a subversive practice of performing identity.[8] Both practices are certainly equally concerned with the body as 'inscribed' by social discourse, by gender or racial codes, by culture. And both are characterized by a mutual desire to reclaim identity as a grounding for political action. They are responding to, and are often actively involved in[9], the subaltern struggles over symbolic representation that have come to be known as 'identity politics' in the US.[10] The 'slippage' between claiming and simultaneously subverting a claim to identity, which Carlson has identified as being characteristic for this performance work, reflects the debate over 'structural essentialism' in identity politics.[11] This 'slippage' becomes particularly poignant when related to attempts to contest the often stigmatized identity of a marginalized group. Hall has described the strategy of counteracting negative models of Otherness with a positive identity, based on a supposed cultural essence, as an 'act of imaginative rediscovery' of 'hidden histories' (Hall 1990: 224) that are located either before or outside of the 'dominant regimes of representation' that 'had the power to make us see and experience *ourselves* as 'Other'. (Hall 1990: 225–6) A different strategy to address the pressures of

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[8] For Carlson's discussion of Gómez-Peña and Fusco see Carlson 1996: 161–4 and 185–6.

[9] Both Gómez-Peña and Fusco are respected political activists. For an account of their political work see Fusco 1995a; Gómez-Peña 1993a; Gómez-Peña 1996a; Gómez-Peña 2000a.

[10] See Chapter 1. Gómez-Peña has recently expressed a disillusion with 'identity politics': 'Identity politics in the 90s has succumbed to self-righteousness and new essentialisms. Debates about identity are now getting framed as a wrestling match between compassion fatigue and a binaristic ultra-essentialism. [...] The debates on identity politics and cultural diversity in America have become first and foremost a terminological battle – not a civil rights battle, but a battle of vocabulary. Both theoretical and public language have either become overused and emptied of meaning and specificity, or overly charged with dangerous connotations.' (Gómez-Peña 2000a: 267)

[11] See Chapter 1.

Otherness and cultural stereotyping, which are central to the experience of subaltern identities, is to subvert stereotypical notions of 'Otherness' by actually reiterating them. Feminist scholars have broadly examined this strategy at work in performances which make use of sexually explicit imagery in order to highlight women's agency. Rebecca Schneider, for example, has written about women's explicit body performance, exploring the ways in which female performance artists perform gender and race by using their body as their stage (Schneider 1997). Schneider argues that such performers 'wield identity politics as a manipulable *mise en scène* of physical properties in a kind of visceral cultural analysis that, riddled with irony, often hits in the troubled space between send–up humor and searing critique' (Schneider 1997: 300). Yet, she also acknowledges that a balance between a critique of stereotypical imagery on the one hand, and an actual reification of that imagery through reiteration on the other is difficult to strike. As Schneider has obverved, a woman's body 'cannot help but speak a history embedded in habits of representation'. (Schneider 1997: 75). 'The gendered and/or racially marked body is (inescapably?) ghosted by the sedimented history of its depictions, a history that overdetermines the range of meanings to which it can give rise' (Wolford 1998: 32).

For Carlson this problematic relationship between representation and reiteration is not confined to the discourse of Otherness, but presents a dilemma for performative practice in general: 'Unable to move outside the operations of performance (or representation), and thus inevitably involved in its codes and reception assumptions, the contemporary performer seeking to resist, challenge, or even subvert these codes and assumptions must find some of way of doing this 'from within'". (Carlson 1996 172) He presents it as an effect of the ideological implications of contemporary theoretical concepts of performance: 'Ironically, the more aware theorists have become of the centrality of performance in the construction and maintenance of social relationships in general and gender roles in particular, the more difficult it has become to develop a theory and practice of performance that could question or challenge these constructions.' (Carlson 1996 172) What Carlson alludes to here is a reflection of what I have identified

as the wide-spread conflation of performance, performance art, performative and performativity in the Anglo-American discourse on performance.[12] As stated above, the marriage of analysis, activism and art (cf. Conquergood 1995: 139) has motivated a theoretical and political investment into the making of performance art that has led to new performance practices.[13] An inclusion of a wide range of cultural practices and behaviours, interculturalism, and a political commitment to cultural differences and identity politics result from this close exchange between the practice and the theory of performance. Yet, as Carlson rightly points out, the proliferation of performance and performativity as critical tropes in recent post-structuralist and postmodern theoretical debates on identity have problematized the relationship between performance and performativity. As Diamond has argued in her critical discussion of Butler, 'as soon as performativity comes to rest on *a* performance, questions of embodiment, of social relations, of ideological interpellations, of emotional and political effects, all become discussable' (Diamond 1996b: 5). In Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's case, it is the relationship between the 'material' body, the body that performs, and the conventions of embodiment, the social and cultural inscription of the body, that is central to their performance practice.

There is another consequence of the conflation of performance and performance art, one which is inherent in their different genealogies as a critical term and as an aesthetic practice.[14] Féral has argued that although the term 'performance' has gained critical credence, the practice of performance art grew from a very different concern to what this term has come to denote, a desire 'to contest the aesthetic order of the time, to explore the artist's relation to art. This primacy of formalist concerns [...] characterized performance until the mid-1980s, and with its disappearance "true" performance art disappeared, to be replaced by a view of performance not as a function involved only with the art experience but as a genre that can be turned to any concerns, marking a return to "message and signification", which [...] are inimical to the original aims of

[12] See Chapter 2.
[13] Gómez-Peña has recently also commented critically on the relationship between artists and academics and the impositions of theory, see Gómez-Peña 2000a: 263–8.
[14] See Chapter 2.

performance.' (Carlson 1996: 151) Even if one does not share Féral's narrow formalist and modernist definition of performance art, the aesthetic and formal concerns that she has identified for 'true' performance art (refusing representation and presenting the material 'reality' of body, space, time and audience-performance relationships in their immediacy[15]) seem at first to be at odds with a performance practice that is primarily concerned with a politics of identity and its representation, and which for Féral 'has chosen to return to the real as a construction of the political, and to show the real as necessarily bound to the individual' (Féral, as quoted in Carlson 1996: 151). Fusco has pointed to the cultural and racial implications of claims like these, which associate the increasing politicization of performance in the name of subaltern communities with its death as an art form: 'our entry into the postmodernist debates that encircle us have also been associated with the dismantling of hierarchical categories that set 'high art' performance apart from other performative practices of vernacular cultures, which – for some – signals the end of performance as an artform.' (Fusco 1995b: 158)[16] Indeed, Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's practice is exemplary for the way in which contemporary performance art has grown out of the concerns of its predecessor by exploring the relationship between the 'material' reality of the body with the conventions of

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[15] See Chapter 2.

[16] Fusco and Gómez-Peña both firmly locate their practice within the realm of performance, although their work also contains aspects of (increasing) theatricality. Referring to the debate over the appropriateness of the term 'performance' for Latin American artistic practice (cf. (Taylor and Villegas 1994 ; see Chapter 2), Fusco states that 'I also did not trouble myself much as to whether "performance" is a term that originated in Latin America – every Latino performance artist I have ever met knows what it means and how to use it [...]' (Fusco 2000: 3) However, she too points to the problems involved in adopting the English term 'performative' and thus superimposing a U.S. academic agenda on the analysis of Latin American culture: 'A good deal of scholarly debate in the US about "the performative" in Latin American culture and in US-Latino communities has been framed in anthropological terms, focusing on the study of rituals, on traditional and "everyday life" performances, and on the performative dimension of political action. This is due in part to the fact that since the field remains dominated by Anglophones, work that demand a knowledge of Spanish or Portuguese, and for which documentation exists largely in those languages, is largely ignored, or at least not systematically studied, by those who do not choose to do their fieldwork in Latin America. The anthropological bent of the focus on Latino performance artists has also meant that unless the work is perceived as serving a particular sociological agenda, whether it be feminism, queer theory, or cultural hybridity, is less likely to be studied. While the appreciation of vernacular performativity derives in part from a desire that I sympathize with to dismantle highbrow definitions of culture, I do not believe that such anthropological inclinations should lead to the symbolic erasure of artistic practices' role in the production of national and regional cultures, or that they should encourage us to misconstrue artists' work as essentially elitist.' (Fusco 2000: 4)

embodiment.[17] Yet, the audience responses to *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* also highlight a continuing investment in the 'real' effects of performance:

> we had to confront two unexpected realities in the course of developing this piece: 1) a substantial portion of the public believed that our fictional identities are real ones; and 2) a substantial number of intellectuals, artists, and cultural bureaucrats have sought to deflect attention from the substance of our experiment to the 'moral implications' of our dissimulation, or in their words, our 'misinforming the public' about who we are.
>
> (Fusco 1995a: 143)

How may performance practice contradict such investments? How may it trouble a normative assumption of Otherness as grounded in a purportedly 'natural' category of 'race'? How may performance critique stereotypical imagery yet avoid a reification of that imagery through its performative reiteration? How may performance negotiate the relation between the 'material' body and the conventions of embodiment? Judith Butler herself has considered possible subversive strategies for troubling identity through performance. She warns that the power of discourse strictly regulates possible deviance: 'Parody by itself is not subversive, and there must be a way to understand what makes certain kinds of parodic repetitions effectively disruptive, truly troubling, and which repetitions become domesticated and recirculated as instruments of cultural hegemony. [...] What performance where will invert the inner/outer distinction and compel a radical rethinking of the psychological presuppositions of gender identity and sexuality? What performance where will compel a reconsideration of the *place* and stability of the masculine and the feminine? And what kind of gender performance will enact and reveal the performativity of gender itself in a way that destabilizes the naturalized categories of identity and desire.' (Butler 1990a: 139). But although she concludes that a 'typology of actions would clearly not suffice, for parodic displacement [...] depends on a concept and reception in which subversive confusions can be fostered' (Butler 1990a: 139), she nonetheless gives some examples of what a subversive performance of gender might look

[17] In Gomez-Peña's own words the relationship is expressed as follows: 'In the 70s performance was about authenticity. The blood was real blood, so to speak. In the 90s, it's all about artifice. Chicanos and other so-called "artists of color" understand artifice 'cause the hardships of everyday life are so intense that they demand to either be forgotten, satirized or stylized.' (Gómez-Peña 2000a: 79)

like. A passage in *Gender Trouble* lists four figures for "doing" gender in a manner that troubles gender ontologies: 'Which possibilities of doing gender repeat and displace through hyperbole, dissonance, internal confusion, and proliferation the very constructs by which they are mobilized?' (Butler 1990a: 31). Butler cites and analyses two examples of hyperbole, dissonance, internal confusion and proliferation: the female impersonations of Divine in John Waters' films (in Butler 1990a), and Lana Turner's portrayal of the quasi-autobiographical "Lora" in Douglas Sirk's 1959 film *Imitation of Life* (in Butler 1990c). These exemplary performances of gender do not depart from a normative repertoire of stereotypical gender behaviour. Instead they refigure this behaviour performatively in a manner that discredits assumptions of natural or ontological fixity.

Using Butler's model for an analysis of the way in which Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's performance work discredits stereotypical notions of Otherness by refiguring normative racial behaviour is not without its problems. One objection to such an analysis comes from Butler herself, who has warned that the performativity of identity cannot be reduced to perform*ance* as an individual act of 'theatre'. But as theatre scholar Scheie has argued, 'her stated reservations about dramatic performance notwithstanding, these indications are in terms compatible with, if not characteristic of, conventional theatrical performance.' (Scheie 1994: 33) Scheie himself proposes an application of her theory to an analysis of intercultural theatre practice, which will serve as my guide. He has detected an analogy between Butler's separation of the performer's anatomy, performer's gender, and performed gender, and certain theatrical models of distinguishing between the body of the performer, the performed body of the character, and the theatrical apparatus of representation.[18] Yet, he also points to the possible limitations of applying Butler's model, which has been developed in reference to filmic representation, to an analysis of live performance: the performer's 'material body' in live performance in his opinion 'presents a formidable obstacle to a radically dissonant performativity' (Scheie 1994: 35). 'It is often said that a performer on the stage has

[18] Scheie refers above all to the work of Brecht. For a full discussion of the analogy he draws between Butler and Brecht see below.

"presence". The banality of this compliment perhaps dulls the ear to a perspicuous insight into the nature of live performance and the implications of bodily presence. [...A] presence [that is] at once corporeal and subjective [...] invites or even exacts fetishization as the mark of a performing subject who *animates* the performing body, who pulls the strings of this flesh and blood marionette from an extra-representational "head" quarters [...] safely removed from the performance itself. [...] Can one conceive of a corporeal individuality without recourse to familiar categories of the subject? In performance, can a spectator perceive a living dynamic performing body without immediately positing a *somebody*, a subject of performance, who inhabits it?' (Scheie 1994: 32). 'Presence', however, is not located in the body of the performer, but constructed by the spectator in the act of *seeing*, expressing the desire to fix the body-given-to-be seen. Phelan has argued that '[m]uch Western theatre evokes desire based upon and stimulated by the inequality between performer and spectator – and by the (potential) domination of the silent spectator. [...] [T]his account of desire between speaker/performer and listener/spectator reveals how dependent these positions are upon visibility and a coherent point of view. A visible and easily located point of view provides the spectator with a stable point upon which to turn the machinery of projection, identification, and (inevitable) objectification.' (Phelan 1993: 163)[19] I shall analyse Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's performance work as a strategy of performing identity that throws the desire to identify and objectify the true 'identity' of the body-given-to-be-seen into confusion.

[19] For an in-depth discussion of 'presence' in performance see Phelan 1993 and Auslander 1997a. Auslander has proposed a very interesting reading of the role of 'presence' in the acting theories of Stanislavski, Brecht and Grotowski in the light of the Derridean 'play of *différance*'. Auslander argues that all acting is an 'intertext': 'We arrive at our perception of a performance by implicitly comparing it with other interpretations of the same role (or with the way the role should be played), or with our recollection of the same actor in other roles, or with our knowledge of the stylistic school to which the actor belongs, the actor's private life, etc.' and concludes, '[i]f our perception of the actor's work derives from this play of differences, how can we claim to be able to read the presence of the actor's self back through that performance?' (Auslander 1997a: 29). Stanislavski bases his theory on the 'actor's self', Brecht on the actor as a social being, and Grotowski on the actor's body as an absolute presence. 'A deconstructive critique of these theories suggests that when we speak of acting in terms of presence, defined implicitly as the actor's revelation of self through performance, we must realize that we are speaking at most metaphorically, and that what we refer to as the actor's self is not a grounding presence that precedes the performance, but an effect of the play of *différance* that constitutes theatrical discourse.' (Auslander 1997a: 36)

A second problem arising from using Butler's model of a troubling gender performance to analyse Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's subversions of ethnic otherness is that it may propose an equivalence between 'gender' and 'race' as two subject positions. In fact, their actual intersection in the political reality of sexism and racism is very different. This difference has inspired Fusco's own critique of Butler's work in reference to *Paris Is Burning*, Jennie Livingston's film about black and Latino 'voguers'.[20] The film forms the centre of a debate between Butler and critic bell hooks, who analysed the film under the aspect of its portrayal of ethnicity. hooks emphasized that the portrait of the drag queens in the film reiterated an image of gender identity that is drawn from white ideals of female beauty, an argument that for Butler was caught up in essentialist notions of gender (for a summary of the debate see Fusco 1995: 71–4). Fusco has defended hooks's position: 'To suggest, as Butler does, that the possibility of a white lesbian director's gender-bending desire for a black transvestite in and of itself subverts ethnographic convention because it introduces ambiguity does not engage with a history of racial exploitation that crosses genders and sexualities.[...] Livingston's alleged feminization of her black subject may subvert gender identity for Butler, but it also recalls a long history of white women's power to subjugate black men and thus keep the racial order of things in check' (Fusco 1995a: 73). The material effect of racism as a political and psychic 'real' for Fusco puts into question the very notion of performative identity: 'While other schools of thought associated with postmodernism have interpreted identity as pure process, and as infinitely transformable and essentially performative, subaltern discourses have looked upon these positions as volunteerist characterizations that do not account for controlling faces that affect identity, such as racism and the determining force of collective historical experience.' (Fusco 1995a: 27) And what is more, as Fusco has argued above, in the case of racial identity performativity has served as an essentialist notion for a construction of ethnic 'otherness'.

Keeping in mind these reservations, I shall analyse Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's performance work with the help of three of Butler's four figures of subversive identity

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[20] See also Phelan's discussion of the film in Phelan 1993: 93–111.

performance: 'Hyperbole', 'Dissonance' and 'Internal Confusion. Although less distinctive than in the case of Brith Gof, a similar differentiation between three phases in the history of their practice suggests itself, relating to different understandings of identity and different performative strategies to address this understanding. The first 'phase' refers to Gómez-Peña's early solo work and his collaborations with the *Border Art Workshop/ Taller de Arte Fronterizo (BAW/TAF)*, the second phase discusses Gómez-Peña's solo monologues and his early collaborations with Coco Fusco, and the third phase relates to the above-mentioned *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...*[21] As was the case with Brith Gof, I shall approach Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's performance work by way of analysing their published writings. This is less of an imposition than it may appear at first – indeed, the method seems justified when considering the quantity and variety of their publications. Both artists are prolific authors – Gómez-Peña is a poet and essayist, whose writing is collected in three major volumes (see Gómez-Peña 1993a; Gómez-Peña 1994c; Gómez-Peña 2000a), and Fusco has worked as a journalist and art critic (see Fusco 1995a). And although their writing makes frequent reference to their performance work, the former is never presented as secondary to the latter. Gómez-Peña in particular regards his written work, whether documentary, theoretical or poetic, as an integral part of his artistic practice. 'I fuse prose and poetry, sound and text, art and literature, political activism and art experimentation. As a result I find myself working with hybrid genres and interdisciplinary formats. My works are simultaneously essays and manifestos, performances and social chronicles, bilingual poems and radio or video pieces.' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 16)[22] Gómez-Peña hybridizes and 'deterritorializes' (Kuhnheim 1998: 24) his production in multiple genres (poetic,

[21] For an insight into Coco Fusco's work as an artist and critic see Fusco 1995a.

[22] In a later publication, *Dangerous Border Crossers* (Gómez-Peña 2000a), Gómez-Peña calls himself a 'performance writer' who attempts to' bridge many gaps, both in my life as an interdisciplinary artist and in the field of performance, including those between cultural identity and performance persona, practice and theory, art and activism, transgressive aesthetics and radical politics, and the somewhat private realm of the creative process and the public realm of distribution and presentation. Like my performances, the (conscious) impulse behind my writings is the desire to speak as a public intellectual and a socially committed artist in a time and place where this appears to be a lost battle, and to attempt to do so in an innovative way, using every possible medium to which I have access: performance, installation art, film, radio, journalism, theory, the Internet, and when necessary, direct political action. In my work, all of these overlapping territories are interconnected through an intricate system of veins and wires. They feed one another, translate into one another, project shadows into all directions.' (Gómez-Peña 2000a: xiii)

essayistic, performative, journalistic) and multiple sites (stage, book, CD, video, radio, Internet). Writing and performing are presented as two closely related practices which 'have always influenced each other' and 'often invade one another.' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 16). In Brith Gof's case, I argued that the difference between theatre and its documentation, artistic practice and its theorization, performing and writing as two distinct practices was being upheld and even reinforced in order to validate a non-literary form of theatrical performance. In contrast, Gómez-Peña regards their difference not as an ontological one, but as one of articulation: 'My theoretical voice is more balanced and logical, [...] [m]y performance voice is frantic and fractured' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 16). The 'voices' may differ, but their message remains the same, informed by the same theoretical stances, political convictions and artistic concerns. The political strategy behind this is evident: for Kuhnheim, '[h]is boundary crossing, rather than marginalizing his creation, has enabled him in some ways to "crossover", reaching larger audiences and achieving a relatively high degree of recognition in several fields' (Kuhnheim 1998: 24). Gómez-Peña himself has pointed out on several occasions that for reasons of political impact he seeks wide recognition for his work, and that he has no interest in marginality, 'in fact, what we [as marginalized people] want is to speak from the center' (in Thompson 1998: 6).[23] The political aspect of his art, however, is not limited to multiplying its potential recipients. For Gómez-Peña, a thus hybridized and deterritorialized artistic practice, combining writing and performance in multiple genres and multiple media, is intrinsically linked to a model of cultural identity as hybridized and deterritorialized.

[23] '[...] I oppose marginality for us who have experienced it for five hundred years – whereas the dominant culture glorifies marginality because it's an act of privilege for a Western bohemian to be marginal [...]. And for us marginality is a five-hundred-year-old reality[...].' (Gómez-Peña in Thompson 1998: 6)

Gómez-Peña has published a series of autobiographical 'performance chronicles', including 'A Binational Performance Pilgrimage' (1991) (reprinted in Gómez-Peña 1993a: 15–23)[24], 'Colonial Dreams/Post-Colonial Nightmares' (1995) (reprinted in Gómez-Peña 1996a: 80–109), and 'La Migrant Life' (1999) (in Gómez-Peña 2000a: 7–17). These chronicles charter his career as an artist, historicize the performance work both in relation to his biography and to historical events, and offer an insight into the cultural influences that have shaped his identity. The first of these artistic self-portraits, 'A Binational Performance Pilgrimage', in Gómez-Peña's own words 'chronicles two decades of projects, trips, and social and cultural phenomena that shaped the consciousness and sensibility of my generation' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 15). Gómez-Peña generalizes his personal experience as being paradigmatic for that of a larger social group, the 'Mexicans of my generation' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 17), defined both in spatio-cultural terms and in temporal-generational terms as a community linked by the common structure of its experience, rather than mutual roots or a shared ancestry. Two experiences in particular are described as having moulded his sense of identity: his upbringing in Mexico City[25], and his subsequent emigration to the United States. Mexico City is described as a place of cultural syncretism and hybrid identities, 'the "postmodern" city par excellence' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 18):

> From Aztec to post-punk, all styles, eras, and cultural expressions are intertwined in this mega-pastiche called 'el D.F.' (Mexico City), and those of us who grew up in such a context developed a vernacular postmodern sensibility with cross-cultural fusion at its core. Through the prism of this sensibility, past and present, pop culture and high culture, politics and aesthetics, rural and urban realities, pre-Columbian rite

[24] Many of Gómez-Peña's written works have appeared in multiple formats in different publications, for aesthetic as well as political reasons, as he himself has pointed out: 'Many of the essays, performance pieces, and poems have been published previously in multiple formats in the spirit of the author's desire to provide wide access for his ideas.' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 5) 'Since I never "finish" a text, there have been several versions (not just drafts) of most of the pieces included in this book, and there will probably be others which are yet to be realized. My performance texts and chronicles have included different collaborators at different times, and not all of them are represented in the version which appear here [...]' (Gómez-Peña 1994c: preface). Unless stated otherwise, I refer to the versions published in the three collections of writings by Gómez-Peña, Gómez-Peña 1993a, Gómez-Peña 1996a, Gómez-Peña 2000a.
[25] Gómez-Peña was born in Mexico City in 1955.

and Catholicism are perceived as either logical dualities belonging to the same time and place, or as overlapping realities.

(Gómez-Peña 1993a: 18–19)

Gómez-Peña here describes identity in *aisthetic* terms as a particular sensibility or mode of perception, a way of 'looking at the world'. Its formation is referred to in similar terms to the ones that cultural theory has applied to postcolonial identity in general: as the result of heterogeneous cultural influences, as being 'multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions' (Hall 1996b: 4). Gómez-Peña identifies 'three forms of colonialism' that have left their marks on Mexican culture. 'Spain was present in the skin privilege of the upper class and in the petty conservatism of the middle class. France was a plague that afflicted the "high" cultural scene. [...] U.S. culture was perhaps the most blatant colonial presence. (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 17). This model of Mexican cultural *mestizaje*[26] as a negotiation between different cultural 'presences', to which we can add that of the indigenous culture, resembles Hall's description of the 'creolized' culture of the Caribbean as constituted between the presences of African, European and American culture (Hall 1990: 230ff.)[27]. It is the experience of these different presences as being *of the same time* and *of the same place* that characterizes the postcolonial condition. This experience is 'postmodern' insofar as it undermines the temporal and spatial homogeneity of modernity's 'present': Bhabha has described this as 'the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion' (Bhabha 1994: 1). Operations of cultural inclusion and exclusion have been identified as central to the modern constitution of a stable, self-same identity, which produces 'Otherness' as its supplement or negativity: 'notions of the "supplement" locate the other outside of the field of subjectivity as it were, as pure excess; notions of "negativity" locate the other within the field of subjectivity as a constitutive exotic other. In the former, the subaltern constitutes the

[26] Jean Franco has critisized the connotations of the term: 'The trouble with the old term *mestizaje* was that it suggested that culture sprang naturally from copulation. Hybridity is a botanical metaphor closely linked therefore to the notion of culture as cultivation. ' (Franco 1992: 140–1)
[27] See Chapter 1.

boundaries of the very possibility of subjectivity; in the latter, the subaltern may be granted an incomprehensible subjectivity. (Grossberg 1996: 90)[28] Goméz-Peña looks from or speaks from this place of the 'Other' about the way in which the subaltern constitutes subjectivity and identity in response to these operations:

> In Mexico, we are immersed in syncretism, and our survival skills to move laterally and vertically into the cultural other are quite developed. We have no other choice. The other exists within us. This multiple otherness within constitutes the very spinal cord of our personal and collective biography. It is only until we cross the border that we face 'the other outside', thus becoming the outside other for Anglo culture.
> (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 18)

According to Hall, it is characteristic for the 'colonial experience', that the 'categories of knowledge of the West', in Gómez-Peña's case equated with 'Anglo culture', have the power not only to construct difference and otherness, but 'to make us see and experience *ourselves* as "Other"' (Hall 1990: 225). Bhabha similarly speaks of the 'ambivalent identifications of the racist world [...], the "otherness" of the self inscribed in the perverse palimpsest of colonial identity' (Bhabha, as quoted in Hall 1990: 233). Interestingly, Gómez-Peña contrasts one form of identity, in which identity is seen not as the antithesis but as the very result of embracing and incorporating the 'other' within the self, with another form, in which the experience of self as otherness produces a deep sense of alienation, of experiencing oneself as a negativity. In the first instance, the experience of Otherness 'exists' as an aspect of the communal 'being', part of the necessary process of negotiating identity within a community that is defined by it. In the second instance, the experience is one of individual 'becoming', the result of encountering the operations of cultural exclusion as an act in the here and now. The latter, in Gómez-Peña's case, is the consequence of a concrete physical repositioning – the move from a syncretic culture, which embraces otherness, to a monoculture, which depends on its exclusion, separated by 'the border'. The 'border' here refers to the geopolitical border ('la Frontera') between the USA and Mexico. Gómez-Peña describes

[28] See Chapter 1.

how he crossed this border in 1978 aged twenty-three to study post-studio art at the California Institute of the Arts in Los Angeles.

> [...] I crossed the border in 1978 and something broke inside of me, forever. Crossing the border meant much more than having to learn English or eat bad food. For the first time I had to confront Protestant ethics, pragmatism, hyperindividualism, and racism on a daily basis; for the first time in my life I was truly alone and scared, without a family, a community or a language.
>
> (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 20).

As Chaudhuri observes in her analysis of the same paragraph: 'The schizophrenia of immigrant experience begins [...] with a violent and painful rupture. [...] After the break comes a lesson in loneliness, in the numerous forms and qualities of loneliness, and of course the slow, dawning sense of loss.' (Chaudhuri 1995: 174). It is this experience of spatial, cultural and social rupture that motivated Gómez-Peña to turn to performance as an appropriate form of expression: 'Performance gave me a vocabulary and a syntax to express the processes of loss, rupture and deterritorialization I was undergoing' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 20). The result were performances that articulated his deep sense of cultural alienation.[29] For Chaudhuri, such alienation, however, is a process 'that inevitably raises the specter of return, of the need to recover somehow the true meaning of that very real – increasingly real – place one has left behind.' (Chaudhuri 1995: 174) Hall has described this desire for recovery as an expression of an essentialist notion of diaspora, according to which 'identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which [one] must at all costs return' (Hall 1990: 235). In the case of Gómez-Peña, this desire materialized in an imaginary return to an idealized and over-emphazised Mexican identity: 'In those days, the need to survive culturally in an

[29] 'My early solo performances in California reflected the pain of the departure and the indescribable loneliness of the immigrant. Once I spent twenty-four hours in a public elevator wrapped in a batik cloth. In many ways, this performance was my American birth rite. I was kicked, fondled, and cursed by strangers, and peed on by a dog. I only spoke once during the entire performance. When someone verbally threatened to stab me, I began to scream in Spanish until he ran away. I ended up being thrown into a trash can by security guards.' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 20) The projections of desire and fear onto the mute body of the other, one of the major concerns of Gómez-Peña's performance work, is here already articulated. More recently Gómez-Peña has described the experience of deterritorialization in opposite terms: 'Americans cross the border South in search of identity and history. Mexicans cross the border North as if coming into the future. Since we suffer from an excess of identity, deep inside what we really want to get rid of it... We cross the border to reinvent ourselves...' (Gómez-Peña 2000a: 79)

alienating environment such as Cal Arts made me create performances in which I overstated my *Mexicanidad*, my marginality, my otherness' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 22).[30]
The imaginary return did not lead to an actual return, however. Gómez-Peña admits that '[i]f it wasn't for the help of some marvelous teachers and L.A. artists who graciously explained to me the bizarre topography of U.S. culture, I would probably have decided to return to Mexico' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 22). But such a return was, in fact, already impossible. 'By coming to El Norte I paid a high price for my curiosity. I unknowingly became part of a lost tribe. As citizens of nowhere or, better said, of everywhere, we were condemned to roam around the foggy and unspecific territory known as border culture. Today, a decade later, we still haven't been able to "return" completely.' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 21). For Hall, non-essentialist diasporic identities are 'constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference' (Hall 1990: 235). Rather than recovering what is (forever) lost, 'return' takes on the meaning of an ongoing project, never to be completed. In the words of Chaudhuri, '[f]or the citizens of nowhere and everywhere there is a vision, beyond homecoming, of return: a vision of coming home by / and going home'. (Chaudhuri 1995: 212).[31]
For Gómez-Peña, the experience of cultural deterritorialization was followed by a process of 'reterritorialization' (Gómez-Peña 1993a), not by returning to the old but by taking possession of the new territory, in this case through discovering 'otherness' in the fabric of U.S. culture itself:

> In 1979 I began venturing into the inner city, in search of my incipient Chicano[32] identity. [...] It was there that I began to look at the United States with different

[30] Gómez-Peña cites the example of a performance piece which expressed a fantasy of returning: 'When I was first busted by the California police for "looking suspicious", meaning for being Mexican, my response was to do a performance in which I burned a photo of my mother while screaming at the top of my lungs over the Los Angeles skyscrapers, "*Madre, házme regresar a la placenta*!/ Mother, take me back to the womb!' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 20).
[31] The territorial vision of 'homecoming' for Mexican natives in the South of the U.S. presents a complex issue, as large sections of the country (Texas, New Mexico, California, Arizona) used to be part of the Mexican territory before handed to the U.S. in 1848 as a result of the Mexican defeat in the war with the U.S. Chicana novelist Gloria Anzaldua has described the 'borderland' as a 'vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary [...]. People who inhabit both realities [...] are forced to live in the interface between the two' (Anzaldúa 1987: 37).
[32] Term for an American of Mexican origin. Derived from a pejorative term for a rural Mexican immigrant, activists later adopted the term as a strategy to unite Mexican-Americans.
'[...] the term Latino applies to those descendants of Latin American parents born and/or educated and living in the United States. The largest groups are the Mexican American, or Chicano, the Puerto Rican,

eyes. With my new eyes, I saw this country no longer as the mythical all-white mighty power that Mexicans fear so much, but as a multiracial/ multilingual complex with myriad points of view. This realization gave me the courage to stay and the desire to participate in the making of a culture that included my vision. *Chicanismo* provided me with the intellectual, political, and artistic means to begin my process of 'reterritorialization' and to eventually regain my lost citizenship. I no longer thought of myself as a foreigner, but as a citizen of the other America.

(Gómez-Peña 1993a: 22)

Gómez-Peña's use of the terms 'deterritorialization' and 'reterritorialization' to describe a process of identity displacement and cultural alienation and a subsequent 're-homing' through an experience of shared cultural otherness recalls that of Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze and Guattari 1988). Like Gómez-Peña, Deleuze and Guattari employ the concept of 'deterritorialization', 'the movement by which "one" leaves the territory' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 508), to locate the experience of exile in culture, in their case in literature and language. In this context, 'reterritorialization' refers to a process of 'becoming minor' of language and culture:

Minor languages are characterized not by overload and poverty in relation to a standard or major language, but by a sobriety and variation that are like a minor treatment of a the standard language, a becoming minor of the major language. [...] It is a question not of reterritorializing oneself on a dialect or a patois but of deterritorializing the major language. Black Americans do not oppose Black to English, they transform the American English that is their own language into Black English.

(Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 104–105)

Similarly, for Gómez-Peña the U.S. monoculture is transformed and deterritorialized into 'the other America' as a result of myriad multiracial and multilingual reterritorializations. This process of 'making minor', of appropriating the language of the master-discourse and thereby decentrering and destabilizing it has been theorized widely as a subversive force of resistance in postcolonial societies (Bhabha 1994; Hall 1990; etc.). It is, above all, a performative strategy: Mercer has analysed how creoles, patois and black English affects the language 'through strategic inflections, re-accentuations and

and the Cuban American. More often than not, "Chicano" is used as a political label, a badge which connotes a sense of otherness. Just as theare are biological and cultural aspects to being a Mexican American, it must be understood that not all Mexican Americans call themselves Chicano regardless of whether or not they have felt marginalized in this society.' (Taylor and Villegas 1994: 37)

other performative moves in semantic, syntactic and lexical codes' (Mercer, as quoted in Hall 1990: 236); and Bhabha has extended this analysis to discursive formations in general by defining the 'performative' as an action that continuously insinuates, interrupts and interrogates the master discourses of the 'pedagogical' (Bhabha 1994: 146–9).

Performance scholar Diana Taylor has identified this counter-hegemonic process, which allows for the performative impact of a minor culture on a major one, with the more familiar term 'transculturation'[33]:

> We can continue to map the process of transculturation with a reference to the performance artist, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, who describes himself as a Mexican – Chicano – Latin American – *chilango*[34] – Hispanic – Latino – *pocho* – *norteño*[...]. "My generation, the *chilangos* [...], who came to "El Norte" fleeing the imminent ecological and social catastrophe of Mexico City, gradually integrated itself into otherness... became Chicano-ized." Insofar as Gomez-Peña [*sic*] dismantles one social identity (*chilango*) in order to recode it, it seems appropriate that his description of de-territorialization should ring of deconstructionist punning: "We de-Mexicanized ourselves to Mexi-understand ourselves, some without wanting to, others on purpose"[35]. It also illustrates the dynamic natures of social identity. In dismantling an identity, the second face of culture, one finds another – the Chicano is positionally related to the *mejicano* (or MexChicano, from which the term Chicano is said to derive) although physical distance is as fundamental to the relationship as is proximity. The process described by Gómez-Peña involves the de-territorialization of the displaced, loss, and a partial re-territorialization.
>
> (Taylor 1991: 72)

Transculturation in Taylor's definition and deterritorialization and reterritorialization in Deleuze's and Guattari's sense both refer to a complex dynamic *movement* between minor and major, margin and centre in the construction of cultural identities. This non-

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[33] The terms transculture and transculturation have had a long and varied history in cultural theory and politics. Gómez-Peña himself has spoken out against its manifestation as a global consumer phenomenon (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 10–11). I would like to follow Taylor in her use of 'transculturation' as an illustration of 'how the socio-economic and political power of one culture also impacts on, without altogether determining, another' (Taylor 1991: 60). The process of transculturation, following Fernando Ortiz (1940), is described as a chain of cultural acquisition, disculturation and loss, and finally neoculturation. The process 'is only partially defined by the *other*. Rather than being oppositional or strictly dialectical, it *circulates*' (Taylor 1991: 71).

[34] Slang for a Mexico City native.

[35] Gómez-Peña 1993a: 37. 'Shaped by internal exile, a part of and apart form 20th-century Mexico, Chicano culture can be a mystery to Mexicans, even though many Mexicans have had the experience of being simultaneously Mexicans and Chicano. (Border *Brujo* Guillermo Gomez-Peña [*sic*] has been the most original spokesperson for this third-stream identity (*Mexichicanidad*, both or neither).)' (Lippard 1996: 17)

essentialist, *kinetic*[36] concept replaces the notion of reterritorialization as an imaginary reclaiming of a 'proper' place (the mythical 'Aztlán'[37]) that Gómez-Peña identifies elsewhere as having been characteristic for the Chicano movement of the 1960s and 1970s (see Gómez-Peña in Fusco 1995a: 153). Consequently, the cultural antagonism of Gómez-Peña's early days in the U.S. made way for a new sense of cultural syncretism, 'the possibility of entertaining two or more cultural contexts simultaneously, of inhabiting two or more homes simultaneously' (Chaudhuri 1995: 212). The result was what Gómez-Peña calls his 'binational' identity, or 'El Half and Half' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 16):

> I physically live between two cultures and two epochs. I have a little house in Mexico City, and an apartment in New York, separated from each other by a thousand light-years in terms of culture. I also spend time in California. As a result, I am Mexican part of the year, and a Chicano the other part. [...] My journey goes not only from South to North, but from the past to the future, from Spanish to English, and from one side of myself to another. I walk the fibre of this transition in my everyday life, and I make art about it.
>
> (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 15)

According to the chronicle of his artistic output in 'The Binational Performance Pilgrimage', the art which Gómez-Peña created during this period was focused primarily on the geo-political manifestation of this transcultural transition, the U.S.-Mexico border, a 'mega-context of syncretism and cultural fusion that seemed ideal for the work we were doing' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 24). Gómez-Peña created some of his better-known art pieces at the time as a member of the Border Arts Workshop/ Taller de Arte Fronterizo (BAW/TAF), an intercultural San Diego-based art collective with members from both sides of the border, which he co-founded in 1985 and worked with until 1989[38].

> [...] BAW/TAF began with a series of site-specific performances at the US-Mexico border that addressed human rights violations in the region, the conditions of undocumented workers, and hybridity in the border zone. Though the Chicano arts movement of the 1970s had already revindicated the poetics of Spanglish, introduced

[36] See Chapter 1.
[37] Name for the mythical homeland of the Aztec civilization. 'Atzlán' is referred to as the Chicano homeland in the Chicano Nationalist Movement.
[38] For a personal history of the BAW/TAF, see Gómez-Peña 1993a: 27–9.

the notion of border culture[39], and had also made landmark visual arts and theatrical representations of Mexican laborers in the Southwest, BAW/TAF's emergence coincided with the intensified industrialization of the border that generated unprecedented population growth in the area and concomitant media attention, and with the new centrality of multiculturalism to American art debates.

(Fusco 2000: 265)

Many of BAW/TAF's artistic interventions and site-specific performances were aimed at traversing the actual border, legally and illegally, through exchanging goods or information, or actually crossing the border physically[40]. For example, in one of their earlier pieces, *End of the Line* (1986), a table was placed right across the border, with Mexican members of the collective sitting on the Mexican side and North American members on USA-territory, both parties dressed as 'border stereotypes' and exchanging food across the line. At one point the participants turned the table by 360 degrees, thus entering each other's countries illegally (see Gómez-Peña 1993a: 27–8). These border crossings challenged the integrity of the division between two segregated cultural entities, both of whom regard the border as the guarantee for their sense of cultural self-containment. '[F]or the Mexican, the U.S.-Mexican border is an absolutely necessary border to defend itself from the United States. [...] For the North American, the border becomes a mythical notion of national security. The border is where the Third World begins.' (Gómez-Peña in Fusco 1995a: 148–9)

Art historian Irit Rogoff argues that the concept of the border as division 'serves to mask the realities of an endlessly hybridized culture between Latin America, the Caribbean, Mexico and the Mexican–American chicano population. The "border" works to reduce the complexities and richness of all these mutual influences by reducing them to the status of a geographically localized "problem" of migration across the Mexican–American border and its ensuing economic and cultural feared threats'. (Rogoff 2000: 118–9) In response to this reductionism, the BAW/TAF produced performance work

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[39] For Gómez-Peña's understanding of 'border culture' see 'The Border Is... (A Manifesto)' (1989) (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 43–4). For more information on 'border culture' see the proceedings of the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies's 'Borderlands Festival' at the 1993 Festival of American Folklife in Washington, D.C.; reproduced on http://educate.si.edu/migrations/bord/intro.html (1 September 2000). See also Anzaldúa 1987.

[40] See Fusco 1995a:147-58, Fusco 2000: 264–5, Gómez-Peña 1993a: 27–9.

that pushed 'on the pressure point of the feared and dreaded Mexican–American "border"' (Rogoff 2000: 118) by making the border a site for intercultural encounters and confrontations. Such encounters underline the need to *stage* identity, to perform self and otherness. The border became, in Gómez-Peña's own words, 'a performance laboratory' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 27), in which the inherent performativity of the border experience was revealed. BAW/TAF's hyperbolic depictions of 'border stereotypes' made manifest the way in which cultural identity is forced to perform itself at the border controls of one of the most closely watched strips of land on the planet. They also exposed the performance of an elsewhere invisible power (of those who have control over the border), which at the border presents itself in a gigantic militaristic *mise en scène*. 'By night, helicopter spotlights sweep the desert's barbed-wire fences; underground, the police shine flashlights over the sewage (the drainage pipes have been fitted with gratings but there are still a large number of Mexicans who manage to reach the United States along the rats' highway)' (Villoro 1996: 183). Performance as liminality is here literalized by being actually practised at the border. Victor Turner defines 'liminality' as 'being on the threshold', 'a state or process which is betwixt-and-between the normal, day-to-day cultural and social states and processes' (Turner 1977: 33). Turner's identification of liminal practice as a transition between an experience of rupture and a subsequent reintegration (cf. Turner 1982a)[41] corresponds with Gómez-Peña's understanding of performance as an act of passage between the experiences of de- and reterritorialization.

I would like to explicate the performative strategies that Gómez-Peña and his collaborators from the BAW/TAF applied in the performance 'laboratory' of the border with regard to a displacement and subversion of notions of cultural 'otherness', and I would like to discuss these above all in terms of corporeal strategies, rather than the spatial strategies of de- and re-territorialization. The border is as much a corporeal as a geographic separation; the particularity of the U.S.-Mexican border is not that is presents a site where cultural identities are separated or transfigured (it shares this

[41] See Chaper 1.

characteristic with many other borders), but that is presents a site where cultural differences are sexualized and racialized. Bhabha in this context talks about the 'polymorphous and perverse collusion between racism and sexism as a *mixed economy* – for instance, the discourses of American cultural colonialism and Mexican dependency, the fear/desire of miscegenation, the American border as cultural signifier for a pioneering, male "American" spirit always under threat from races and cultures beyond the border or frontier' (Bhabha 1994: 69). In a similar manner, Ramon Gutierrez has referred to the U.S.-Mexican border as a division that 'separates a pure from an impure body, a virtuous body from a sinful one, a monogamous conjugal body regulated by the law of marriage from a criminal body given to fornication, adultery, prostitution, bestiality, and sodomy' (Gutierrez, as quoted in Wolford 1998: 19). The 'otherness' of Mexican identity is thus constructed by colonial discourse primarily in sexualized and racial terms.

Gómez-Peña himself has described his 'otherness' with reference to 'skin' and race:

> 'I was the darkest of three children. Darkest both in terms of skin complexion and personality. My father was darker than I, a gallant sportsman with a quintessential *mestizo* look. My mother was white as can be. She looked like a Spanish *doña*, though she was filled with Mexican tenderness. Having a red-haired sister and a blond brother, I always felt slightly odd, for I had to be "twice as clean and well dressed" to look *decente*.'
>
> (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 16)

His looks have marked him as different in both Mexican and North-American societies, even if '[r]acism in modern-day Mexico is not like the militant versions found in the United States [...]' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 16). There are also a number of references in Gómez-Peña's work which refer to his own body as a metaphor for the continent of America: 'dear audience/ ease my pain/ lick my chest, my sweat, my blood/ 500 years of bleeding ..../ from head to toes/ & all the way down to the root/ I bleed/ from Alaska to Patagonia' (Gómez-Peña 2000a: 75)[42] The 'interstitial wounds' (Gómez-Peña 1993a:

[42] Similarly, the continent serves as a metephor for the body: 'standing on the map of my political desires / I toast to a borderless future / (*I raise my glass of wine toward the moon*) / with... our Alaskan hair / our Canadian head / our U.S. torso / our Mexican genitalia / our Central American cojones / our Caribbean sperm / our South American legs / our Patagonian feet / our Antartic nails / jumping borders at ease / jumping borders with pleasure / amen, hey man.' (Gómez-Peña 1994c: 3)

47)[43] in the social and ethnic fabric of the continent, of which the U.S.-Mexican border is the territorial manifestation, and the racialized body are equated as two products of colonialism.

Gómez-Peña has declared his body the primary site for his performative practice: 'my body is at times a laboratory for experimentation, or an exotic specimen on display, a pagan creature debating between martyrdom and transcendence, or a monster to be redeemed and, if necessary, destroyed.' (Gómez-Peña 1993a 80) These figures of 'exotic specimen, pagan creature, monster' allude to the corporeal strategies that he employed in his performance at the time, and which have continued to characterize his performance work since: strategies that Butler, in reference to the gender performance of drag, calls 'hyperbolic enactments' (Butler 1990c: 1). These enactments repeat and 'overdo' stereotypical 'racialized' behaviour in a humorous and parodic manner in order to figure and re-figure[44] notions of cultural 'otherness'. Bhabha has described the 'stereotype' as the 'major discursive strategy' of colonial discourse, which responds to its 'dependence on the concept of "fixity" in the ideological construction of otherness' (Bhabha 1994: 66). It is a 'paradoxical mode of representation: it connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition. [... It is] a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always "in place", already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated...' (Bhabha 1994: 66). 'The stereotype is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality. It is a simplification because it is an arrested, fixated form of representation that, in denying the play of difference (which the negation through the Other permits),

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The metaphorical equation of landscape and bodyspace has a long history in Western thinking (for a discussion of the history of the body–landscape metaphor see Porteous 1986). The equation is often related to issues of identity through colonial equations between place, race and culture (see Nash 1994). More specifically, the equation is part of a highly gendered discourse, in which landscape is generally compared with the female body. Kuhnheim has identified and criticized such gendered notions of land in Gómez-Péna's writing: 'on whose breasts will I be resting next century? on whose land will I be resting for good?' (Gómez-Peña 1994c: 234) – and she concludes that '[t]he absolutes of gendered identity [...] are reinforced rather than taken apart in this text.' (Kuhnheim 1998: 32)

[43] Gloria Anzaldua has called the U.S.-Mexican border 'una herida abierta' (an open wound) 'where the third world grates against the first and bleeds' (Anzaldúa 1987).

[44] 'Figure' here refers to both rhetorical–discursive and embodied materializations of stereotypes. For a discussion of 'figure' as an inter-discursive element in rhetorics, philosophy and theatre studies see Brandl-Risi, Ernst and Wagner 2000. Said called stereotypical figures of Otherness 'gigantic caricatural essentializations' (Said 1993: 320).

constitutes a problem for the *representation* of the subject in significations of psychic and social relations' (Bhabha 1994: 75). For Bhabha, his analysis of racialized stereotypes serves as a starting point for a complex and detailed explication of the 'ambivalent, psychical process of identification' (Bhabha 1994: 70), which is constituted as a play between narcissistic and aggressive moments in racist stereotypical discourse. It is not so much the discourse itself, however, than its subversion in performance that is of interest here. If, as Butler insists, the success of performance relies on its iterability, then in order for performance to 'work' across cultures (and borders) it must repeat the stereotypes of 'otherness' that are 'always "in place"' in order to be recognizable by the 'other' (cf. Lewis 1999). Emily Apter calls the stereotype the '"Achilles heel" of performativity': 'Using Homi Bhabha's emphasis on the stereotype's role in processes of subjectification, Apter argues that each new attempt to repeat the stereotype will *qua* Bhabha be a "deadening" mismatch. The experience of not quite matching will alienate the subject from the image rather than tie them securely to it.' (Lewis 1999: 71). It is precisely such alienation from the image of stereotype which Gómez-Peña seeks in his performance work[45]: a disruption of the psychic and discursive identification with negative images of 'Otherness' through repeating, emphasizing and 'mismatching' them. Rogoff has described this as a process of inversion: Gómez-Peña pushes 'these vilifications to a point where they must turn in on themselves and on the currency of demonization they have produced out of the sense of border as threat'. (Rogoff 2000: 117)

Gómez-Peña himself has detailed this strategy as one of using cultural stereotypes in order to 'reveal and subvert' the 'mechanisms of mythification' of Chicano, Mexican or Anglo identities that 'generate semantic interference and obstruct true intercultural dialogue' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 40). He describes the intention of this work as 'a strategy of social communication and an exercise in cultural translation.' (Gómez-Peña 1993a:

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[45] 'Artists dealing with these issues often adopt the strategy of reworking cultural stereotypes, a very different objective from that of the imaginative retrieval of 'original cultural forms' or that of creating entirely new paradigms devoid of historical traces.' (Fusco 1995b: 161)

16). This strategy evokes Bhabha's treatment of the issue[46], for whom the act of cultural translation is directed not at an essence of culture that could be translated, but at its limits: 'we should remember that it is the "inter" – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture.' (Bhabha 1994: 38) In Gómez-Peña's work, stereotypical 'figures' of cultural otherness and their discursive limits become pressurized, marking these limits as possible sites of dialogue, in which the 'Other' is allowed a speaking position. This emphasis on a bilateral, intercultural exchange goes right through his early writings. In an earlier essay, 'Documented/Undocumented (1987) (reprinted in Gómez-Peña 1993a: 37–41), Gómez-Peña calls for a 'mutual cultural understanding and acceptance, and it is precisely to this that the border artist can contribute. In this very delicate historical moment, Mexican artists and intellectuals as well as Chicanos and Anglos should try to 'recontextualize' ourselves, that is to say, search for a 'common cultural territory', and within it put into practice new models of communication and association' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 41). And in open letter to the National Arts Community, 'The Multicultural Paradigm' (1989) (reprinted in Gómez-Peña 1993a, 45–54), he claims, 'the only way to regenerate identity and culture is through ongoing dialogue with the other' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 48).

Gómez-Peña has pointed out how this emphasis on dialogue and reciprocity was a new step in identity politics. In 1985, the year of the founding of BAW/TAF, the Chicano movement in the U.S. began to shed its separatism and create intercultural alliances with other Latinos as well as other subcultural groups in the U.S. (cf. Gómez-Peña 1993a: 27). This, however, did not change the fact that Gómez-Peña was far from being accepted as a member of the Chicano community: 'Paradoxically, some Chicanos still have a hard time considering me a "Chicano", either because I wasn't born in Aztlán, I didn't participate in the political struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, or I still have an accent that gives away my *chilango* (a derogative term for a Mexico City native) upbringing.' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 21). Gómez-Peña thus remains 'other' to all essentialist notions of identity, whether Chicano, Mexican or U.S., and whether based

[46] See Chapter 1.

on birth, shared history or language: 'I have learned to accept the advantages and disadvantages of being a "border citizen", which means I am always the other, but I get to choose my identity. Depending on the context, I can be a Mexican, a post-Mexican, a Chicano, a *chica-lango* (half-Chicano and half-*chilango*), a Latin American, a trans-American, or an American – in the widest sense of the term.' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 21). This quote manifests that, as a result of the process of de- and reterritorialization, for Gómez-Peña cultural identity had changed from an *aisthetic* to a communicative competence. Intercultural dialogue for him is not merely the exchange between different identities – it is, in fact, constitutive of identity itself. The dismantling of the stereotypes that underlie and interfere in this dialogue is thereby not only targeted at enabling a better understanding of 'the other', but also at enabling a different form of representing the 'self'. The experiences of de- and re-territorialization, of a rupture with and reformation of cultural identity, can thus be interpreted as problems of communication and communicative competence.[47] If cultural identity is therefore the context-dependent product of communication, the result is, as Gómez-Peña stresses above, a 'kaleidoscopic' [i.e. kaleido-*scopic*] identity. 'Far from being mere postmodern theory, this multiplicity is a quintessential feature of the Latino experience in the United States'. (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 21). Again, at the same time as declaring himself as 'always the other', Gómez-Peña also asserts the paradigmatic nature of his identity: 'One thing I know for sure: my identity, like that of my contemporaries, is not a monolith but a kaleidoscope; and everything I create, including this text, contains a multiplicity of voices, each speaking from a different part of my self.' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 21)

However, despite the attempt to implode the duality of the 'self' and the 'Other' in the liminal 'in-between' (Bhabha 1994) realm of the border and to replace it with a notion of a kaleidoscopic identity, there is, I want to argue, still a strong dualist quality to Gómez-Peña's thinking and artistic practice at the time. His own identity is conceived of

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[47] Herlinghaus argues in a similar manner: '*Border Aesthetic* [machte] die Erfahrung des Bruchs (mit der eigenen Herkunft) und der Herstellung neuer Identititätsbezüge als Problem der Kommunikation und der Kompetenz *spielbar*.' (Herlinghaus 1999: 279) (Border Aesthetic *put into play* the experience of rupture (from one's own history) and the constitution of new relations of identity as a problem of commication and competence. [My translation]

as 'El Half and Half', set between the binational poles of Mexican and Anglo–American culture, separated by the border as the concrete geopolitical site of their cultural confrontation or intercultural dialogue – both forms of encounters are described as primarily bilateral. This hidden dualism extends to other aspects of Gómez-Peña's thinking, such as the relationship of writing and performing, which appear as two sides of an identity that is identified as a duality between Mexican and U.S. American culture:

> I am a writer in Mexico, where writers are respected and listened to, and a performance artist in the United States, where writers are marginalized. [...] My activities as cultural commentator and my performance work have always influenced each other. My theoretical voice is more balanced and logical, or at least that's what I think. My performance voice is frantic and fractured.
>
> (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 16)

Writing (theory) and performance here are placed alongside other dualisms of politics (or cultural commentary) versus art, theory versus practice, and Mexican versus U.S. American identity (which, in an inversion of the usual stereotypes, are associated with logic versus frenzy and fragmentation).

Most importantly, the dualism also extends to Gómez-Peña's concept of the body as the site for the performance of identity. His hyperbolic enactments attempt to break open the fixity of the 'match' between the skin colour of the physical body and the stereotypical image of its racial identity as constituted by a racist discourse.[48] This strategy is expressed by Gómez-Peña himself as a subversive focus on identity as visibility or 'look':

> My work's ethnic look is by design dismantled in front of the audience. I want the audience to see and understand the mechanisms of cross-cultural fascination. I want to subvert that fascination by putting a mirror in the face of the audience so that what it sees is not the other but itself.
>
> (Gómez-Peña 1991c: 126)

[48] Gómez-Peña also alluded to the 'mismatch' between body and identity as a result of deterritorialization in a photograph, in which he is shown with a sign around his neck stating 'There used to be a Mexican inside this body' (reproduced in Gómez-Peña 1996a: 8). The sign was used in his collaborative diorama project with James Luna, *Living and dying dioramas: The Shame-man Meets El Mexican't* (1993ff.), see Gómez-Peña 1996a: 100–1.

Hyperbolic enactment alone, however, does not necessarily 'dismantle' or destabilize the fixity of such naturalized identity categories. Although 'overdoing it', it reiterates a mimetic relationship between body and identity that is based on the presumed visibility of 'otherness'. Thus it is that stereotypical performance too operates through a strategy of hyperbolic enactment. Butler has therefore proposed 'dissonance' and 'internal confusion' as two more complex figures for a subversive form of performativity. Whilst hyperbole attempts to unmoor the performed body from the performer's body, both 'dissonance' and 'internal confusion' rely on a triadic distinction between the performer's anatomy, the performer's gender (or race), and performed gender (or race), which further complicates the presumed mimetic relationship between physicality and identity.

Gómez-Peña's early works certainly did not belong to the genre of 'theatre'; they were firmly located within the genres of performance art, installation art and performance poetry. But the separation between the performer's body and the performed body on which hyperbolic enactments build strongly evokes the theatrical distinction between 'performer' and 'character'. Traditionally, theatrical representation relies on the effacement of this distinction. The character's identity is established through a mimetic identification of its body with that of the performer and its visible markings: 'the physical appearance of the actor [...] may inform us about the age and sex of the character [...], about social status [...], about ethnicity and nationality [...], about the particular type embodied [...], or about profession [...]. This means that the physical appearance of the actor playing a certain character enables us at first sight to ascribe a temporary identity to this character' (Fischer-Lichte 1997: 290). Therefore, a model of identity that is based on the mimetic identification between the visible markings of the body's anatomy and its identity can be characterized as 'theatrical' in nature.[49] For Fischer-Lichte, this identification *of* the character on stage is the condition for an identification *with* that character, and thus the prerequisite for theatre's unique status as a 'mirror' that reflects back to the spectators the image of themselves as an other (body),

[49] Traces of this model can be found in the theatrical paradigm of social psychology, see Chapter 1.

thereby confirming their identity.[50] Her French colleague, Ann Ubersfeld, describes the relationship between spectator and actor in terms of pleasure: '[T]he actor is a figure of desire. And even beyond this figure of desire that the actor is or has to be, s/he is – or should be – that gaping emptiness which is the vital condition of the spectator's work and emotion. [...] What we have here is the *residue of a residue*, that gap [between the identity of the character and the identity of the actor] in which the gaze of the spectator, caught *in the space between*, sets out to cross and to cross again.' (Ubersfeld, as translated by and quoted in Melrose 1994: 13–14) The use of the term 'figure'[51] here alludes to the body of the actor as an object of both perception and desire.[52] Rather than assuming a full identification between the body of the actor and the character as the foundation for the way in which theatre works, Ubersfeld describes theatre's pleasure for the spectator precisely as deriving from an experience of 'not quite matching' the identity of actor and character.

Gómez-Peña's hyperbole enactments of stereotypical 'figures' of Otherness can be described as attempting to replay and subvert such theatrical models of figuration and identification.[53] By driving a wedge between 'performer' and 'figure' through exaggeration[54], Gómez-Peña hoped to create an 'excess' that would trouble *in looking* the

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[50] See Chapter 2.

[51] It is important to note here that the French 'figurant' refers to an 'extra' or non-speaking part in film or on the stage, whose body appears as part of the visual dimension of the scenery, rather than a speaking and acting character. See also Pavis' definition of the term 'figuration': 'In theatre, this term refers to the way of representing visually what was not originally visual; by showing a certain scenery, portraying a character, suggesting a psychological state, the staging makes choices on the interpretation of the play and the emergence of visual fantasies.' (Pavis 1998: 149–50).
In German, 'Figur' is another word for a theatrical character.

[52] See also Lyotard's concept of the figural as related to perception and desire, building on Merleau-Ponty and Freud, which presents the foundation of his theory of an energetic or affirmative aesthetics. 'The figural continually displaces the viewer and leaves him without a fixed identity rather than situating him in the position of an addressee.' (Lyotard, as quoted in Carroll 1987: 31).

[53] 'If you see a narrative film or a theater play, you immediately assume an ethical or emotional positionality. Whether you like it or not, you align yourself with certain characters, with certain notions of good, justice, freedom, rebellion, etc. You walk out of the theater and you say, I got it, I liked it or I didn't. [...] But with performance art, it's different. You walk out of a performance feeling troubled and perplexed. The performance triggers a process of reflexivity that continues through days and sometimes weeks, creating sediments in the consciousness of people. People slowly begin to come to terms with the images and make up their minds about what they saw, but it takes them weeks, even months. Sometimes people think they are offended because they don't want to face certain realities or certain scary feelings they harbor, and it's very easy to say "I'm offended", as opposed to trying to understand what wound was opened.' (Gómez-Peña 2000a: 170)

[54] Gómez-Peña has described the process of creating imagery: 'In this oversaturated culture, it has become increasingly difficult to find original images that speak for the times. [...] Sometimes we find images in everyday life, in the streets, and we capture them with our photographic eye and then re-enact them in

fixity of the body-given-to-be-seen. This attempts to undermine the identificatory relationship between spectator and performer, thereby, to use his own words, inverting the 'mirror' and redirecting it at the audience 'so that what it sees is not the other but itself'.[55] The identificatory relationship with depictions of Otherness in theatre is already more complex than Fischer-Lichte's model of the 'mirror' allows, relying on an identification *of* rather than *with* the other. Ubersfeld's model of desire as constituted in a movement between the body of the performer and the performed body seems to offers a more fruitful model for what Bhabha has called 'the *productive* ambivalence of the object of colonial discourse – that "otherness" which is at once an object of desire and derision' (Bhabha 1994: 67). Gómez-Peña sought to subvert the audience's desire for, or what he calls the 'fascination with', the performer's body as a figure of Otherness not by reducing, but by further expanding the gap between the body of the performer and the performed body. However, several commentators have remarked on the hidden ambivalences in such practice. By building on and overstating the dualisms of self and otherness, performer and spectator, performer's body and body performed, Gómez-Peña risks reinforcing these distinctions, rather than subverting them. As Kuhnheim has pointed out, 'in order to examine border identity, we must in some way fix it [...] Boundaries are inherent to the definition of subject positions, and a border identity is no exception. Gómez-Peña must inevitably participate in the activity that he is critiquing in

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more complex ways in stage. At other times, we create composite images by departing from a highly charged, traditional icon such as the crucifixion, the captured primitive, the political monster, the mariachi performing for outsiders and tourist, the witch doctor... Then we begin to do nasty things to these images. We begin to layer them as a kind of palimpsest. We add layers of contradition or complexity, or we begin inserting details and features from other sources until these "traditional" images implode. The result is like genetically engineered Mexicabilia. The ultimate goal is to look for images that will create a disturbing sediment in the consciousness of the spectator, images that the audience cannot easily escape from, that will haunt them in dreams, in conversations, in memories.' (Gómez-Peña 2000a: 168)

[55] More recently Gómez-Peña has described the construction of identity through incorporating enforced notions of otherness as a continuous play of refractions: 'The North stereotypes the South. In turn, the South internalizes these stereotypes and either reflects them back, commodifies them to appeal to the consumer desire of the North, or turns them into 'official culture.' Meanwhile, national identity gets lost in this display of reflections and refractions. It's like being inside a House of Mirrors.' (Gómez-Peña 2000a: 40) Performance can 'shatter' the House of Mirrors: 'Performance as an artistic "genre" is in a constant state of crisis, and is therefore an ideal medium for articulating a time of permanent crisis such as ours. Performance is a disnarrative and symbolic chronicle of the instant which focuses mainly on the "now" and the "here". Performance is about presence, not representation; it is not (as classical theories of theater would suggest) a mirror, but the actual moment in which the mirror is shattered.' (Gómez-Peña 2000a: 9)

order to make his critique.' (Kuhnheim 1998: 25). Similarly, Rogoff has observed: 'One of the curious dimensions of all this border work is that it posits a persistent belief in immutable borders [...] and that these are still consistently viewed as strictly policed lines of separation in which countries, cultures and languages do remain divided and hostile. It is curious because it assumes some cohesion on each side of the border, each country an internally unified entity and identity.' (Rogoff 2000: 210) I want to argue that Gómez-Peña's work began to develop towards a more 'dissonant' strategy of performing identity that would be less easily accommodated or recuperated by such fixed dualisms.

II DISSONANCE

In her critical discussion of Gómez-Peña's second collection of essays, *The New World Border* (Gómez-Peña 1996a), Kuhnheim argues that the early emphasis on bipolar exchange and intercultural dialogue in Gómez-Peña's work later makes way for a more complex and extended understanding of cultural identity and the artist's role in relation to it. She quotes Gómez-Peña's essay 'The Free Trade Art Agreement' (1993–4) (reprinted in Gómez-Peña 1996a: 5–18) as evidence for this change:

> The presence of the hybrid denounces the faults, prejudices, and fears manufactured by the self-proclaimed center, and threatens the very raison d'etre of any monoculture, official or not. It reminds us that we are not the product of just one culture; that we have multiple and transitional identities; that we contain a multiplicity of voices and selves, some of which may even be contradictory. And it tells us that there is nothing wrong with contradiction.
>
> (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 12)

According to Kuhnheim, '[i]n this recent statement, border identity is based on hybridity and contradiction, and the aim of border art is not to clarify a multicultural dialogue [...], but to multiply positions within it. This is a theoretical complication and extension of the author's earlier ideas.' (Kuhnheim 1998: 25–6) Her argument requires some qualification: The notion of multiplicity was already present in Gómez-Peña's previous understanding of identity – see, for example, his paragraph on kaleidoscopic identities in 'Binational Performance Pilgrimage' quoted above (cf. Gómez-Peña 1993a: 21). But this kaleidoscope does still bear traces of a concept of multiplicity which defines it as the sum of essentially distinct cultural identifications whose incommensurate differences manifest themselves for the individual as a fundamentally traumatic experience. It is only in Gómez-Peña's later publications that a new identity paradigm takes shape which fully embraces the contradictory, incongruous and incommensurate aspects of difference in the paradoxical (i.e. non-identical identity) figure of the 'hybrid'.[56]

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[56] Karp identifies a similar distinction between different understandings of multiple identities: 'Guillermo Gómez-Peña defines identities in a way that goes beyond thinking about them as multiple and complex. Assertions about identity may attempt analytically to disentangle and separate out components of a

In 'The Free Trade Art Agreement', Gómez-Peña defines the hybrid[57] as

> cross-racial, polylinguistic, and multicontextual. From a disadvantaged position, the hybrid expropriates elements from all sides to create more open and fluid systems. [...] An ability to understand the hybrid nature of culture develops from an experience of dealing with a dominant culture from the outside. The artist who understands and practices hybridity in this way can be at the same time an insider and an outsider, an expert in border crossings, a temporary member of multiple communities, a citizen of one or more nations. [...] His/her job is to trespass, bridge, interconnect, reinterpret, remap, and redefine; to find the outer limits of his/her culture and cross them.
>
> (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 11–12)

There are echoes here of the practices of deterritorialization and transculturalism explored above, of the movement between minor and major, margin and centre. But the emphasis seems to have shifted to a consideration of the movement itself, or rather, to the position of 'in-betweenness' that the movement constitutes. This position is declared to be a (socially) disadvantaged, yet also (culturally) privileged point from which to understand the essential borderness and hybridity of culture itself. Gómez-Peña attempts to maintain the possibility of agency even when essentialist notions of a unified, homogenous monoculture are revealed to be obsolete. He stresses, however, that the concept of hybridity is above all a political instrument[58], not a new essentialized identity type: 'Once the hybrid model is depoliticized, we will have to look for another paradigm and a new set of metaphors to explain the complexities and dangers of the times.' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 13) He warns that 'because of its elasticity and open nature,

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of a particular community's identity and try to show how people shift from one identity to another, but this interpretation ignores the perspective from the margins. [...] Gómez-Peña writes from the border, that is, from the point of people who continuously melt down, merge, and amalgamate seemingly incommensurate senses of identity and points of view.' (Karp 1992a: 25).

[57] For a discussion of the history of the concept of 'hybridity' and its contempporary uses see Joseph and Fink 1999. 'Although the foundational discourses of hybridity lie in the anthropological and biological discourses of conquest and colonization, the modern move to deploy hybridity as a disruptive democratic discourse of cultural citizenship is a distinctly anti-imperial and antiauthoritarian development. The antecedents for this discourse lie in an intricate negotiation between colonial abjectness and modernity's new historic subjects, who are both colonizer and colonized. Always framing the struggles for democratic rights and sovereignity in the twentieth century is the language of internationalism, shaping global colonial policies as well as international solidarity movements'. (Joseph and Fink 1999: 1)

[58] See also Joseph's definition of hybridity and its political role: 'By "new hybrid identities", we mean a nexus of affiliations that self-consciously perform contemporary acts of citizenship through which modern social and political alliances are formed. It is the intersection between transforming global capital and postcolonial conditions.' (Joseph and Fink 1999: 2) 'Many of these political identities [i.e. Afro-Arab, Asian/Pacific/American, Afro-Asian, and South Asian] were expressions of anticolonial and anti-imperial strategies against a reductive humanization in response to the empire's dehumanizing of the colonized subject, whether of African or of Asian descent. [...]' (Joseph and Fink 1999: 4).

the hybrid model can be appropriated by anyone to mean practically anything' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 12) has come true. Yet the hybrid model has also enjoyed careful and detailed consideration to rethink questions of identity, social agency and cultural affiliation in the light of a postcolonial political project, most notably by Homi Bhabha. Bhabha pays tribute to the inspiration he received from Gómez-Peña's *The New World Border*, in which the artist draws up a list of the new hybrid identities of the future: *Mexkimos*, *Chicanadians*, *Chicarricuas* ('products of Puerto Rican–mulatto and Chicano–mestizo parents), *Germanchurians* ('who descend from the union of West Germans and Manchurian Chinese'), *Belga-chicas*, *Anglomalans*, *Afro-Croatians*, *Japtalians* (cf. Gómez-Peña 1996a: 33–4). For Bhabha,

> [...] Gómez-Peña [...] extends our senses towards the new transnational world and its hybrid names. [...] Such fantastic renamings of the subjects of cultural difference do not derive their discursive authority from anterior causes – be it human nature or historical necessity – which, in a secondary move, articulate essential and *expressive* identities between cultural differences in the contemporary world. [...] Hybrid hyphenations emphasize the incommensurable elements – the stubborn chunks[59] – as the basis of cultural identifications. What is at issue is the performative nature of differential identities: the regulation and negotiation of those spaces that are continually, *contingently*, 'opening out', remaking the boundaries, exposing the limits of any claim to a singular or autonomous sign of difference – be it class, gender or race. Such assignations of social differences – where difference is neither One nor the Other but *something else besides, in-between* – find their agency in a form of the 'future' where the past is not originary, where the present is not simply transitory.
> (Bhabha 1994: 219)

Bhabha calls this 'in-between' space of differential identities a 'third space', 'where the negotiation of incommensurable differences creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences.' (Bhabha 1994: 218).[60] Border is here defined not merely as a spatial but as a

[59] 'We've replaced the bankrupt notion of the melting plot with a model that is more germane to the times, that of the menudo chowder. According to this model, most of the ingredients do melt, but some stubborn chunks are condemned merely to float.' (Gómez-Peña 1994c: 132).

[60] See Chapter 1. Grossberg has discussed the relationship between the concept of *hybridity* and various definitions of *border*: 'The figure of *hybridity* is more difficult to characterize for it is often used synonymously with a number of other figures. Nevertheless, I will use it to describe three different images of *border* existences, of subaltern identities as existing between two competing identities. Images of a "*third space*" (as in Bhabha) see subaltern identities as unique third terms literally defining an "in-between" place inhabited by the subaltern. Images of *liminality* collapse the geography of the third space into the border itself; the subaltern lives, as it were, on the border. In both of these variants of hybridity, the subaltern is neither one nor the other but is defined by its location in a unique spatial condition which constitutes it as different from either alternative. Neither colonizer nor precolonial subject, the postcolonial subject exists as a unique hybrid which may, by definition, constitute the other two as well. Closely related to these two figures of hybridity is that of the "*border-crossing*", marking an image of between-

temporal 'in-betweenness', as borders develop wherever different and conflictual temporalities meet, such as in the non-synchronous temporalities of global and national cultures, or those of different communities, but also within the hybrid temporality of postcolonial communities themselves: 'The resultant rhetorical gestures, hybrid forms, and ephemeral objects speak to a future that will bridge the rupture between the past and present: pre-Conquest and postcolonial. The present, then, becomes the sites of performance where two ineffable histories (one residual, the other emergent) are installed, producing a provisional context or space within which to imagine Latino communities and cultures.' (Noriega 1999: 186)

A similar shift in the understanding of 'border' from a particular geopolitical entity, whose role it is to separate the territorial and with it the cultural (and corporeal) identity of two sovereign nations, to a spatio-temporal 'third' space of otherness, which opens up wherever differential cultural identities are negotiated, can be observed in Gómez-Peña's writing and performance work in the mid-nineties. In 'The Free Trade Art Agreement' he states: 'But for me, the border is no longer located at any fixed geopolitical site. I carry the border with me, and I find new borders wherever I go.' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 5). 'Borderness' here manifests itself on two levels: On the level of the individual it appears as an internalized 'border within', i.e. as a multiplicity of hybrid identifications brought about by universal experiences of deterritorialization ('we are all potential border-crossers and cultural exiles' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 6); and on the level of social organisation it takes the shape of what Gómez-Peña had diagnosed earlier as the 'borderization of the world' (Gómez-Peña 1993a) – the development of a new socio-political geography defined by the evolving spaces of cultural hybridity: 'When I am on the East Coast of the United States, I am also in Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean. There, I like to visit Nuyo Rico, Cuba York, and other micro-republics. When I return to the U.S. Southwest, I am suddenly back in Mexamerica. [...] When I visit Los Angeles or San Francisco, I am at the same time in Latin America or Asia.' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 6)

ness which does not construct a place or condition of its own other than the mobility, uncertainty and multiplicity of the fact of the constant border-crossing itself.' (Grossberg 1996: 91–2) Grossberg himself concedes that '[o]ften, these three versions of hybridity are conflated' (Grossberg 1996: 92). Gómez-Peña's notion of the border certainly encompasses all three aspects of hybridity.

The term 'border' now signifies the global distribution of intercultural scenarios, in which cultural identities, referring to an intercultural communicative competence, are to be negotiated.

In 'Binational Performance Pilgrimage', Gómez-Peña had already anticipated a change in his border concept, which he links to the political upheavals of the time:

> 1989 and 1990 were confusing and terrifying years for humanity. From the Tiananmen Square massacre to the Baghdad genocide, we all felt the birth pains of the new millennium. Many borders were erased and others were instantaneously created. [...] Everything seemed to be up for grabs, [...and] my colleagues and I were looking for a *new place to speak from.* [...] With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the increased militarization of the U.S./Mexico border, the world "border" changed its meaning drastically.[61] [...] All this forced me to undertake a radical process of questioning my cultural parameters and aesthetic strategies. Since then, my main objectives have been [...] to create an art that promotes a new internationalism *ex centris*, one in which the nerve centers are located in the Third World within the First World, a conceptual place I call Arteamérica.
>
> (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 30–1)

This new 'place to speak from' is a strategic and positional locale of enunciation, where identity is formed discursively, rather than a point of (spatial or temporal) origin, in which an identity's essence could be located. This place is no longer the real or imaginary place called 'home', nor is it the border as a site that separates the realms of home and diaspora. It is instead the border as a space of hybridity, a third space, or, to use Gómez-Peña own terms, the 'Fourth World', 'Arteamérica', or the 'New World Border': 'a great trans- and intercontinental border zone, a place in which no centers remain', in which 'hybridity is the dominant culture' and 'our identities are constantly being reshaped by this kaleidoscopic experience' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 7). As Chaudhuri observes, Gómez-Peña thereby moves beyond the 'geopathic impasse [...] produced by the impaction of personal identity and place', and instead proposes a model in which 'the experience of diaspora (and its attendant nostalgic and sentimental poetics of exile) is exceeded through association with the postmodern, even millennial, experiences of

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[61] More recently, Gómez-Peña has given another reason for this change: 'Since the early 90s, border culture has been fully commodified. Mainstream culture has stripped border culture of any of its political content and has turned it into an object of desire. [...] You then have to reposition the border. That is what is so fascinating about border culture. The border has to be redefined over and over again.' (Gómez-Peña 2000a: 218)

political apocalypse and ideological transgression' (Chaudhuri 1995: 215). Indeed, what is striking about Gómez-Peña's writing at the time, in his theoretical as well as his performance output, is that this 'New World Border' is referred to in both descriptive and prophetic terms: it appears as a geographical reality and a 'utopian cartography' (see Gómez-Peña 1996a: 6), an unavoidable status quo in the present and an imaginative projection into the future. Following Chaudhuri's argument, this movement between different temporalities can be read as part of the peculiar temporal border existence of the postmodern condition, a condition which Bhabha describes, again in direct reference to Gómez-Peña's work, as 'being in the "beyond"', or as touching *'the future on its hither side'* (Bhabha 1994: 7): 'Our existence today is marked by a tenebrous sense of survival, living on the borderlines of the "present" [...]. The "beyond" is neither a new horizon nor a leaving behind of the past.' (Bhabha 1994: 1). Art which intervenes in this spatio-temporal 'borderline of the present' 'does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent "in-between" space, that innovates and interrupt the performance of the present.' (Bhabha 1994: 7) Consequently, Gómez-Peña's cultural syncretism, his use of traditional as well as contemporary cultural elements of different origin, can be interpreted not as a yearning for a lost past and a lost home, nor as a confrontation between two cultures in the present, but as the creation of a hybrid which upsets altogether modernity's orders of space and time that have traditionally guaranteed the formation of cultural identities by separating 'us' ('here and now') from the 'other' ('there and then'). 'I crisscross from past to the present' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 16).

Gómez-Peña's extended concept of 'border' resulted in performances that were no longer directly located at the real U.S.-Mexican border, but addressed themes and issues raised from the condition of borderness and borderization in a variety of sites, artistic and non-artistic. 'I step away from the border as a specific site to begin looking elsewhere for 'hybrid America', or for what Mexican artist Daniel Manrique calls 'the universal barrio'' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 30). Gómez-Peña had performed in dedicated art spaces before. As he remarks about his work with the Border Arts Workshop: '[...]

every now and then we would create installation pieces and performances in the safe environment of galleries and museums. [...] We walked back and forth between the art world and the real world.' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 28) There is a transgressive gesture inherent in this 'nomadizing between art world and "unprotected" sites' (see Herlinghaus 1999: 279[62]), one which calls attention to the borders between the realm of art and that of non-art (i.e. the realm of law and politics) by crossing them, which remains a prominent feature of Gómez-Peña's artistic practice. But these early works with the Border Art workshop still revolved around the U.S.-Mexican border as their main point of reference, a focus which was to change in the later work.

One of Gómez-Peña's best known solo performances, *Border Brujo*[63], was a transitional project in this respect:

> As a rite of passage, my solo characters are often born by physically crossing the U.S./Mexico border checkpoint in costume. If the border patrol allows them into the country, that to me is a sign of their strength and raison d'être. Dressed in an altar jacket and a rowdy wig, and carrying an old-fashioned bullhorn, *Border Brujo* first crossed the border on June of 1988. I/he spoke through ten different personae in four languages (Spanish, English, Spanglish, and tongues) about the fragmentation of the border itself. I/he toured throughout northern Mexico, the United States, Canada, and Europe, performing indiscriminately at alternative spaces, political rallies, and community centers. And through him, I discovered the secrets to crossing the borders between cultures, communities, institutions, and territories of thought and action.
> (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 29).

Border Brujo was born at the border between the U.S. and Mexico, and three years later was put to rest in the same place[64], but in between he was moving through the new border spaces that had opened between diasporic cultures and communities: 'I'm a child of border crisis/ a product of a cultural cesarean/ I was born between epochs & cultures / born from an infected wound / a howling wound / a flaming wound / for I am part of a

[62] The German original talks of a 'Nomadisieren zwischen Kunstwelt und "ungeschützten Räumen"' (Herlinghaus 1999: 279).

[63] *Border Brujo* was awarded the 'Prix de la Parole' at the International Theatre Festival of the Americas (Montreal) and the 1989 New York 'Bessie'. A film version of *Border Brujo* was made in collaboration with Isaac Artenstein and premiered at the Film Festival of San Juan (Puerto Rico), and later was awarded first prize in the 1991 National Latino Film and Video Festival (New York) and first prize in the category of performance film at the Cine-Festival (San Antonio). In 1991, Gómez-Peña was awarded the prestigious 'MacArthur Fellowship' 'Genius' Award. (cf.Gómez-Peña and Fusco 1993a)

[64] 'The Brujo and I finally ended up back at the U.S.-Mexico border; there I buried his costume and props and staged a performance funeral.' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 95)

new mankind / the Fourth World, the migrant kind' (*Border Brujo*, Gómez-Peña 1993a: 78). Although still conceived as a predominantly binational and bicultural character, the Border Brujo speaks in a variety of hybrid voices, including the 'authoritative voice', the 'newscaster voice', the 'redneck voice', 'each speaking a different border language. The relationship among these personae are symbolic of those between North and South, Anglo and Latin America, myth and social reality, legality and illegality, performance art and life' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 75). All these conflicting identities and their relationships are presented as aspects (or voices) of one character, as internalized differences that undermine any claim to a unified identity: 'He dances between self and other. He becomes self and other, within himself.' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 76) It is not the contents of what he says, not the languages he speaks, but their voicing that determines his identity: identity is conceptualized as performative, as a voicing, a dancing, a becoming. The use of the two pronouns in referring to the *Border Brujo* as 'I/he' highlights the way in which this hybrid character transgresses a second border between 'self' and 'other': that between person and persona, performer and character, a device of which Gómez-Peña made ample use in his solo performance work . All of his work produced during this period, whether written or performed, features a strong autobiographical element. His essays are often inspired by personal experiences of cultural dislocation and intercultural misunderstanding, the performance scripts repeat these allusions to Gómez-Peña's 'real' life (i.e. the events he describes in his overtly autobiographical texts) and 'Guillermo Gómez-Peña, performance artist' makes an appearance in *Border Brujo* (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 80) and *Califas* (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 73). Gómez-Peña shares this oscillation between the real-life biographical self, the textual 'I' of the written work and the performance personae with a number of contemporary U.S. performance artists of the so-called 'monologue' movement[65], as he himself has pointed out: 'By 1988, many of

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[65] For a discussion of the 'monologue' movement and autobiographical performance work in general see Carlson 1996: 114–17 and Goldberg 1988: 172–7. What appears to set Gómez-Peña apart from the main protagonists of this movement is that his texts are neither devoted to an autobiographical 'self', such as the works of Spalding Gray and Quentin Crisp, nor entirely character creations, like those of Whoopi Goldberg, Lily Tomlin and Eric Bogosian, but instead oscillate between the two to blur the separation between self and character (cf. Carlson 1996: 86). Coco Fusco has highlighted the different cultural and political aspects that set Gómez-Peña's work apart from other performers: 'Mexican artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña's award-winning performance "Border Brujo" is most often characterized as a prime example

us felt that performance had become so artificial and technically complex that we needed to get back to the basics. The result was a low-tech, language-based, and highly politicized "performance monologue" movement.' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 94).[66] Carlson has traced its historical roots back to the what he terms the 'character' or 'persona' performance art of the 1970s, which dealt 'with the exploration through performance of alternative, imaginary, even mythic selves' (Carlson 1996: 152).[67] This style of performance, which Carlson describes as being prevalent within the feminist performance art movement of the time, gained its political efficacy through the combination of 'active authorship' and 'irrefutable presence [...] within a hostile environment' (after Catherine Elwes, Carlson 1996: 153). Gómez-Peña presents a kind of multicultural 1990s version of the persona performance: in his works, it is a culturally marginalized subaltern who affirms his irrefutable presence within the 'dominant cultures of both countries' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 75), the U.S. and Mexico. But this subaltern is not entirely his own author: not only does he speak his kaleidoscopic identity in a multitude of voices, but he is also spoken by the voices of authority and prejudice.

> Gómez-Peña has also characterized his work as involving the expression of 'multiple identities', but these arise less from internal choices than from a particular cultural matrix [...]. Like Gómez-Peña himself, each of the characters he presents (in a variety of colourful costumes) may host several different personalities, even though each bear a single name, such as Border Brujo or Warrior for Gringostroika. These are much less imaginative extensions of Gómez-Peña's own complex personality than his sensitive projections of cultural types and stereotypes reflecting current cross-cultural politics.
>
> (Carlson 1996: 161–2)[68]

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of 1980's American multiculturalism and autobiographical monologue. However, as a university student in Mexico City in the 1970s, Gómez-Peña was mentored by Mexican conceptual artists and performers such as Felipe Ehrenberg and Maris Bustamante. While his work with the Border Art Workshop/El Taller de Arte Fronterizo invoked the strategies of the artists of Mexico City's *grupos* of the 1970s, who revindicated the aesthetic value of urban popular culture from wrestler masks to *carpa* comedians to comics and presented their work in public spaces, "Border Brujo" is closer in its stage setting and blistering social critique to Jesusa Rodríguez's politically charged cabaret.' (Fusco 2000: 79)

[66] Coco Fusco has identified the various influences on the creation of the *Border Brujo* beside that of the monologue tradition of U.S. performers, such as Mexican street performers and Spanish sound-poetry, see Fusco 1991.

[67] 'Indeed the use of performance to explore alternate "selves" or to reveal fantasies or psychic autobiography had become by the mid-1970s a major approach to performance in the United States. For much of the general public, this still remains the most familiar and accessible manifestation of this movement.' (Carlson 1996: 114)

[68] Gómez-Peña's current collaborator, Roberto Sifuentes, confirms this: 'It's not autobiographical. We're not performing our authenticity as Chicanos; what we're doing is performing the multiplicity of mythologies and perceptions of Mexicans and Chicanos in the US.' (in Gómez-Peña 2000a: 170)

What distinguishes Gómez-Peña's performative treatment of stereotypes in his performance monologues from that in his earlier works is the complex way in which they multiplied the relationship between performer's identity and performed identity: Gómez-Peña performs *Border Brujo* performing fifteen different personae, including a drunk, a transvestite, a newscaster, an authority figure, a Mexican street performer, and a performance artist called Gómez-Peña, thus separating the identities of performer, character and role(s). To borrow another one of Butler's concepts, this strategy can be described as 'dissonant'. According to Butler, '"dissonant" drag' drives a wedge between the performer's anatomy, the performer's gender and performed gender. 'If the anatomy of the performer is already distinct from the gender of the performer, and both of these are distinct from the gender of the performance, then the performance suggests a dissonance not only between sex and performance, but sex and gender, and gender and performance. [...] *In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself – as well as its contingency*' (Butler 1990a: 137). Gómez-Peña's 'dissonant' performances were actually a little more complex than this, as in his case, the anatomy of the performer was not always distinct from the racial identity of the performer, and both of these were not always distinct from the racial identity of the performance.[69] Instead, they created performative 'dissonances' on a figural-corporeal level by creating multiple fluctuations between the bodies of performer, character and role(s).[70] Such dissonant corporeal strategies were accompanied, and further complicated, by similar

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[69] In their confusion of the distinction between the racial identity of performer, character and role, Gómez-Peña's performances at the time could also be analysed as creating 'internal confusion' rather than 'dissonance', but the way in which they use the theatrical apparatus to frame and contrast different identity performances in my opinion justifies their being discussed here as an example of dissonant performance.

[70] Gómez-Peña also played with name, the second 'idential' according to Fischer-Lichte (Fischer-Lichte 1997: 291). Not only did he play with 'fantastic renamings of the subjects of cultural difference' that Bhabha has identified for his work (Bhabha 1994: 219). He also plays with the 'personal' name of the performer as a supposed marker of a stable identity and reveals its inherent instability within the discourse of racism: 'if your name is Guillermo Gómez-Peña / I can turn it into Guermo Comes Penis / or Bill, "the multimedia beaner" / or even better, Indocumentado #00281431' (*Border Brujo*, Gómez-Peña 1993a: 80)

linguistic strategies. For Gómez-Peña, identity and Otherness were no longer located predominantly in the body:

I speak Spanish therefore you hate me
I speak English therefore they hate me
I speak Spanglish therefore she speaks Ingleñol
I speak in tongues therefore you desire me
I speak to you therefore you kill me
I speak therefore you change
I speak in English therefore you listen
I speak in English therefore I hate you
pero cuando hablo en español te adoro
but when I speak Spanish I adore you.

(*Border Brujo*, Gómez-Peña 1993a: 78–80)

The choice of a particular language, or its hybrid usage in forms of bi- and multilingualism, thereby also serves as a marker for identity and otherness. Furthermore, these can be located too on the prosodic level of language, where language is 'embodied' in the voice in the form of accents and intonations:

VOICE WITH THICK LATINO ACCENT:
to "be" in America, I mean in this America
is a complicated matter
you "are" in relation to the multiplicity of looks
you are able to display
I am brown therefore I'm underdeveloped
I wear a moustache therefore I am Mexican
I gesticulate therefore I'm Latino
I am horny therefore I am a sexist
I speak about politics therefore I'm un-American
my art is indescribable therefore I'm a performance artist
I talk therefore I am, period.

(*1992: The Re-discovery of America*, Gómez-Peña 1993a: 118)

Gómez-Peña's performances at the time created multiple dissonances between the visual comprehension of the body and the aural comprehension of the voice as the two presumed carriers of ethnic Otherness. They thereby not only attempted to break open the fixity of the 'match' between the skin colour of the physical body and its racial identity, as was the case in the early works. They attempted to put this fixity into 'play'

to undermine what Bhabha has identified as the denial of the play of difference in the arrested, fixated discourse of the stereotype (cf. Bhabha 1994: 75; see above).[71]

Gómez-Peña himself has identified this strategy as one of 'interference': 'in order to multiply the perceptual readings of my identity / I always try to create interference during the broadcast' (*1992: The Re-discovery of America*, Gómez-Peña 1993a: 118). The concept of interference slightly expands on the notion of dissonance as it has been developed so far by locating it on the level of the 'broadcast', rather than on the level of the performer, thus taking into account the whole *mise en scène* of the performance of identity. It actually moves the concept closer again to Butler's understanding of dissonance, as it expands the performativity of identity beyond notions of individual acts to a consideration of the apparatus that determines these acts.[72] Despite Butler's reservations about the 'theatrical' as the realm where performativity is reduced to an individual act of performance, Scheie has tried to identify a theatrical model that would correspond to her notion of dissonant performativity:

> By driving a wedge between the performer's anatomy, performer's gender, and performed gender, dissonance evokes the Brechtian split between the character and the theatrical apparatus (namely the performer, but also lights, set, sound [*sic*] costumes, etc.) that constructs it. Both Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* and Butler's dissonance would uproot naturalized opinions to reveal their contingent, historical, and, most importantly, changeable status.
>
> (Scheie 1994: 34)

As Scheie himself has pointed out, for all their similarities, there are also fundamental differences between Butler and Brecht: whilst Brecht would challenge the spectator to imagine a possible resolution of all dissonances in the ideals of socialism, Butler

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[71] Gómez-Peña keeps reminding us of the real dangers that the arrested, fixated discourse of the stereotype presents for the Other that is arrested by it: In 'Real Life Border Thriller', for example, an autobiographical piece, he recounts an incident of racial paranoia and cultural misunderstanding. He remembers how he was hunted down by the San Diego police for the attempted kidnapping of a blond child – in fact, his son, who he had picked up for a weekend visit. Two Anglo-American women had observed him sitting in a restaurant with his son and contacted the police. 'This section is set up as a "real" performance of prejudice in which the dangers of race and gender preconceptions are enacted. [...T]he protagonist's identity is [...] created [...] in response to an actual antagonism. In the incident itself, Gómez-Peña is objectified (metaphorically "arrested" even if the literal arrest is avoided) by another's misrecognition; analyzing the recounted episode demonstrates that one of the women's primary mistakes was reading only the surface of the scene they witnessed.' (Kuhnheim 1998: 30) Gómez-Peña's most recent collection of essays, *Dangerous Border Crossers* (Gómez-Peña 2000a) is full of accounts of similar incidents in which Gómez-Peña's identity is 'misread'.

[72] See Chapter 1.

celebrates contraditions, and resists grounding performance in any underlying 'truth'. With regard to this aspect Gómez-Peña's performance work is certainly closer to Butler than Brecht. But he was doubtless becoming more interested in the implications of the 'theatrical apparatus' for a dissonant performance of identity and otherness.

The New World Border: Prophecies for the End of the Century (1992–94)[73] presented a pivotal piece in Gómez-Peña's artistic development towards an increasing concern with, and subversion of, 'theatricality'. Interestingly, the work was performed both as a solo and as a duet, first with Coco Fusco and later with Roberto Sifuentes, and as such acted as a bridge between Gómez-Peña's different collaborative working partnerships.[74] The work combined many of the characteristics of Gómez-Peña's work in the late 1980s and early 1990s: the use of a proscenium stage, a multiplicity of performance personae delivered in a variety of voices, a writing style that fused different registers and languages, a narrative that evoked a new social order through exaggeration or ironic inversion of the status quo. *The New World Border* was a high point in a self-conscious and subversive play with the theatrical template. One of the most striking strategies employed to this effect consisted of a number of framing devices, which called into question the work's status as a self-contained piece of performance work. The performance was accompanied by a press release (Gómez-Peña 1994c: 122–3), to be distributed to local newspapers and provided on the night as a programme note, in which Gómez-Peña and Fusco were introduced as two characters from the immediate future, 'cross-cultural salesman *El Aztec High-Tech*' and 'pop semiotician *Miss Discovery*'. Their counter-cultural activities to oppose the New World Order of

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[73] The performance was originally commissioned by the University of Colorado at Boulder Artist Series, as part of *The Year of the White Bear*, a larger interdisciplinary project by Gómez-Peña in collaboration with Fusco, and co-sponsored by the Walker Art Center. Cf. Gómez-Peña 1993d..

[74] Like many of his scripts, *The New World Border* exists in a variety of versions (Gómez-Peña himself speaks of 'at least twenty-five' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 22). For my analysis I am using three different drafts: a manuscript for a version performed by Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco (still called *New World (B)Order*, (Gómez-Peña 1993d), a reworked version for the same cast printed in *TDR-The Drama Review* (Gómez-Peña 1994c, and the version performed by Gómez-Peña and Roberto Sifuentes printed in his second collection (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 19–47). The differences between the different drafts are slight (apart from a reworking of the scenes referring directly to the different cast, these are restricted to a few additional lines, the cut of one scene in the final version, and two alternative endings) and insignificant for my purposes. I will use the second version as my main reference point and quote from the other two when appropriate.

'President Belse-Bush' (i.e. President George Bush senior) were said to include live performances, pirate radio and T.V. broadcasts. *The New World Border* was declared to be one of their illegal radio transmissions, with set details such as 'On The Air' signs evoking its setting in 'a bizarre radio studio' (Gómez-Peña 1994c: 125). The intention was not merely to cast the performance as a fictitious radio show: in his notes to promoters of the work, Gómez-Peña suggests for a local radio station to actually broadcast the performance live (Gómez-Peña and Fusco 1993a), thus turning it into a real radio show and thereby questioning the genre identity of the piece (as well as expanding its potential audience). Similarly, in the script there are corresponding references to the work's shifting genre identity: 'This is not a performance, but a cue to cue rehearsal. *Miento.* This is an authentic Indian ritual. *Miento.* This is a techno-town meeting. Fuck it! This is what it is. Chingao'!' (Gómez-Peña 1994c: 125) 'What it is' is a combination of all of these: the unfinished, the ritualistic, and the communal. Gómez-Peña here clearly alludes to the conventional definition of performance art as 'this is what it is', setting it against the representational practice of theatre. Gómez-Peña even speaks of the work's 'antitheatrical' nature: '[t]here is really not plot, no recognizable "characters". [...] Their voices are disembodied, and their/our actions *have become* totally ritualized and antitheatrical.' (Gómez-Peña 1994c: 21; emphasis added) Plot and characters *have become* antitheatrical (i.e. deliberately breaking with the traditional theatrical form) both on the level of the written script and on the level of the performance (as the physical actualization of the script). A coherent narrative[75] was replaced with a series of 'prophecies' describing the 'immediate future' of a 'New World Border': 'Imagine a new American continent without borders. It's a continent that has become a huge border zone. Think of it as the New World Border. We are living in the age of *pus-modernity*, a blistering, festering present.' (Gómez-Peña 1994c: 127). Here again we find Gómez-Peña's hallmark prophetic-descriptive writing style, which evokes a time on the 'hither side of the future', 'a blistering present', a distopian utopia,

[75] Like Brith Gof, Gómez-Peña emphasises the cultural specificity of the theatrical form: 'We know that linear narratives and psychological realism are cultural impositions. We know there are more imaginative languages to articulate our cultural experience and we are looking for them.' (Gómez-Peña, *Border Arts Journal*, in Levy 1992: vii)

exaggerated yet instantly recognisable, a realist fiction, or fictionalized real. 'Yes, we are [...] members of a fictional society, no longer defined by ethnicity, ideology, nationality, or language, but by time. [...] Yes, the only recognizable parameters of this emerging society are "ruptures", i.e., the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Baghdad genocide, the L.A. insurrection.' (Gómez-Peña 1994c: 127)[76] The main feature of *The New World Border* was a series of voices, both pre-recorded and live, altered, filtered and mixed with music and sounds to compose a multilayered audioscape (and as such utilizing the format of a radio broadcast). The physical action on the other hand was kept to a few symbolic gestures: putting on various masks and wigs (130, 134, 136, 137), drinking from a shampoo bottle (127, 131, 132) or rubber heart (135), executing Yoga positions (136, 137), praying (136), chanting (138), and boxing with and later decapitating dead chickens[77] (138, 141) (all Gómez-Peña 1994c). As Gómez-Peña suggests, a theatrical (i.e. narratively coherent) plot was replaced by a series of ritualized or performative (i.e. symbolic and repeated) rather than representational actions. The use of various recording and mixing techniques helped to multiply and then separate the voices from the bodies from which they emanated, thereby undermining the strong identification that traditionally ties the identity of a character to the performer's body and voice. In *New World Border*, Gómez-Peña also attempted to separate further the performer's autobiographical self and the character's identity, a separation that he himself had previously often consciously blurred. In the script, the only two lines that made a direct reference to the performer's biographical selves ('GP/SAD: I used to be a Mexican but...

[76] More strongly than in his previous pieces do the theoretical-academic and the performative-poetic registers merge (the script contains an ironic reference to its theoretical and essayistic style: 'this presentation [...] is written for the most part in academic Mexican English' (Gómez-Peña 1994c: 134).). Not only do the paragraphs on the new geopolitical order of the New World Border and its new hybrid and hyphenized citizens reappear in Gómez-Peña's other writing, he reworked the script for an essay, also entitled 'The New World (B)order' by simply quoting the text verbatim and leaving out the 'character' names and stage directions (Gómez-Peña 1992b). The multiple manifestations of *The New World Border* in various genres and different media, like that of Gómez-Peña's other writings, attempt to evoke a sense of hybridity and deterritorialization that he sees as the mark of his own identity.

[77] Dead hanging chickens are a recurrent theme in Gómez-Peña's work. They refer to the pejorative use of the term 'pollo' for migrant workers, cf. Gómez-Peña 1994c: 122, and are used as a 'metaphor for violence towards Mexicans' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 22). According to Gómez-Peña's own account, it was these chickens that created the most controversy: 'We were often visited by animal rights activists who objected to our "violent actions toward the chickens" and vehemently accused us of "desecrating animals" for art's sake. Once, they went to the extent of equating "violence to animals with violence to Mexicans". In all cases, we were defended by audience members who told the animal rights people that they wished "to discuss more important issues". (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 22)

CF/SAD: I used to be a Cuban but...'. (Gómez-Peña 1993d)) were taken out in later versions of the show. The intention was, as Gómez-Peña himself phrased it, to present the performers on stage as 'mere media images and virtual reality clones of our own (fictionalized) identities.' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 21) The multiple framings of the piece (a radio broadcast of a performance piece enacting a radio broadcast) served to mark the various levels of media reproduction involved in the representation of these identities and helped to problematize the assumption of a given property at their origin.

By thus shifting the focus onto the representational apparatus of theatre, which creates identity through reproduction, *New World Border* also attempted to change the audience's relationship to this apparatus, multiplying and dynamizing their gaze. It did so with the help of a second framing device. The performance was preceded by an elaborate 'pre-performance event' in the lobby: 'MISS DISCOVERY and EL AZTEC HIGH-TECH walk around with a basket collecting objects from the audience. He has a ghetto blaster with Latino rock. They speak in Spanish and tongues: Is there anything you would like to give away? [...] Just be sure you don't need what you're parting with to face the end of the 20th century.' (Gómez-Peña 1994c: 125) After handing over their possessions, the audience was then 'segregated' by Miss Discovery and seated separately according to their racial background and linguistic skills.[78]

> She uses the following categories: a) People of Color born in the U.S. & People who came in costume. b) Immigrants of color. c) All other immigrants. d) People who speak two or more language. e) People who are currently involved in an interracial relationship. f) People who have done it with an "alien". g) people who have hired "illegal aliens". h) People who have spent more than six months outside the U.S. i) The rest of the audience.
>
> (*The New World Border*, Gómez-Peña 1993d: 7)

[78] 'In 1990, I began to collaborate with writer and artist Coco Fusco. In some proscenium pieces ("The '1992' Trilogy" and "The New World Border"), we introduced the performance strategy of "segregating" the audience as it entered the theater, utilizing various criteria: a person's degree of bilingualism, racial background, immigration status, and/or their position vis-à-vis certain political issues. Sometimes members of "ethnic minorities", immigrants, and bilingual audience members would be allowed to enter the theater first and to take the best seats. At other times, we would seat "bilinguals, people of color, and immigrants" on one side of the theater, and "the rest" on the other. Even interracial couples would sometimes have to sit in different parts of the theater.' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 95)

The audience here is not addressed as either a culturally homogenous community or a culturally unmarked group, but each spectator is asked to identify themselves in terms of their cultural identity, defined by their degree of bilingualism, racial background, immigration status, or contact with the 'other'. According to this identity they are then literally positioned in relation to the work, highlighting the way in which cultural identity determines reception. At the same time, the performance satirizes the fixed quality of ethnic identity: 'people who came in costume', i.e. people who determined their own identity for the night, sit alongside those determined by their innate ethnicity, and sexual intercourse and economic exploitation are presented as characteristic relationships with the cultural and ethnic other. In an ironic inversion of the real racial and social hierarchy of American society, people of different ethnicity, cultural background and citizenship are given priority over white, monoglot Anglo-Americans, forcing the latter to feel like minorities and outsiders. 'By imaginatively inverting naturalized relations of hierarchy and domination, Gómez-Peña and his collaborators effectively defamiliarize and interrogate structural and political inequities in contemporary culture. According to Gómez-Peña, "We assume a fictional center, push the dominant culture to the margins and treat it as exotic and unfamiliar." (Wolford 1998: 7) The script complements this performative positioning through textual means. Audience responses are not only actively invited (the performers hold up cardboard signs with instructions such as 'Laugh!', 'Applause!', 'Express outrage!' (Gómez-Peña 1994c: 124)), but already included in the script: a (planted) caller from the audience keeps interrupting the performance with exclamations such as 'If you guys don't like it here, why don't you go back to where you came from?' (Gómez-Peña 1994c: 130). For Kuhnheim this effects a mere 'pseudo participation': 'The text does not create dialogue or interaction but the appearance of this, implying perhaps as well that responses to Gómez-Peña's work are largely uniform. Including this pseudo-participation serves to reinforce the centrality of the speaker/performer, for all the response ultimately comes through him. In this way, Gómez-Peña sustains his cultural and discursive authority and manipulates his readers to either support or reject it.' (Kuhnheim 1998: 29) Yet, in *The*

New World Border the scripted audience responses do not anticipate or determine possible reactions in performance, they *are* part of the performance[79]. The strategy behind these scripted responses seems not to manipulate an audience's reaction, but, in making overt the manipulation, it draws attention to the way in which the apprehension of identity is literally already 'scripted' by the apparatuses that represent it.[80]

A similar strategy was at work in the use of languages in *The New World Border*. As Kuhnheim points out, the use of bilingualism in the script positions the readers and spectators as they are excluded or included depending on their language skills and cultural competence (Kuhnheim 1998: 28). In her sceptical interpretation, by thus positioning the audience Gómez-Peña 'is not perforating, but declaring (and reinforcing) the boundary between self and other, insider and outsider' (Kuhnheim 1998: 28–9). However, Gómez-Peña's objective seemed neither to perforate nor reinforce the boundary between insider and outsider, but to reverse it, to make the outsider insider and vice versa, to inverse the power relations inherent in the relationship between self and other. It is the experience *in performance* of linguistic and cultural exclusion that is of importance here. In an interview with Coco Fusco, Gómez-Peña describes his intentions as follows:

> When we speak in English, we are the Other. Spanish is for us the language of translation and interpretation. When we use it, we explain the condition of the Mexican–American to the monolingual Mexican. Using bilingualism implies a complicity and speaks to the experience of the Chicano as one who understands biculturalism. Those three registers operate simultaneously in the performance. [...] If we go to Mexico, we still want to keep the sense of linguistic otherness for Mexicans, because it is very important for us to help Mexicans understand that the Chicano experience is valid and important and necessary. We would perform seventy-five percent in Spanish and twenty-five percent of linguistic otherness that half the audience will understand, more or less, and the other half won't understand, is absolutely necessary. If we are performing in an Anglo context, we would reverse the

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[79] In the earlier version of *The New World Border* with Gómez-Peña and Fusco, the caller's interventions were performed by Roberto Sifuentes, technical director of the show at the time, from the technical desk behind the audience. In the later version featuring Sifuentes as the second main performer, the caller's interventions were actually spoken by Sifuentes on the stage in a 'redneck voice' (Gómez-Peña 1996a), and thus had become overtly part of the scripted performance.

[80] Fusco has described the effect of *Border Brujo* on its white audience: 'The listeners referred to in the text are propelled into the act of absorbing a radically different world.' (Fusco 1991: 47). Thompson has highlighted another aspect of this strategy: 'A major source of the powerful effect he achieves in his work is his refusal to allow the audience a formal vantage point from which they view "objectively" the social situation in which they are in fact always intimately implicated.' (Thompson 1998: 1)

> process. The twenty-five percent in Spanish would be enough to make them uncomfortable, to feel threatened, and to make them feel that they are not receiving the entire experience.
>
> (Gómez-Peña in Fusco 1995a: 151)

There appears to be a distinctive complication here of Gómez-Peña's earlier emphasis on social communication, cultural translation and intercultural dialogue. The focus seems to lie no longer on creating a 'true' intercultural dialogue, but to highlight the conditions that determine it. Consequently, in *The New World Border* Gómez-Peña calls into question the very possibility of translation, not merely as a linguistic practice, but as a cultural practice of explaining the other: 'We are all, finally, untranslatable hijos de la chingada' (*The New World Border*, Gómez-Peña 1996a: 25). Instead of translating the 'Other' so it could be apprehended by the dominant culture, Gómez-Peña's efforts are now directed at 'translating' the dominant culture to itself:

> The philosophical premise of most of these projects, and not just the ones I've been involved in, has turned 360 degrees [...]. We were explaining ourselves to ourselves, then we went on to explain ourselves to the dominant culture. Now we are entering a new stage, explaining the dominant culture to the dominant culture. We have turned the world upside down. We have assumed a position of center, of the speaking subject and no longer the object.
>
> (Gómez-Peña in Breslauer 1992: 84)

At the heart of this strategy is Gómez-Peña's belief that (only) in its encounter with cultural otherness can a culture really become transparent to itself. This again evokes Bhabha's theory of translation[81], for whom translation *between* cultures is secondary to the primary process of translation *within* culture: 'Meaning is constructed across the bar of difference and separation between the signifier and the signified. So it follows that no culture is full unto itself [...]. By translation I first of all mean a process by which, in order to objectify cultural meaning, there always has to be a process of alienation and of secondariness *in relation to itself*. In that sense there is no "in itself" and "for itself" within cultures because they are always subject to intrinsic forms of translation.' (Bhabha 1990a: 210). Gómez-Peña's artistic practice in performances such as *The New*

[81] See Chapter 1.

World Border can best be described as an attempt to alienate the dominant culture in relation to itself by making transparent the process by which the meaning *of* difference is constructed *across* difference.

However, despite Gómez-Peña's attempts at hybridizing identity, at multiplying his self in a number of roles and characters and making manifest their creation in representation, at subverting notions of a true 'self' as the origin of representation and notions of a true 'other' as the object of perception, Kuhnheim interprets these efforts as mere rhetorical manifestations and reinforcements of Gómez-Peña's own inner autobiographical 'self':

> [...] [D]espite an appearance of heterogeneity, Gómez-Peña primarily maintains a unified speaking position in *The New World Border*[82], one that ultimately reinforces his authority as artist and as emblem of a particularly masculine bicultural identity. [...] There is a deceptive hybridity in this text; attempts to multiply personae do not fragment into difference but reproduce like echoes and mirrors. The speaker's identity depends upon an opposition between multiculturalism and a monoculture that he has asserted no longer exists, but that he must reinforce so that he can position himself as a hero destroying it.[83]
>
> (Kuhnheim 1998: 27–9)

Kuhnheim cites various characteristics of Gómez-Peña's writing as evidence for his latent essentialism: the lack of difference that she detects between speaking positions in his texts even when expressed in a variety of genres; the lack of disjunction between his biographical self and his performance identity; the fact that she finds him 'most convincing' when he adopts a conventionally autobiographical voice; the fact that he himself is 'trapped' in his own set of cultural preconceptions[84]; and, above all, the way

[82] Kuhnheim refers to the collection of essays and performance scripts of the same title, including the script for *The New World Border*.

[83] Recently Gómez-Peña himself has referred to this form of self-heroization: 'I don't want to heroize/eroticize my oppression as a post-Mexican in racist USA, or as a "Chicanized" Mexican in nationalist Mexico; I have already done enough of that in my earlier books and performances.' (Gómez-Peña 2000a: 7)

[84] Kuhnheim offers a very perceptive reading of Gómez-Peña's short poem, 'The Psycho in the Lobby of the Theatre' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 60–1), in which the speaker verbally assaults his (silent) listener with his assumptions about who he is (an Anglo psycho), only to find in the end that his counterpart is a photocopier repair man called Mario López. 'All the interlocutor has to do to contradict Gómez-Peña's positioning of him is reveal that he has a Hispanic name – this appears to automatically situate him as one of "us", not "them". The speaker categorizes him and then re-categorizes him – converting him from North American, purposeless "psycho" to regular Mexican or Chicano working guy – in both cases the result is a simplification rather than a complication of identity.' (Kuhnheim 1998: 31)

in which he reinforces gendered identities by applying traditional female images and metaphors of aggressive penetration.[85] She concludes:

> There is a clash between how Gómez-Peña defines border identities – as multiple, heterogeneous, subversive, transitional – and the unified speaking authority with which he deploys them. [...] [H]e chooses to consolidate border identity, to be representative, instead of exploring the multiplicity of both real and imagined identities.
>
> (Kuhnheim 1998: 32–3)

Kuhnheim accuses Gómez-Peña of undervaluing the difference between performance and writing (Kuhnheim 1998: 27), and suggests he may 'explore the potential of incorporating some of the more paradoxical elements of performance (other voices, audience response, clash between image and words, crossing over into different performance personae) into his textual construction of identity' (Kuhnheim 1998: 33). Yet she herself undervalues the performative aspects of Gómez-Peña's work and restricts herself instead to an analysis of his rhetorical strategies. Such a restriction is certainly legitimate, considering that Gómez-Peña's work is most readily available in the form of his published writings, but it cannot explain its full impact. These writings were written *for* performance, and it is within the dissonance between the performative and the textual strategies of constructing identity that they take full effect.

Kuhnheim's criticism, however, highlights a problem that may be less the result of Gómez-Peña's personal artistic strategies than the consequence of a hidden contradiction in dissonant performance practice in general. Scheie has traced this problem back to the afore-mentioned role of the performer's corporeality in live performance, which in his opinion 'presents a formidable obstacle to a radically dissonant performativity' (Scheie 1994: 35). The unique status of the body within the representational apparatus of theatre is that the body is not only a sign to be read, but also a producer of signification itself. The human body thus appears to betray an inner self that exceeds the body-as-

[85] Other critics have contradicted this point: 'Guillermo Gómez-Peña's hybridized border performances are notable for the range of links they make to some of these identities [i.e.feminists, Third World Women, minorities, refugees, migrants, illegal workers, immigrants, exiles]' (Joseph and Fink 1999: 6)

sign and governs its signification[86]. According to Scheie, the unique 'aural nature' of the body in live performance compels the spectator to resolve any dissonance between the performer's anatomy, the performer's racial or sexual identity and its performance by referring it to such an extra-representational 'self'. 'Indeed, dissonance complicitously facilitates this urge by carving the body into discrete fetishes for the spectator to seize upon as the mark of the "true" self. This compulsion to fetishize the body immunizes the spectator against the "trouble" that a dissonant performance might stir up.' (Scheie 1994: 36). However dissonant a performance of identity, the desire to identify beyond its dissonance a true identity that pulls the strings thus always subverts its subversion. It reverses the meaning of Ubersfeld's dictum that, 'the actor is a figure of desire' (Ubersfeld, as translated by and quoted in Melrose 1994: 13) – the actor in this case is a figure made by the desiring gaze of the spectator, which creates the illusion of presence on the performer's body. Together with Coco Fusco, Gómez-Peña began to develop towards a strategy of performing identity that would throw this desire into confusion.

[86] See, for example, the different theatre semiotic models concerning the role of the body in theatre's signifying economy, in the works of, for example, Elam 1980, Fischer-Lichte 1992, Melrose 1994.

III Internal Confusion

The New World Border, with its dissonant *mise en scène* and its reflection of the audience's positionality *vis-à-vis* the performance, anticipated many of the formal and political concerns of Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's next project, *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...*(1992–93). But the interest of both artists now focused more strongly on the regimes of representation themselves through which notions of cultural 'Otherness' are constructed. Fusco termed their work a form of 'reverse ethnography' (Fusco 1994: 143)[87], as ethnography's traditional focus of attention on the study of the primitive 'Other' was turned around and instead redirected at Western culture and its concepts of Otherness, which in this context appears primarily in terms of ethnic difference. Consequently, the ethnically marked body and its role in the construction of cultural identity and cultural Otherness remained central to Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's investigation.[88]

Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit... was preceded by a number of radio programmes (*Norte: Sur* (1990; reprinted in Fusco 1995a: 169–178) [89] and *Radio Pirata: Colón Go Home* (1992–3; reprinted in Fusco 1995a: 179–95)), in which Gómez-

[87] Gómez-Peña uses the term 'reversed anthropology' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 96).

[88] Visual artist and performer James Luna, who has collaborated with Gómez-Peña on a series of 'diorama' pieces since 1993, created an installation in 1986, *The Artifact Piece*, which anticipated some of the concerns of *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...*Luna exhibited himself in a display case in a section of the San Diego Museum of Man dedicated to the Kumeyaay Indians. Lucy Lippard describes the exhibit as follows: 'labels unsentimentally explained his scars, resulting from drunkenness and fights. In three glass cases were Luna's personal effects – the accoutrements of a '60s American [...], a significant collection of shoes, and the "medicine objects" used in rituals on the La Jolla reservation where he has lived since 1975 – shown with no explanations. By his presence, Luna countered the "vanishing Indian" tone of the rest of the museum with its large collection of Edward Curtis's photographs of Indians dressed up and posed to document their own "disappearance"'. (Lippard, as quoted in Wolford 1998: 48, n.6). In their collaborative project, *Living and dying dioramas: The Shame-man Meets El Mexican't* (1993ff), Luna and Gómez-Peña have exhibited themselves in dioramas in museums and other public places, enacting stereotypical images of Mexicans and native Americans. For a description of their joint project see Gómez-Peña 1996a: 100–1.

[89] The radio programme, *Norte: Sur*, was part of larger project of the same title, which Gómez-Peña describes as follows: 'After my departure from BAW/TAF, I collaborated in a very ambitious project with writer and media artist Coco Fusco. Invited by Festival 2000 of San Francisco, we formed a temporary group with Latino and Anglo artists from both the East and West Coasts. We met in San Francisco several times during an entire year. The result of this dialogue was an installation at the Mexican Museum entitled *Norte/Sur*. From "authentic" pre-Columbian and colonial artworks juxtaposed with tourist art, to a multimedia altar composed of computer-generated projections, we attempted to articulate some of the intercultural dynamics that characterize the relationships between North and South, such as appropriation, creative expropriation, colonial dependancy, vampirism, and nostalgic simulacra.' (Gómez-Peña 1993a: 32).

Peña and Fusco dealt explicitly with the issue of ethnicity and its historical and cultural contingency, and with the influence of the changing definitions of identity on the experiences of the individual. *Norte: Sur*, which is built around a fake interview with the two artists, includes the following passage:

> CF: My name is Coco Fusco, and actually, I was born in the U.S. and am genetically composed of Yoruba, Taino, Catalan, Sephardic, and Neapolitan blood. In 1990, that makes me Hispanic. If this were the '50s, I might be considered black.[...]
> GG-P: Would you believe that one of my grandmothers was part German and part British? [...] My other grandparents had a mixture of Spanish and Indian blood.
> (Fusco 1995a: 170)

Gómez-Peña and Fusco here question the assumption that 'race' is 'carried' by blood, asserting instead that notions of 'race' are determined by visual markings that are read differently in different historical circumstances. As Susan Bennett points out in her analysis of the same paragraph, 'the assumptions of ethnography are seen as historically specific and contingent, and *Norte: Sur* asks spectators to realize that what they see cannot possibly carry the full complexity of identity. What they see, it is suggested, is what the mainstream culture of their own historical moments makes available to them.' (Bennett 1997: 192) In a later passage from the same radio play, the cultural and historical contingency of ethnic identity is referred to again in more detail:

> CF: [...] When I was born, the nuns in the hospital thought they were doing my parents a favor by classifying me as white. Then my mother got deported just after I was born and took me to Cuba with her, where everyone saw me as a *mulatica clarita.*
> GG-P: I am my parent's youngest and darkest child. I was born *morenito y peludo*, a dark and hairy thing at the Spanish Hospital of Mexico City. [...] Ninety percent of all Mexicans were mestizos like me. In a sense, I grew up raceless.
> CF: My parents tried to raise me without a sense of race, but that was unrealistic. [...]
> GG-P: Now that you say that, Coco, I realize that my world wasn't completely raceless either. I became aware of skin privilege when my slightly darker schoolmates began to treat me with extra respect. To them I was white, sort of. [...] [I]n Mexico, race has more to do with class. [...]
> CF: [My parents] knew that the Civil Rights movement wasn't going to end racial classification, but they didn't want me to be psychologically impaired by it. They found a private school where they thought I wouldn't have to deal with my race in negative terms. I entered in 1966 as a child of color. [...] Segregation had been supplanted by separatism. No one was into the idea of "mixed race". And whenever I took national exams, I had to check an ethnic background box, and I couldn't find one

> for myself. So I always marked Other. Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans hadn't been lumped together yet. [...] [When people started using the word "Hispanic",] [p]eople were still confused about whether I was Black or not. A [*sic*] the end of high-school, three administrators – a black, a Chicano, and a Jew – were deciding if I was eligible for a minority scholarship, [*sic*] The black said no, the Chicano said yes, and the Jew said that I should ask my mother if we had any African ancestors. They weren't convinced by my little Afro [...].
> GG-P: They had a lot of other terms for me besides "Hispanic". When I crossed the border in '78, I ipso facto became a greaser, a wetback, a meskin. At the time, I didn't understand what those words implied.
>
> (Fusco 1995a: 173–5)

'Race' here is referred to as the product of an historical and cultural act of 'classification', rather than as a 'innate' property. This act is presented as intrinsically linked to other social and political issues (e.g., class), which define the particular historical and cultural meaning of racial identity. The paragraph also argues against notions of 'Otherness' as a homogeneous category: Fusco's experiences of having her racial identity evaluated by representatives of other minority communities in the U.S. points to the complexity of definitions of identity and otherness across communities. The person of 'mixed race' falls between the binary of 'black' and 'white' that is fundamental to racist discourse in the United States. It also highlights the different categories that are used for the identification of identity: appearance ('my little Afro') is set against ancestry (not coincidentally here a Jewish concern). One must keep in mind, however, not merely *what* is being said, but also *how* it is being said: *Norte: Sur* was written as a radio play. Bennett argues that 'the absence of visual signs by way of the genre *Norte: Sur* brings into play the importance of voice (accent, vocabulary, syntax) in the audience's comprehension of cultural competence and location. It reminds us that an auditory regime can work as effectively as a scopic one.' (Bennett 1997: 192)

Whilst *Norte: Sur* distinguishes between the different historical and cultural perceptions of the ethnicity of the Mexican immigrant on the one hand and the second-generation Cuban American on the other, their next performance, *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* presented Gómez-Peña and Fusco less as individuals than as representatives of a generalized ethnic 'Other', members of the same indigenous 'tribe' whose main characteristic was that they were non-white. Fusco argues that this primacy

of ethnicity before any other differentiation of identity is not only paradigmatic for the history of colonialism, but still lives on in the way in which Western culture approaches people of different ethnicity:

> "As artists of color in the United States", writes Fusco, "whatever our aesthetic or political inclinations, Guillermo Gómez-Peña and I carry our bodies as markers of difference and reminders of the endlessly recycled colonial fantasies on which Western culture thrived."
>
> (Gablik 1995: 313–4)

Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit... set out to critique 'the construction of ethnic Otherness as essentially *performative* and located in the body' (Fusco 1994: 27) which lies at the heart of these colonial fantasies. It did so by emphasising the performative nature of colonial encounters, and the role of the 'native' body as the primary site of the performance of colonialism. The structure of *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* was simple enough (for a detailed description see above[90]): The artists displayed themselves as two members of a (fictitious) 'undiscovered' indigenous Amerindian tribe in a cage, which was exhibited in a variety of public spaces and arts institutions in a number of countries in Europe and in the USA[91]. They performed their fictional culture by carrying out 'traditional' tasks, and by singing and dancing for money. They spoke a (nonsensical) language unfamiliar to their spectators. Apart from paid-for encounters with the audience, in which the spectators were allowed to touch them and feed them, they avoided all direct communication, even eye contact or other gestures of recognition, thus stripping their performance 'of anything that could be mistaken for a "personal" or individual trait' (Taylor 1998). The performance was based on a once popular European and Northamerican practice of exhibiting indigenous people from Africa, Asia and the Americas in museums, zoos, circuses and parks for the purpose of both entertainment

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[90] See also descriptions of the performance in Fusco 1994, Gómez-Peña 1996a: 96–8, Gablik 1995, Sawchuk 1992. A video documenting the performance and some of the responses it received was produced by Fusco with Paula Heredia under the title *The Couple in the Cage: A Guatinaui Odyssey* (Fusco and Heredia 1993).

[91] Venues included the Columbus Plaza in Madrid, London's Covent Garden, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, the Field Museum of Chicago, New York's Whitney Museum of American Art (at the opening for the *Whitney Biennial*), the Australia Museum Sydney, the Fundacíon Banco Patricios Buenos Aires, the Walker Arts Center Sculpture Garden, the University of California at Irvine Art Gallery.

and scientific analysis, 'spectacles which offered up mute, exoticized specimens for curious and titillated crowds' (Clifford 1997: 198). A chronology of its historical antecedents, ranging from the case of an Arawak brought back from the Caribbean by Columbus in 1493 and displayed in the Spanish Court, to the case of a black woman midget exhibited at a state fair in Minnesota in 1992, was displayed in a didactic panel next to the cage (reproduced in Gómez-Peña and Fusco 1993b; and Fusco 1995a: 146–7). It pointed to the importance of these practices for the production of Otherness and identity: 'Ethnographic spectacles circulated and reinforced stereotypes, stressing that "difference" was apparent in the bodies on display. They thus naturalized fetishized representations of Otherness, mitigating anxieties generated by the encounter with difference.' (Fusco 1995a: 152)[92] Notions of ethnic Otherness were constructed as primarily performative and located in the body: 'At times, the distinctive "racial" and/or physical characteristics of the specimens were in themselves sufficient to command attention and awe on the part of Anglo-European spectators; in other instances, the beings on display were called upon to perform activities (rituals, songs, or work-related actions) thought to be characteristic of their cultures of origin.' (Wolford 1998: 5) Fusco emphasises the importance of this practice for the identity building of Western culture: 'The exhibits also gave credence to white supremacist worldviews by representing nonwhite peoples and cultures as being in need of discipline, civilization, and industry. Not only did these exhibits reinforce stereotypes of "the primitive" but they served to enforce a sense of racial unity as whites among Europeans and North Americans, who were divided strictly by class and religion until this century.' (Fusco 1994: 148)[93] In her

[92] Fusco refers explicitely to Bhabha's notion of stereotype: 'Bhabha explains how racial classification through stereotyping is a necessary component of colonialist discourse, as it justifies domination and masks colonizer's fear of the inability to always already know the Other.' (Fusco 1995a: 153). Bhabha's influence on *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* is self-evident: 'The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction. [...C]olonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at one an "other" and yet entirely knowable and visible.' (Bhabha 1994: 70–1)

[93] For a history of colonial exhibitions see Fischer-Lichte 1997: 225–227 and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's detailed study of 'displaying' culture (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998a).

detailed analysis of the performance, Taylor summarizes its multifaceted critique of such practice:[94]

> The performance challenged the way history and culture are packaged, sold, and consumed within hegemonic structures. It called attention to the Western history and practice of collecting and classifying [...]. It recalled the construction and performance of the "exotic" staged in the ethnographic fairs of the late 19th century, in which "natives" were placed in model "habitats" much as lifeless specimens were placed in dioramas. And it parodied the assignation of value that the West has placed on the exotic. For one dollar, the artist would perform their culture. It suggested the impossibility of self-representation by the "indigenous" contained in and through representation ("the subaltern cannot speak"[95]). It openly confronted the voyeuristic desire to see the "other" naked (passing, of course, as a legitimate interest in cultural "difference") that animates much current ethno-tourism. The world tour, moreover, highlighted the continued circulation of these images and desires in the global neocolonial, imperialist economy. Fusco and Gómez-Peña enacted the various economies of the [body as object]: the body as cultural artifact, as sexual object, as threatening alterity, as scientific specimen, as living proof of radical difference.
>
> (Taylor 1998: 164–5)

It is not only colonialism's fascination with Otherness as essentially performative and located in the 'primitive' body that is being critiqued here. The performance intends to

94 Taylor has remarked critically on the fact that 'while the performance critiqued structures of colonialism, there was less of an attack on prevailing structures of sexism or heterosexism. Both performers very much played the "male" and "female" referred to in the explanatory panels. [...] Why was gender construction more difficult to deconstruct than colonialism?' (Taylor and Villegas 1994: 165) She describes the actions of both performers and the responses they received in more detail: 'There was something very alluring about Fusco with her beautiful face painted and wearing a grass skirt and skimpy bra, and the frequent sexual overtures by men suggest that perhaps the erotic pleasure of her performance eclipsed its ethos. Gómez-Péña's performance of masculinity was also troubling for some audience members. His macho presentation affirmed and challenged the age-old ambivalence and anxiety surrounding the sexuality of the nonwhite male.' (Taylor and Villegas 1994: 165) It appears that the performance managed to achieve 'confusion' (see below) with regards to gender identity more easily than with regards to racial identity.

Wolford, on the other hand, argues that '[t]he extraordinary physical attractiveness and sexual magnetism of the artists is a crucial element of their performance strategy. [...T]he specimens on display invite objectification by the spectators, invoking the perfidious historical legacy by which nonwhite people are constructed in the colonial imagination as carnal, sensual creatures incapable of controlling their base desires'. (Wolford 1998: 21). Wolford also discusses at length various subversive categories applied by recent female collaborators of Gómez-Peña and Sifuentes Diorama piece (Wolford 1998: 28ff. Bennett notes the frequency with which the 'imperialist gaze of the audience expressed itself explicitely in sexual terms' (Bennett 1997: 221, n.)

95 After an article by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, entitled 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', on the intersection of a theory of representation and the political economy of global capitalism (Spivak 1988). Wolford has commented on the absence of language in Gómez-Peña's diorama pieces in general: 'One of the primary issues in [these performances] is precisely the question of who is able to speak and who is spoken for' (Wolford 1998: 37). Taylor has made the connection to the role of the silent body-to-be-seen of the subaltern other for the history of ethnography: 'Then, insofar as native bodies are invariably presented as not speaking (or not making themselves understood to the defining subject), they give rise to an industry of "experts" needed to approach and interpret them – language experts, scientists, ethicists, ethnographers, and cartographers.' (Taylor and Villegas 1994)

reveal the inherent performativity and theatricality[96] of colonialism itself through which notions of ethnic Otherness are constructed. It does so by repeating the patterns of colonialism's performance: the repetitive execution of tasks, the display of native bodies, the position of the subaltern as the given-to-be-seen. As Taylor points out, by 'iterating colonialism's performance, *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* highlighted its citational character and historicized its practices' (Taylor 1998: 163).

The critique of colonialism's performance also extended to the practices of ethnography (as the academic study of the Other, including its public display in museums[97]) and its collusion in the construction of Otherness. Fusco has critizised ethnography's own involvement in the staging of 'cultural identities' as part of the one-sided historical reality of intercultural 'encounters'. The fact that the concept of 'cultural performance' was first developed in anthropology to differentiate a more 'performative' (i.e. ritual, oral, physical etc.), i.e. 'primitive', culture from the developed text-based cultures of the West presents for Fusco a legacy which any anthropological theory of the performance of culture has to take into account (Fusco 1995a: 41ff.). Again, it was not merely ethnography's interest in cultural performance[98], but the performative aspects of ethnography itself that Gómez-Peña and Fusco highlighted. Taylor states:

> ethnography is performative primarily in the way it stages, or restores, the social drama.[99] The encounter is constructed theatrically, staged in the here and now, rather than as a past-tense narrative description. The ethnographer brackets the moment, [...] chooses the cast of characters by virtue of framing the event, and endows it with space and meaning. The ethnographic "other", like the dramatic character acted by a live actor, is part "real', part "fiction" – that is, real bodies come to embody fictional qualities and characteristics created by the ethnographer/dramatist. [...] [The] created, fictional other, child of the ethnographers' cultural repertoire, is the figure that Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña capture and put behind bars. Their reenactment shows the violence of the ethnographic performance that tries to pass as real – violent because its performative strings are hidden from the spectator's view.
>
> (Taylor 1998: 171)

[96] See below for the difference between theatricality and performativity in the context of colonialism.
[97] 'Since their inception in the 19th century, museums have literalized the theatricality of colonialism – taking the cultural other out of context and isolating it, reducing the live performance of cultural practice into a dead object behind glass' (Taylor 1998: 164). For a discussion of the history of ethnographic museums and the 'theatrical' display of the other see Cooke and Wollen 1996; Karp 1992a; Karp 1992b; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998a; Rogoff 2000.
[98] See Chapter 1.
[99] See Chapter 1.

In her critique of *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* and its restaging of modes of ethnographic knowledge and display, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett points out that the performance 'tended to simplify, in the spirit of repudiation, such "othering" practices. [...] [C]ritiques from outside of the discipline have tended to reduce all of anthropology to a preoccupation with the primitive body. [...] As for Claude Lévi-Strauss and for that matter Bronislaw Malinowski, their concerns were not the "'primitive' body as object", but rather forms of social organization, worldview, values, personhood, and ways of being in the world' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998b: 177–8). Her judgement of the performance is thus fairly damning: 'Rather than offering a critique of contemporary (or even modern) ethnographic theory and practice, *The Couple in the Cage*[100] (i.e. *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...*) uses the ethnographic burlesque in the service of a shameful ethnology, practices associated with the early history of ethnographic writing and display and with popular entertainment." (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998b: 175) And she concludes: '*The Couple in the Cage* is neither a serious display nor a fake ethnographic display, however much it used dissimulation and "reverse ethnography", as Fusco puts it. It is a provocation, and the genre, for want of a better term, is performance art.' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998b: 179). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett is certainly right in stating that the performance targeted models of ethnographic understanding that had long been outdated, and that contemporary anthropology[101] shares the performance's critical attitude to historic ethnographic practices. Fusco herself, who refers to Clifford's work (Fusco 1994: 150) as an inspiration for the performance, would probably agree – as a matter of fact, she and Gómez-Peña never claim to critique contemporary ethnographic theory. It is the afterlife that repudiated ethnographic models of Otherness enjoy in the enduring stereotypes of popular culture and mass media which is the performance's true target.[102] 'What is at stake in these performance

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[100] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett here uses the title of the video-documentation on the performance.

[101] See (Clifford 1988; Clifford 1997; Clifford and Marcus 1986a; Fabian 1990; Geertz 1973; Geertz 1983; Hastrup 1995). See Chapter 1.

[102] 'The stereotypes about nonwhite people that were continuously reinforced by the ethnographic displays are still alive in high culture and the mass media.' (Fusco 1994: 153)

finally has less to do with historical modes of exhibition than with the persistent and damaging legacy created by these forms of display as they continue to influence dominant cultural perceptions of people of color.' (Wolford 1998: 7)

What is more, there is another set of consequences implied in Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's concept of performance art as 'reverse ethnography' that have often been overlooked by its critics: 'reverse ethnography' does not merely refer to the reversal of ethnography's traditional practices, but also to the implication of performance art in the staging of colonialism and colonialist ethnography on the one hand, and to the use of performance as an ethnographic tool on the other. It is important to note at this point that *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* was devised as a counter-project to the celebrations of the quincentenary of Columbus' so-called 'discovery' of the New World in 1992. Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's declared intention behind the performance was to draw a link between 'the racism implicit in ethnographic paradigms of discovery' and the 'exoticizing rhetoric of "world beat" multiculturalism' (Fusco 1994: 145).

> Rather than debating historical accuracy, we are interested in the concept of "discovery" not only as the encounter with a continent unknown to Europeans but also at the beginning of the West's relationship *to* otherness. In this sense the discovery is about the creation of a discoverer, and the discoverer's attitude towards the "other". We find that this spirit, this attitude is repeated in all kinds of places and situations, including the *presentation and interpretation of art.* There are many examples of otherness being put on display for the European gaze. [...] What was understood in the nineteenth century as living ethnography, we see as the origins of intercultural performance. The practice of the discovery objectifying the other can be played with and parodied. In *Two Undiscovered Aborigines* we use our bodies to act out that concept. By making reference to the past we indicate how this dynamic of discovery is not just something that happened long ago, but is repeated in certain forms of multiculturalism still alive today.[103]
>
> (Fusco in Sawchuk 1992: 24; emphasis added)

In her article expanding on the theoretical premises of the performance, Fusco retraces the history of an allegiance between colonialism and artistic practice in their joint construction of Otherness as performative and located in the body. She demonstrates how ethnographic displays have been referred to by writers and artists for over five

[103] 'The central position of the white spectator, the objective of these events as a confirmation of their position as global consumers of exotic cultures, and the stress on authenticity as an aesthetic value, all remain fundamental to the spectacle of otherness many continue to enjoy.' (Fusco 1995a: 57)

centuries. But it is the development of modernism which openly imitates 'primitiveness' in order to break with the paradigm of realism.[104] Fusco argues that '[t]his practice of appropriating and fetishizing the primitive and simultaneously erasing the original source continues into contemporary "avantgarde" performance art' (Fusco 1994: 150)[105], and she cites the influence of shamanistic practices on performance art as evidence. Art historian Johannes Lothar Schröder has demonstrated how *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* commented in a very literal manner on the history of performance art referred to by Fusco here. He lists a number of performances featuring cages from what he terms the 'heroic age' of performance art in the 1970s: performances by well-known performance artists such as Bonnie Sherk[106], Chris Burden[107], Ben d'Armagnac[108] and Teching Hsieh[109], which for Schröder presented 'heroic' acts of ridding oneself of the cultural traits of tradition and education to create the foundation of a new ritual practice.[110] Schröder admits to an initial dislike of Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's performance, which he thought was being derogative of this performance art tradition, a judgement he later rectified: 'Bringing into focus the history of suppression and humiliation of fellow-creatures, aliens and freaks as the roots of performance art [...] makes evident why performance art is still looked at as inferior or even barbaric.' (Schröder 1999) Although Schröder is one of the few commentators to take seriously

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104 See also James Clifford's discussion of primitivist art in Clifford 1988.

105 Fusco makes an interesting distinction between the 'function' of ethnographic displays, which live on in contemporary mass culture, and the 'structure' of the primitive, which has been assimilated by avantgarde art. *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* attempts to realign the two in its criticism of practices of 'Othering', see Fusco 1994: 153.

106 In the spring of 1971, Bonnie Sherk placed herself in a tiger cage in San Francisco Zoo. She was let in and out through the small door of the cage in the same manner as the tigers and lions, and had her lunch at the same time as the animals were being fed. (cf. Schröder 1999)

107 In 1971 Chris Burden spent five days in a 30 cubic feet locker situated on the campus at the University of California Irvine. (cf. Schröder 1999)

108 In 1973 Ben d'Armagnac lay in a large cage in the gallery of the Goethe Institute in Amsterdam. His body was wrapped in white cloth and pieces of jute so that his physical shape would be hard to recognize. Organs taken from a cow were placed around him. As he rolled around the cage, blood was squeezed from the organs and tainted the clothes and floor. (cf.Schröder 1999)

109 From 30 September 1978 to 29 September 1979, the Taiwanese artist Teching Hsieh lived in a wooden cage built inside his studio in New York City. He vouched not to converse, read or write, listen to the radio or watch television until he had unsealed himself. A friend facilitated him with food and clothes and took care of his refuse. (cf. Schröder 1999)

110 Taylor has remarked that the cage alluded to another, very different history: 'the caging of rebellious individuals in Latin America from pre-Hispanic times to the recent public caging in Peru of Guzmán, leader of Sendero luminoso (Shining Path).' (Taylor 1998: 164)

Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's claim that ethnographic displays were an integral part of the history of performance art in the West (cf. Fusco 1994), Fusco would probably object to his interpretation for being another example in which a white theorist lays claim to the work of an artist of colour in order to argue for a ritualist performance art practice beyond civilizationary constraints. 'Redefining these "affinities" with the primitive, the traditional, and the exotic has become an increasingly delicate issue as more artists of color enter the sphere of the "avantgarde". What may be "liberating" and "transgressive" identification for Europeans and Euro-Americans is already a symbol of entrapment within an imposed stereotype for Others.' (Fusco 1994: 151)[111] It is these differential relations of power, which continue to influence the making and reception of art work by artists of colour for a white audience in mainstream arts institutions that are at the heart of *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...*'s critique. 'We sought a strategically effective way to examine the limits of the "happy multiculturalism" that reigned in cultural institutions, as well as to respond to the formalists and cultural relativists who reject the proposition that racial difference is absolutely fundamental to aesthetic interpretation'. (Fusco 1994: 145).

The examination of the influence of racial difference on the way the performance was received and interpreted became the most controversial aspect of *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* It is in reference to this examination that the term 'reverse ethnography' reveals its full meaning. Fusco uses the term for the first time not in connection with the performance itself, but with her essay on the work (Fusco 1994), in which she catalogues and evaluates the responses the work received from its various audiences. According to her, these responses, not the actions carried out by the performers in the cage, were the site of the actual 'performance': 'The performance was interactive, focussing less on what we did than how people interacted with us and

[111] Fusco is also highly critical of the usual genealogy of performance art, which links the performances of the early 1970s with the Dadaist and Surrealist events of the 1920s and 1930s, the Black Mountain College group of the 1950s, etc. She calls this history 'flagrantly Eurocentric', as it lends credence to the misconception that artists of color began contributing to the movement only as a result of the multicultural policies of the 1980s (Fusco 1995b: 160).

interpreted our actions.' (Fusco 1994: 148).[112] The intention behind the involvement of the audience was to make manifest their implication within the performance of colonialism: Taylor argues that this performance relies as much on the viewing ('civilized') subject as it does on the 'primitive' body as the object of his gaze, who in turn affirms the subject's cultural supremacy.

> The native is show; the civilized observer is the privileged spectator. The objectified, "primitive" body exists, isolated and removed. "We", those viewers who look through the eyes of the explorer, are (like the explorer) positioned safely outside the frame, free to define, theorize, and debate their (never "our") societies. The "encounters" with the native create "us" as audience just as much as the violence of definition creates "them" – as primitives. The drama depends on maintaining a unidirectional gaze, and stages the lack of reciprocity and mutual understanding inherent in "discovery"'.
>
> (Taylor 1998: 163)

Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit... attempted to 'put the viewer back into the frame of discovery.' (Taylor 1998: 162). Gómez-Peña and Fusco achieved this through two means: firstly, they made the spectators themselves into objects subjected to the gaze of others. The actions of the two performers in the cage were largely reactive and responded to a set of actions, most of them prescribed, of the spectators. Fischer-Lichte describes the audience's actions in detail:

> [T]he spectators were challenged to act themselves if they wanted to see more than the so-called everyday activities. They must pay, literally, a certain price. And this price did not only amount to the fee they had to donate. For in asking the "zoo" guards whether they might feed Fusco a banana, or for rubber gloves in order to touch Gómez-Peña, or if the two people on display mate in public in the cage and by donating the prescribed fee for Fusco to dance or Gómez-Peña to narrate his 'stories', the spectators themselves also performed activities. In doing so, they exposed themselves to the gaze of the performers as well as of the other spectators.
>
> (Fischer-Lichte 1997b: 231)

The spectators were thus quite literally placed within the 'frame' of the performance. This alone, however, would have affirmed rather than undermined the system of scopic

[112] In an essay accompanying Gómez-Peña's and Sifuentes' *Temple of Confessions* (1994–96), Fusco suggests a definition of interactivity which applies equally to *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...*: 'Together these figures create a dynamic that compels us to choose a disposition towards what we are seeing. As part of an interactive performance, every movement the audience makes means something, so a neutrality one might enjoy in front of other work of art is here unattainable.' (Fusco in Gómez-Peña and Sifuentes 1994: 3–4)

and specular identification that underlies colonial power. Instead, the work questioned the 'frame' itself by shifting the responsibility for its constitution to the viewers. The work was staged primarily in non-art contexts such as public spaces, historic sites or natural history museums[113], where, if possible, the performers would appear in their cage without prior publicity to 'create a surprise or "uncanny" encounter', in which 'people's defence mechanisms are less likely to operate with their normal efficiency; caught off guard, their beliefs are more likely to rise to the surface' (Fusco 1994: 148). The absence of conventional means which traditionally help to identify a spectacle as an art event, such as its setting in a clearly defined artistic space or the usual marketing devices from the selling of tickets to accompanying programme notes, placed the responsibility for 'framing' the event on the spectators, who had to decide whether they were witnessing an art work or a 'real' ethnographic encounter. Unlike in *The New World Border*, where the spectators were placed in relation to the performance, thus making literal the way in which we are always already positioned within the dominant regimes of representation, in *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* it was the spectators themselves who now (wittingly or unwittingly) placed themselves in relation to the work, thus revealing the ways in which these regimes are internalized.

However, in *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* the internalized regimes of representation proved too deeply imbedded to be easily suspended, despite the overt, even overemphasized artifice of the performance. Fusco states: '[W]e have had to confront two unexpected realities in the course of developing this piece: 1) a substantial portion of the audience believed that our fictional identities are real ones; and 2) a substantial number of intellectuals, artists, and cultural bureaucrats have sought to

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[113] Venues included public spaces (e.g. Columbus Plaza in Madrid – significant because of its monument of Christopher Columbus; London's Covent Garden); art galleries (e.g. New York's Whitney Museum of American Art); and natural history museums (e.g. the Smithsonian Institution in Washington). The work was thus framed either as an art piece or as an object of scientific research. Taylor has pointed out that Gómez-Peña and Fusco had chosen 'countries deeply implicated in the extermination or abuse of aboriginal peoples. By staging their show in historic sites and institutions, they situated the dehumanizing practice in the very heart of these societies' most revered legitimating structures. (Taylor 1998: 163) Gómez-Peña himself pointed to the different qualities of the locations chosen: '[I]t's one thing to carry out iconoclastic actions in a theater or museum for a public that is predisposed to tolerate radical behavior, and it's quite another to bring the same work into the street and introduce it into the mined terrain of unpredictable social and political forces.' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 182–3)

deflect attention from the substance of our experiment to the "moral implications" of our dissimulation' (Fusco 1995a: 143).[114] The question that occupies Fusco in her 'reverse ethnography', therefore, and all the commentators after her, is twofold. Taylor summarizes it as follows: 'How could people either believe the show or feel offended by it, maintaining that they were being "deceived"? And secondly, why were they [...] so angry?' (Taylor 1998: 167).

Fusco suggests as an explanation for both the literal and the moral interpretations of the work the 'culturally specific nature' of reception (Fusco 1994: 143). Her essay proposes an ethnography of her audience's responses and their cultural specificity, distinguishing and classifying them 'along the lines of race, class and nationality' (Fusco 1994: 158) (and, significantly, not along the lines of gender). In summary, she defines the American audience as being more inclined towards a literal interpretation (159), and British audiences as generally taking a moral stance opposing the project's dissimulation (159), whilst in Spain, 'a country with no strong tradition of Protestant morality or empirical philosophy' (157–8), audiences were concerned largely 'with its political implications, and not with the ethics of dissimulation' (158). People of colour according to Fusco recognized the symbolic significance of the work, identifying their own situation with the incarceration expressed in the cage (158), and often expressing their solidarity with the performers (162). White audiences are portrayed as being more literal and more prone to believing the fiction, although white spectators outside of the U.S. 'appeared to be less self-conscious about expressing their enjoyment of the spectacle'. (160). 'The overwhelming majority of whites who believed the piece, however, have not complained or expressed surprise at our condition' (160). Fusco highlights one distinctive audience group in particular: other artists and cultural bureaucrats, who recognized the fiction, yet 'exhibited sceptical reactions that were often the most anxiety-ridden', and often 'chastises us for the "immoral" act of duping our audiences' (159). (All quotes Fusco 1994) Carlson follows Fusco in her analysis of the cultural

[114] Fusco gives an account of the audience figures: 1,000 in Irvine, 15,000 in Minneapolis, 5,000 in Sydney and in Chicago; 12,000 in Washington, plus audiences at the heavily trafficked public areas of Covent Garden and the Columbus Plaza (cf. Fusco 1995a).

specificity of the audience's responses when he states that 'the *Undiscovered Amerindians* show illustrates [...] the dynamic involved when a specific performer encounters specific culturally and historically situated audience. What began in *Undiscovered Amerindians* as an ironic commentary on appropriation, representation, and colonial imaging through the playful reconstruction of a once popular and symbolically charged intercultural performance, became a far more complicated and interesting phenomenon as the performers gradually realized that all of these concerns had to be freshly negotiated, often in surprising and unexpected ways, in every new encounter.' (Carlson 1996: 186) Yet, without wanting to devalue the role of class or national difference for the process of reception[115], Fusco's rendition of these encounters paints a fairly homogenous picture. Whether or not the audience believed what they saw, or felt deceived by it, 'gullibility and deception', as Taylor argues, 'are flip sides of the same will-to-believe. The first accepts "the truth" of the colonial claim, the other sees only the "lie"' (Taylor 1998: 167). More important than the distinction between 'gullibility' and 'deception' appears to be a distinction that governs all other variations – that of ethnic difference. According to Fusco, people of colour generally identified with the objectification of the ethnic Other, whilst white audiences hardly ever questioned this objectification and readily assumed their position as the subjects of this equation. Both seem to be governed by what Bennett calls the 'tenacity and seductiveness' of the 'imperial scopic drive': 'What is so stunningly clear in this account is the default position of a hegemonic white Eurocentric gaze. It is as if – irrespective of the venue, form, and content of the work – what will extend to its reception is the affirmation of the power of the one who sees and the necessary subjection of those who make themselves, willingly or otherwise, there to be seen. This suggests that even when the condition of spectatorship is by some strategy made a subject of the work itself [...], the power of the gaze can exert itself so as to repeat and thus instate the normative values of that

[115] Gómez-Peña gives an account how we was asaulted whilst performing in Argentina which stands out among the responses in its context-specificity: 'One of the many theories circulating in the Buenos Aires artistic community speculated that this attack involved a misunderstanding. The assailant must have thought that our project was a direct commentary on Argentine military culture (which jailed thousands of youths before the alleged democratic transition of 1987) and felt himself implicated.' (Gómez-Peña 1996a: 182)

white Eurocentric gaze. [...T]he complexities of spectatorship lie primarily in the slippage [...] between seeing and believing.' (Bennett 1997: 191) Fusco's ethnography of audience responses to *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* affirms the omnipresence of this white Eurocentric gaze: whilst white spectators placed themselves as the subject of this gaze, people of colour identified themselves with its objects. This presence not only manifests itself in the more obvious manner in which 'gullible' spectators suspended their disbelief and happily assumed their prescribed role of colonizer vis-á-vis Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's stereotyped caged 'Other'. In a more subtle fashion it also determined the ways in which 'non-believing' spectators, such as art critics and fellow artists, approached the performance as a piece of art. Their objections to the 'moral implications' of the work are for Fusco intrinsically linked to the racial identity of the performers: 'We seriously wonder if such weighty moral responsibilities are leveled against white artists who present fictions in nonart contexts.' (Fusco 1994: 155) Literal and moral responses – gullibility and deception – both equally ignored the self-conscious performativity and theatrical artifice of the performance and denied the two artists the opportunity to be the subjects of their own art work.[116] Fusco has identified this prejudice as intrinsic to the Western systems of knowledge, which is built on notions of the 'other' in its visibility as a transparent object of the Western gaze: 'Ethnography and anthropology have had to confront the fallacy of believing that everything presented to the ethnographer, the anthropologist, the outsider, are real things experienced by the insiders of the culture. This fallacy assumes a transparent relationship between the outsider's gaze and the actions of the insider. It leaves no space for self-conscious irony by the ethnographic subject, nor does it account for the ideological position of the outsider.' (Fusco in Sawchuk 1992: 28–9) It is thus that racial difference, as Fusco claims, becomes 'absolutely fundamental to aesthetic interpretation' – not merely the ethnic difference of the spectator, but also that of the performer, which determines the spectators' reaction to his or her work. Both are locked within a system of

[116] Fusco describes how at the Whitney Art Biennale 'some assumed that we were not the artists, but rather actors who had been hired by another artist' (Fusco 1994: 155)

representation that makes one the subject and the other the object of the gaze which constitutes it.

In her interpretation of *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...*, which also takes Fusco's essay as its point of departure, Fischer-Lichte proposes a more optimistic reading of the possibility of reversing the subject-object structure of the ethnocentric gaze in performance. Because the spectators were pulled into the frame of the show and made objects of the gaze of both the performers and other spectators, she argues that

> the roles of performer and spectator were constantly redefined. The spectators, even if unwilling and unaware, adopted the position of the "savages" to be observed and interpreted by others. [...] By creating an experimental situation, the performance worked as a critical discourse on the gaze, which observes, surveys, and objectifies the other. In this case, the procedure of citing a distinct genre of cultural performance served to different purposes. On the one hand, it exposed the continuing existence of a mentality and ideology which was formerly condensed and manifested in the genre of colonial exhibition and critically commented on it. On the other hand, it reflected that in a postmodern, postcolonial, multicultural society the relationship between its members cannot be ordered and constituted along the lines of such position-fixing ideologies. The spectator of the moment will be a performer the next. The gaze directed at the Other is returned by the Other. There are no stable positions, no nonreturnable gazes anymore.
>
> (Fischer-Lichte 1997b: 231)

In the German version of the same essay, Fischer-Lichte goes as far as concluding that 'der verdinglichende kontrollierende Blick kann jeden, auf den er gerichtet ist, in einen "Wilden" verwandeln.[117]' (Fischer-Lichte 1998b: 82). Fusco's account, however, strongly suggests that this reversal of the gaze is not so easily achieved, particularly for the performers, who as people of colour find themselves fixed into their position as objectified, controlled 'savages', whilst the transformation of white audiences into 'savages' is only momentary and always reversible. This suggests that 'presence', although constructed by the spectator in the act of *seeing*, remains tied to the body's visible surface[118], and to the psychic presence of racism. Taylor takes a different stance

[117] 'The objectifying and controlling gaze can transform anyone it is directed at into a "savage"'. [My translation]

[118] Meiling Cheng has argued similarly in her criticism of Phelan's investigation of the unreliability of visible body features in grounding identity: 'I join Phelan [...in her] protest against the simplistic equation between race and skin color, but I wish out that skin color *does* register visual information and implies social and psychic consequences.' (Cheng 1999: 210)

from Fischer-Lichte in arguing that the performance actually encouraged the phantasmagoric fixing of Otherness as the object of the ethnographic gaze. Gómez-Peña and Fusco performed the essence of racial Otherness, the fiction of a pure ethnic Other untouched by interracial and intercultural encounters, and put this Otherness behind bars where it was presented as being both temporally and spatially dislocated from the world around it. Rather than functioning as a site for unstable and ever-changing postmodern identities, as Fischer-Lichte proposes, the cage instead allowed for the illusion of a stable and secure identity taken out of the contingencies of postmodernism altogether:

> Precolonial subjects, frozen in static essence, didn't experience today's hybrid ethnic and racial identities. The native body was believable, then, not because it was "real" but precisely because it wasn't. It served to maintain a distance between the *pre-* and the *post-*: precolonial to postcolonial; premodern to postmodern. Rather than challenging us to more fully acknowledge the racial and cultural heterogeneity of societies such as Latin America's in which very real indígenas continue to live in or alongside industrialized centers, the "pre"/"post" hammers in distinct and identifiable boundaries. Suspended *over there*, outside time, beyond civilization, the naked, mute native body lures the destabilized postmodern viewer into dreaming about fixed positions, stable identities, and recognizable difference. The degree to which some of the viewers continued to disavow the marked theatricality of the performances attests to how deeply invested they were in maintaining the colonial fantasy. The last thing they wanted, it seems, was to recognize the contemporaneity of the postmodern, postcolonial encounter. Maybe that's what made the spectacle so troubling to many spectators – when they got close to the cage and stared at the "savages", they saw themselves reflected in the artists' dark glasses.
>
> (Taylor 1998: 168)

For Taylor, the performance troubled the white Eurocentric gaze not by playfully reversing it, as Fischer-Lichte suggests, but by inverting it – thus making manifest the spectators' desire to identify beyond its confusion a true 'Otherness' that has no mimetic semblance with the 'real' of the Other itself, but instead only reiterates the spectator's own psychic image of the Other.

But why did the troubling nature of the spectacle cause such anger in its audience, and gained such notoriety? Taylor suggests that it was the 'testlike' quality of the performance, a test that was impossible to pass: 'No matter what, we fail.' (Taylor 1998: 168) According to her, there was no tenable audience position available vis-á-vis

the cage.[119] She highlights the way in which *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* emulated the structure of an ethnographic study: making assumptions about its audience, formulating its goals, defining its methodology, measuring and cataloguing the spectators' reactions, before making conclusions about the cultural specificity of their responses. The performance itself thus functioned as 'reversed anthropology' (Gómez-Peña 1994c: 96). 'Is the discomfort manifested by the audience [...] *also* about the way in which it, the audience, is being constructed? Does the scrutiny of the audience in fact end up turning spectators into specimens?' (Taylor 1998: 172).[120] Fusco herself has responded to this criticism: 'I agree that there are ethical issues involved in putting people on the spot. However, I know that some people are put on the spot all the time, while others hardly ever have to show who they are, or be caught off guard, or have their identities questioned. [...] I don't feel too guilty about making them stop for a moment and experience that sort of pressure that people of colour experience all the time [...]' (Fusco 1998: 12).

Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit... combined the concerns of Gómez-Peña's early works and those of his middle period. Again, the performance attempted to subvert the fixity of stereotypical notions of Otherness through hyperbolic enactments. Gómez-Peña himself has spoken in this context of 'frozen' identities, which the work set out to 'defrost' (Gómez-Peña in Sawchuk 1992: 25). More strongly than was previously the case, these identities appeared as mimetic performative reiterations that have no other

[119] Gómez-Peña has remarked how 'over 40 percent of our audience, no matter were we were, believed that the exhibit was real [...] and did not feel compelled to do anything about it.' (Gómez-Peña 1994c: 98). Taylor interprets this as a consequence of the performance itself: 'The prohibition against uninvited intervention comes specifically from its performative nature.' (Taylor 1998: 169) Wolford, on the other hand, highlights this as one of the strengths of the piece: 'I think this inescapable sense of indictment was part of the undeniable strength of the piece. I still remember the paralyzing sense of powerlessness I felt as I sat for hours on the floor of the Chicago Field Museum, trying to find some way to make connection with the 'specimens' that would not simply re-enact familiar scenes of condescension and exoticization. Knowing that I could not extricate myself from the indictment articulated by the performance, that there was no safe space for liberal, "guilt-free" consumption of the piece, is part of what I found most compelling about the performance'. (Wolford 1998: 52, n.25)

[120] Taylor builds her argument also on an analysis of the video-documentation of the performance (Fusco and Heredia 1993. She proposes that the controversy surrounding the piece was primarily caused by the way the audience was constructed in the video. She makes a distinction between the ways in which live performance and film address their audiences: 'While the live performance situates us all in the Lacanian field of the gaze, in which we're all in the frame, looking at each other looking, the video shifts the borders.' She argues that '[t]he hierarchies and epistemologies that the performance attacked are in danger of being reproduced.' (Taylor 1998: 169), as the video 'cages' the viewer into a unidirectional gaze.

'origin' than the phantasmagoric figures that colonial desire and racist imagination have created. Taylor has likened this strategy to the Brechtian *gestus*, but her description equally evokes Butler's notion of performativity: 'The way they "did" their bodies very consciously linked together a series of what Brecht would have called "quotable" gestures drawn from a tradition of stereotypes of native bodies [...]. As "objects", Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña out-fetished the fetish.' (Taylor 1998: 165) Like Butler's 'drag', Gómez-Peña and Fusco again sought to drive a wedge between the performers' anatomy, the performers' identity and the identity of their performance to make manifest that there was no natural or ontological truth that preceded the performance – only the truth of racism, which presupposes such ontological fixity.

In a manner familiar from their previous collaboration, *The New World Border*, Gómez-Peña and Fusco also considered the implications of the representational apparatus that determines these performances of identity – their framing, the position of the audience within them, etc. And like its predecessor, the performance created clearly marked 'dissonances', incorporating a number of elements which manifestly broke with the stereotype: 'Every stereotype was exaggerated and contested – the sunglasses offset the body paint, the "traditional tasks" including working on a computer. When paid to dance, Fusco performed a highly unritualistic dance to rap.' (Taylor 1998: 167) Taylor has termed this break with the mimetic register 'blatantly theatrical' (Taylor 1998: 167).[121] Her definition of theatricality is developed in contrast with Butler's model of performativity: '[U]nlike "performativity", whose power to shape a sense of cohesive identity comes through the seeming naturalness and transparency of what Judith Butler [...] calls the "iterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" [...], theatricality (like theatre) flaunts its artifice, its constructedness.' (Taylor 1998) Theatricality is here precisely *not* the realm of transparence, as which it has been traditionally defined[122], but the overtly artificial 'other' to transparent 'performativity'.

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[121] Gómez-Peña himself has pointed out that the performance became over time 'more stylized, staged, and whimsical' (Gómez-Peña 1994c: 98)

[122] See Chapter 2.

Taylor's account of Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's performance is indeed articulated in strikingly similar terms to Butler's discussion of 'internal confusion' as a figure of subversive performativity: 'Exaggeration and artifice permeate the border that separates theatricality from mimetism to contaminate the purported referent's truth.' (Scheie 1994: 42). While dissonance separates the body into conflicting factions, the very lack of such fragmentation constitutes confusion as a figure of subversion. Butler has expanded on this model in a discussion of Hollywood star Lana Turner's performance of femininity (Butler 1990c), in which she asserts that '"women" who perform feminitity are as much in "drag" as "men"' (Butler 1990c: 14). Unlike dissonant drag performed by a man, a woman performing feminitity *confuses* the distinction between the three separate gendered identities (performed gender, performer's gender, and anatomy) that intersect her body, rather than creates a dissonance between them. Lana's performance 'allegorizes the slippage between gender mimesis and gender performativity' (Butler 1990c: 3) that 'allows the contingencies of performance to mix with and contaminate the alleged space beyond representation, the "real" or natural realm where ontologies reside. Referent and image, performing subject and performed subject, Lana and "Lananess" run together, and their inseparability, their confusion, casts doubt on a purportedly immutable or transcendent identity's, the ""real" Lana's, claim to truth or fixity'. (Scheie 1994: 38). Scheie has appropriated Butler's model of 'internal confusion' again for an analysis of live performance, distinguishing it from that of 'dissonance': 'A confused corporeality in live performance provokes disorientation, questions the mimetic function by challenging the distinction between reality and its reflection, and if it cannot keep the spectator from positing extra-representational identities, it taints these with their constitutive moment in performance. Confusion does not ignore the apparent "presence" of live performance [as dissonance does], or does it excuse or excoriate it. Instead, it confounds, and thereby exploits the spectatorial compulsion to fetishize the live performing body on the stage.' (Scheie 1994: 38).

Scheie has proposed an interesting reading of Ariane Mnouchkine's and Helen Cixous's controversial performance *L'Indiade ou l'Inde de leurs rêves* (Paris, 1987)[123], in which a multicultural troupe performs a cast of Indian characters. 'To create the desired confusion, a performance must somehow evoke the coincidence, in the performing body, of performed identity (imaginary) and the gesture of its performance, without letting either separate itself from the other to claim the upper hand. Mnouchkine's performance generated such a confusion, not by juxtaposing, but by superimposing a scrupulous verisimilitude and an unabashed theatricality.' (Scheie 1994: 41). Very 'realistic', mimetic interpretations of 'Indians' coincided with the obviously performed and manifestly theatrical artifice of 'Indianness'. This model evokes a Brechtian theatre of alienation, in which the display of theatricality would have helped to create a dissonance between performing body and performed identity. Yet Scheie argues that in Mnouchkine's staging verisimilitude and artifice were not juxtaposed to point to the 'real' outside of the performative representation. Instead they coincided in the moment of performance:

> The performers were already in costume and in character, they had already assumed their striking Indian corporeality even as they put the final touches on this Indianness. The face behind the mask was not alienated or distanced anywhere; it was part of the mask itself. [...T]he performance imitated a purportedly "real" India that had no sure existence outside of its accomplishment in the performance itself. As a confused mimesis, it did not project outwards towards an absent reference, but turned into itself. [...] The "real" India is an impression, a negative space, an absence which the spectators, like the characters in the play, fill not with a truthful referent but with the contingent projections of their own imaginaries.
>
> (Scheie 1994: 42).

In *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* a similar confused mimesis was created. The work performed mimetic interpretations of stereotypical figures of otherness. And whilst these were manifestly exaggerated and contested, their 'artifice' did not allow the spectators to see behind the performance, unlike *The New World Border*, for example, which drew overt attention to the way it was constructed and in turn constructed the audience. This created what Scheie terms a 'negative space', which the spectators filled with the projections of their own desired fetishization of Otherness. Rather than

[123] For a discussion of the performance see Pavis 1990: 183–216.

celebrating the 'pleasure' such confusion creates, however, it caused anxiety and anger.[124]

What made *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...*twice confused, so to speak, was that the *performance* itself was also mimetic, reiterating the way in which figures of Otherness had been produced *in* the performance of colonialism and ethnography. Not only did the performance invite a theatrical gaze that reproduced the structure of the white Eurocentric gaze, the Eurocentric gaze itself functions in a theatrical-representational manner[125]. The gaze was meant to turn in on itself, but instead it became duplicated and reasserted in the performance.[126] The 'unabashed' or 'blatant' theatricality that characterized the work thus became invisible: 'What we have not yet fully understood is why so many of these people failed to see our performance as interactive, and why they seem to have forgotten the tradition of site-specific performance with which our work dovetails, an historical development that preceded performance art's theatricalization in the 1980s.' (Fusco 1994: 160)[127] It appears that the performance did not stimulate intervention, as it so successfully assured the spectator in his passive scopic domination.[128]

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124 Fusco also mentions that the 'guards' who looked after the cage 'became so troubled by their own cognitive dissonance' (Fusco 1994: 159).

125 Said has pointed out the role of theatrical representation in the creation of Otherness: 'The idea of representation is a theatrical one: the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined. On this stage will appear figures whose role it is to represent the larger whole from which they emanate. The Orient then seems to be, not an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe.' (Said 1978: 22)

126 Taylor alludes to a similar confusion, that between the performative as a cultural practice and the performative as an artistic practice that comments on the former: '[A]s performance complicates our understanding of cultural practices so that we recognize the rehearsed and produced and creative nature of everyday life, perhaps we may be excused for wondering who the artists are, who the ethnographer, who the dupe, who the closet colonist. Who, ultimately, pulls the performative strings? Who is positioned where in this most uncanny, postmodern drama of cultural encounters?' (Taylor 1998: 172)

127 Kirshenblatt Gimblett argues that this response was actually motivated by the genre:
[...] it could be said that audiences that behaved "inappropriately" or offensively were responding to "performance art", something new for many of them. They fell into two traps and mistook a provocation for an invitation. [...] For those who had not previously been exposed to performance art, this event also served as an inoculation.' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998b: 179)

128 After *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...*, Gómez-Peña and Fusco collaborated on a series of performances called *Mexarcane International (Ethnic Talent for Export)* (1994-5), which elaborated some of the themes of the earlier show. They played representatives of a (fictional) 'post-NAFTA multinational corporation to market and distribute ethnic talent worldwide'. An exhibition stand in shopping malls which featured Fusco at a desk conducting interview about people's 'ethnic desires', which were subsequently enacted by Gómez-Peña, who was exhibited in a cage as a 'composite Indian'.

CHAPTER FIVE

ACCO THEATER CENTER[1] (ISRAEL): BIOGRAPHY, HISTORY, MEMORY – REMEMBERING IDENTITY IN PERFORMANCE

> A memory: a narrow corridor, the smell of wet wood and rotting jute. We are herded together, lined up on wooden benches, heads bent beneath rows of hanging shoes. A face appears in the dim light before us. Through broken glass and barbed wire, a voice begins to ask questions: 'When did you first hear about the Holocaust? What did your father do in World War II?'. Israeli actors opposite a German audience, the children of the victims questioning the children of the murderers. Interrogation, interview, dialogue?
>
> (Roms 1996: 59)

The Acco Theater Center's award-winning[2] theatrical *tour de force*, *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*[3] (English: Work makes free from the death land of Europe), premiered in Acco in 1991 and in the company's repertoire for more than seven years, offered a self-critical portrayal of the Jewish identification with the traumatic 'legacy' of the Holocaust (or Shoah[4]) and its contemporary influence on the Israeli–Palestinian

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[1] The transliteration of the company's name from Hebrew to English causes some variations of spelling in the literature: Akko Theatre Center (Rovit 1993), Theatre Centre Akko (Urian 1993), Akko Theatre Centre (Rokem 1996a, Roms 1996 and Schechner 1997), Akko Theater Center (Kaynar 1996b) and Acco Theatre Centre (Rokem 1998). I have chosen the spelling 'Acco Theater Center', which is the company's own transliteration of its Hebrew name into English (see Acco Theater Center 1994), but I will retain other spellings in quoted materials.

[2] 1st prize and Best Actress Award, Acco Festival of Alternative Israeli Theatre 1991; voted "Best foreign play" in the annual survey amongst German theatre critics, *Theater heute* 13 (1992); MOBIL Pegasus Award for "Best performance of the Internationales Sommertheater Festival Hamburg" 1993; ZKB Förderpreis Award for Smadar Yaaron Maayan, Zürich 1996. In 1994, director David Maayan was awarded the Gottlieb and Hanna Rozeblum Award for outstanding achievements.

[3] Title also appears transliterated as *Arbeit macht frei fun Tojtland Europa* (Rokem 1996a); *Arbeit Macht Frei in 'Teutland Europa* (Kaynar 1996b: 285) and *Arbeit macht frei Mi'Toitland Eiropa* (Kaynar 1996a: 214).

[4] The debate about which term most appropriately designates the Jewish genocide is still continuing. 'The search [...] outlines an attempt to mark both its historical specifity and its uniqueness.' (Patraka 1999: 1) 'Holocaust' is the term most widely used outside of Israel, while Jews prefer the term 'Shoah' or 'so'ah'. [Another term is the Yiddish *hurbn*, 'connoting the violation of the continuity of life within the community' (Patraka 1999: 2)] Agamben traces both terms back to their etymological origins: 'Holocaust' derives from the Greek (*holocaustos*] for 'completely burned' or 'burnt offering' and was used by the early Church fathers to refer to a sacrifice [e.g. Christ's sacrifice on the cross], and betrays for Agamben 'a semantic heredity that is from its inception anti-Semitic' (Agamben 1999: 31). 'Shoah' means 'devastation, catastrophe', and, in the Bible, often refers to a divine punishment. Agamben refuses both terms, and uses instead 'extermination', or its metonymy, 'Auschwitz'. Petraka, however, who recounts the history of the term 'Holocaust' and its cultural, social and political implications (Patraka 1999: 1–4), argues that '[n]o term is fixed forever in its meaning, unless it has become invisible through disuse.' (Patraka 1999: 1). '[W]hile English-speaking scholars critique the term Holocaust with its connotations of sacrifice for a purpose [...], they have generally agreed to use the term to refer to the Jewish genocide because of its function as a stable, recognizable historical referent.' (Patraka 1999: 2)

relationship. And when the company brought the work to the *Toitland* of Germany[5], it initiated there too a debate about the role of Holocaust commemoration for post-war German identity. The direct confrontation of Israeli performers and German spectators in a real conversation about their personal pasts, placed midway through the five-hour-long performance, encapsulated one of the work's main concerns: to challenge the spectator's identification with the theatrical event, and thereby to problematize the way in which identification attaches the individual to a collective identity. It encouraged both performers and audience to enunciate the point of identification where their personal recollections meet the traumatic narrative of their collective past, thereby transforming something that was marked as private and individual into something public and communally shared. Yet the moment of sharing was constructed also as a moment of antagonism. This was most obvious in the case of the German performances of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*: in a moment of the greatest intimacy between spectator and performer, the interview scene underlined their separateness – Jews were facing Germans on different sides of a broken window, and their conversations revolved around the antagonism between their historical roles of victims and perpetrators. In Israel, where actors and audience were largely part of the same cultural community and often even of the same social and generational background, the interview scene was less overtly determined by a confrontational note.[6] But even here, the dialogue took place along finely drawn antagonistic lines. The performers of the Acco Theater Center are

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[5] April 1992 in Berlin (Berliner Festspiele – part of the 'Jüdische Lebenswelten' (Jewish Lifeworlds) exhibition); July 1993 in Hamburg (Internationales Sommertheater Festival); June 1995 in Recklinghausen (Ruhrfestspiele Recklinghausen).
Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa was also shown in the German-speaking countries of Austria (May 1995 in Vienna – Wiener Festwochen Zeit/Schnitte 1995) and Switzerland (August 1996 in Zurich – Theaterspektakel Zürich).

[6] In an article comparing the German performance in Berlin with the Israeli performance in Acco, Inge Deutschkron describes the different audience reactions to the interview:
'Die deutschen Besucher wurden beflissen, fielen ein in das Verhör, sagten aus, auch das Peinliche: der Nazi-Vater oder die eigene Freude am Hitlerjunge-Spielen. Fast dankbar taten sie das. Ein bißchen Selbstreinigung, ein wenig Bitte um Vergebung. Es war fast wie ein Symbol deutsch-jüdischer Beziehungen. [...] aus den Antworten der Israelis hörte ich Trotz heraus. Eine Was-geht-dich-das-an-Haltung. Die Opfer der eigenen Familie wurden dagegengehalten Vor allem dem arabischen Schauspieler gegenüber.' (Deutschkron 1992) ('The German audience became zealous, interrupted the interrogation, testified, even the most embarrasing facts: about the Nazi father or their own joy in playing the games of the Hitler Youth. Almost gratefully did they do this. A bit of self-purification, a bit of request for pardon. It was like a symbol of German-Jewish relations. [...] in the answers given by the Israelis I could hear defiance. A what's-it-to-you-attitude. The sacrifices of one's own family were held against it. Above all with regard to the Arab actor'. [My translation])

Jewish-Israelis of the so-called 'second generation'[7], with one notable exception: one member of the Center is a Palestinian. A Palestinian was facing Jewish spectators, young Israelis were facing their parents' generation of the Holocaust survivors and the state-founders of Israel – the scene thus drew attention to the antagonistic relations that structure contemporary Israeli society. Yet the interview scene never simply stopped at identifying the antagonism between its participants. The conversation traced the development of this antagonism back to the trauma of the Holocaust, and marked the identities of Jews, Germans and Palestinians as equally implicated in this legacy. By asking the audience to transform their emotional identification with this traumatic history into a discursive construction the interview also marked the inability to fully translate traumatic experience into language. It was, paradoxically, within this shared inability to fully identify with one's history that a new form of identification could emerge which enabled the participants to establish points of contact between positions that otherwise would have been separated by irreconcilable difference.[8]

In *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* the Acco Theater Centre concentrated their exploration of the connection between identification and identity on the relationship between biography and history, or, more precisely, on the link between individual and collective memory. In Maurice Halbwachs's seminal study on collective memory (Halbwachs 1992), first published posthumously in 1952, memory was revealed not to be a personal, subjective experience[9], but an act of social construction: 'The individual calls recollections to mind by relying on the frameworks of social memory.' (Halbwachs 1992: 182) It is individuals who remember, but these individuals, being members of a

[7] 'Second generation' denotes the generation of the children of Holocaust victims and their contemporaries.

[8] In her study on trauma, Cathy Caruth analyses Alan Resnais' film *Hiroshima mon amour* (France 1960) as a similar communication across cultural difference in the shadow of trauma:
'It is indeed the enigmatic language of untold stories – of experiences not yet completely grasped – that resonates, throughout the film, within the dialogue between the French woman and the Japanese man, and allows them to communicate, across the gap between their cultures and their experiences, precisely through what they do not directly comprehend. Their ability to speak and to listen in their passionate encounter does not rely, that is, on what they simply know of one another, but on what they do not fully know in their own traumatic pasts. In a similar way, a new mode of seeing and of listening – a seeing and a listening from the site of trauma – is opened up to us as spectators of the film, and offered as the very possibility, in a catastrophic era, of a link between cultures.' (Caruth 1996: 56)

[9] Halbwachs bases his model on a critical discussion of Bergson's theory on intuitive and subjective perceptions of inner time, see Halbwachs 1992: 7ff.

specific social group, draw on that group and its collective memory to remember or recreate the past: 'Every collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in space and time'. (Halbwachs 1992: 22) Halbwachs distinguishes between two kinds of memory: 'autobiographical' and 'historical' memory. The first refers to the memory of events that we have personally experienced. Yet, for Halbwachs, autobiographical memories too are always rooted in a social context, for they are made in contact with other people, and their memory is kept alive in social contact: 'It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories.' (Halbwachs 1992: 38) Such memory tends to fade with time, as the contact with the person with whom it was shared is lost. 'Historical memory', on the other hand, reaches the individual only through records (eg. written documents or photographs) and is stored and interpreted by social institutions. Yet it can be stimulated in the individual and kept alive through social re-enactment: by participating in commemorative activities (from museums to monuments, from archives to parades, from holidays to ruins), reified in particular settings ('locations of memory'), we can imaginatively re-enact a past that would otherwise disappear. These re-enactments of memory allow the participant to identify with and thus 'remember' what she did not experience herself. Identity, as a remembered continuity between an individual's autobiographical past and future[10], is determined by the individual's identification with the memory of its collective, and this identification is constituted through its continuous reproduction. 'We preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through them, as by a continual relationship, a sense of our identity is perpetuated.' (Halbwachs 1992: 47) Yet, according to Halbwachs, memory is also the product of selection, and its selection is shaped by the

[10] See Chapter 1. In his study of the relationship between memory and identity Gillis argues that '[t]he core meaning of any individual or group identity, namely, a sense of sameness over time and space, is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity.' (Gillis 1994b: 3) The 'ruptures' that have decentred the subject have also ruptured its sense of sameness over time: In his critique of postmodernism, Jameson defines personal identity as 'the effect of a certain temporal unification of past and future with one's present', which 'is itself a function of language' (Jameson 1991: 26–7) and traces a supposed contemporary inability to 'unify the past, present, and future of our biographical experience or psychic life' (Jameson 1991: 27) back to a postmodernist 'schizophrenic' experience of pure material presentness.

concerns of the present. Social memory is an instrument of reconfigurating the past *for* the present, and not a retrieval *of* the past. As such it is also an object of possible distortion: '[T]he various groups that compose society are capable at every moment of reconstructing their past. But, as we have seen, they most frequently distort that past in the act of reconstructing it.' (Halbwachs, 1992: 182) As historian Burke has pointed out in his discussion of Halbwachs's model, '[t]hese rituals are re-enactments of the past, *acts of memory*, but they are also attempts to impose interpretations of the past, to *shape memory*. They are in every sense collective representations.' (Burke 1989: 101) Although Halbwachs himself does not use the term 'performance', his concept of collective memory as constructed and affirmed in social re-enactments bears obvious characteristics of a performative understanding of social action. His emphasis on the social structure of individual memory, its deeply located nature[11], his focus on the affectual and expressive aspects of identification between the individual and the collective, and his interest in the ritual performances through which these identifications are constituted and confirmed strongly evoke Turner's theory of cultural performance.[12] And like Turner, Halbwachs places his emphasis on the affirmative, rather than subversive, function of performative activity in social contexts. There is also a similar dualism and stasis implicit in Halbwachs's model, one which contrasts performative 'memory' with textual 'history'. 'Against memory's delight in similarity, appeal to the emotions, and arbitrary selectivity, history would stand for critical distance and documented explanation.' (Davis and Starn 1989: 4)

A similar dichotomy of memory versus history dominates current debates in historical research.[13] One of the most prominent articulations of this dichotomy has

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[11] Studies of the history of mnemonics have pointed to the inherent spatiality of remembering. Frances Yates, in her influential study of the 'art of memory', analyses how in Classical Greece orators recalled their speech by imagining it as a succession of 'topoi' (places and topics) in a fictive architecture or 'memory theatre' (Yates 1996). See also historian Raphael Samuel's study on the history of the geo-politics of remembering in Western thought (Samuel 1994.).

[12] See Chapter 1. Both Turner and Halbwachs base their models on a critical evaluation of Durkheim's work on the affectual character of social groupings.

[13] For a discussion on the influence of this dichotomy on different studies of history see LaCapra 1998: 16ff. LaCapra identifies amongst them two manifestations of the relationship between memory and history: either as opposing, or as mutually confounded. 'In the first instance, memory is crucial because it is what history must define itself against, whether happily or sadly. Memory in brief becomes the antithesis or "other" of history. In the second instance, memory's importance stems from its putative

been proposed by French historian Pierre Nora. For Nora, memory and history are fundamentally opposing concepts. In a present obsessed with history, memory is receding: 'We speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left.' (Nora 1989: 7) Contemporary society is characterized by an 'acceleration of history', which 'confronts us with the brutal realization of the difference between real memory – social and unviolated [...] – and history, which is how our hopelessly forgetful modern societies, propelled by change, organize the past.' (Nora 1989: 8). 'Memory' in Nora's writing appears as synonymous with presence, multiplicity, affect and specificity, whilst 'history' is associated with representation, singularity, intellectualism and universalism. 'Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects, history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities.' (Nora 1989: 9) The distinction between the two is itself, of course, a historical one: traditional societies are characterized by the omnipresence of memory, whilst the concept of history for Nora is deeply implicated in the development of modern society and the nation state[14]. But whereas a truly postmodernist society would be defined by its complete absence of memory, modernity, argues Nora, still preserves aspects of it in order to justify the present and future by referring to (a particular version of) the past.[15] Memory survives in certain sites, for which Nora coins the term, in explicit reference to classical mnemonics, 'lieux de mémoire', places where memory 'crystallizes and secretes itself' (Nora 1989: 7). 'The moment of lieux de mémoire occurs at the same time that an immense and intimate fund of memory disappears.' (Nora 1989: 12) Commemorative monuments, historical records, personal testimony are all regarded by him as such sites where memories converge and conflict, and thus define the relationship between present,

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is what history must define itself against, whether happily or sadly. Memory in brief becomes the antithesis or "other" of history. In the second instance, memory's importance stems from its putative position as the ground or essence of history. Memory is then understood as basically the same as history or at least as history's matrix and muse.' (LaCapra 1998: 16).

[14] For a discussion on the role of memory in the establishment of modern nation states see Gillis 1994a.

[15] Gillis has pointed to the contradictory relationship of modernism to its past. He argues that 'modern memory was born at a moment when Americans and Europeans launched a massive effort to reject the past and construct a radically new future' (Gillis 1994b: 7). Yet at the same time the newly emerging nations of the nineteenth century required their authorization by referring to an ancient heritage. New memories were constructed, and these demanded what Anderson in his study of the origin of nationalism has called a 'collective amnesia' (Anderson 1983).

past and future. But these memories are no longer the 'true' memories of pre-modern times: 'What we call memory today is therefore not memory but already history.[...] We should be aware of the difference between true memory, which has taken refuge in gestures and habits, in skills passed down by unspoken traditions, in the body's inherent self-knowledge, in unstudied reflexes and ingrained memories, and memory transformed by its passage through history.' (Nora 1989: 13) Nora, too, offers a model of two kinds of memories, a pre-modern version, which appears as an 'embodied' practice, and a modern, which is associated with the practice of inscription: 'Modern memory is, above all, archival. It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image.' (Nora 1989: 13)

Dominick LaCapra has criticized Nora's theory not only for its 'exaggerated' opposition between memory and history[16], but also for its 'neutralization of trauma'[17] and the 'insufficient basis for a critical attempt to work through one's transferential implication in the processes one studies' (LaCapra 1998: 18). Both trauma and the ethical question of transference are central to LaCapra's project: a re-evaluation of the relationship between history and memory, and a consideration of the role of the historian in the aftermath of the Shoah. For LaCapra, memory challenges history as it reveals the continuing affectual presence of the past, whilst history tests memory by attempting to work through the past and confirm its 'passedness'. Their relationship is put into sharper focus by the experience of trauma and its lingering presence: 'trauma brings about a lapse or rupture in memory that breaks continuity with the past, thereby placing identity in question to the point of shattering it.' (LaCapra 1998: 9)[18] This rupture affects most strongly the victims of trauma, but LaCapra argues that its effect is also felt by 'everyone who comes in contact with it: perpetrator, collaborator,

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16 The theoretical opposition between memory and history can be interpreted as a variant of the nature/culture divide, contrasting an organic memory with a constructed history. Davis and Starn (Davis and Starn 1989: 2) and LaCapra (LaCapra 1998: 19) have both taken up this argument and proposed a deconstruction of the memory/history opposition based on Derrida's deconstruction of the nature/culture binary.

17 LaCapra has identified a hidden sense of trauma in Nora's writing: 'Nora feels that something essential has been lost, and – whether or not the loss is itself imaginary – the very opposition between history and memory serves to commemorate and assuage it.' (LaCapra 1998: 19). Nora himself speaks frequently of 'ruptures', 'irrevocable breaks' and 'end of societies' (Nora 1989: 7).

18 See Chapter 1.

bystander, resister, those born later', as it unsettles any affectual identifications with a collective identity that is characterized by negativity. 'Yet the memory lapses of trauma are conjoined with the tendency compulsively to repeat, relive, be possessed by, or act out traumatic scenes of the past, whether in more or less artistic procedures or in uncontrolled existential experiences of hallucination, flashback, dream, and retraumatizing breakdown triggered by incidents that more or less obliquely recall the past.' (LaCapra 1998: 10) As a result of this compulsion to repeat, we are experiencing a proliferation of what LaCapra, in reference to Nora, identifies as contemporary sites of memory: museums, monuments, and memorials dedicated to the Holocaust.

The most significant among these sites of memory, however, is the testimony[19]. '[W]itnessing – typically, witnessing based on memory – has emerged as a privileged mode of access to the past and its traumatic occurrences. Testimonial witnessing typically takes place in a belated manner, often after the passage of many years, and it provides insight into lived experiences and its transmission in language and gesture. So great has been the preoccupation with testimony and witnessing that they have in some quarters almost displaced or been equated with history itself.' (LaCapra 1998: 11)[20] LaCapra argues that testimony challenges the practice of the historian by making the witness to the testimony, the historian, a kind of secondary witness to the trauma – a process he calls 'transference'. 'Transference here implies the tendency to become emotionally implicated in the witness and his or her testimony with the inclination to act out an effective response to them.' (LaCapra 1998: 11) LaCapra distinguishes in this context between 'primary' and 'secondary' memory: 'Primary memory is that of a person who has lived through events and remembers them in a certain manner. This memory almost invariably involves lapses relating to forms of denial, repression, suppression,

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[19] LaCapra has identified a current preoccupation with survivor testimonies. This prominent role of survivor testimonies can be traced back right to the origins of the art of memory. The Greek poet Simonides of Ceos is widely credited as the founder of the *ars memoriae*. 'Simonides of Ceos supposedly invented the classical *ars memoriae* by visualizing the places occupied by the victims of a disaster of which he was the only survivor. Memory is of course a substitute, surrogate, or consolation for something that is missing [...]' (Davis and Starn 1989: 3). For a full account of the story of Simonides of Ceos see Yates 1996.

[20] See, for example, Felman's and Laub's influential study on testimony, combining insights of poststructuralism and psychoanalysis (Felman and Laub 1992), and the work of Lawrence Langer (Langer 1991).

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> In acting-out one has a *mimetic* relation to the past which is regenerated or relived as if it were fully present rather than represented in memory and *inscription*. In psychoanalytic terms, the acted-out past is *incorporated* rather than introjected, and it returns as the repressed. Mourning involves introjection through a relation to the past that recognizes its difference from the present and enacts a specific *performative* relation to it that simultaneously remembers and takes at least partial leave of it, thereby allowing for critical judgement and a reinvestment in life, notably social life with its demands, responsibilities and norms requiring respectful recognition and reconsideration for others.
>
> (LaCapra 1998: 45; emphases added)

LaCapra here proposes a model that appears reliant on an underlying distinction between mimesis (i.e. theatricality) and performativity: acting-out versus working-through as two ways of relating to the past are associated here with a mimetic (i.e. theatrical) versus a performative practice, or with its inscribed representation versus its incorporated presence. LaCapra, however, sees the two not as mutually exclusive practices: 'But with reference to trauma, acting-out may be a necessary condition of working-through, at least for victims and all those directly involved in events. Even the secondary witness or empathetic observer who resists full identification with, and the dubious appropriation of the status of, victim may nonetheless undergo muted trauma.' (LaCapra 1998: 45) By interacting and counteracting, acting-out and working-through constitute an identificatory process which enables an identification with the victim of trauma, and thus allows for a transference to take place, yet remains aware of the partial nature of this identification. At a later point in his study LaCapra is more explicit in his differentiation between a 'theatrical' and a 'performative' mode of repeating the past and constituting identification: a theatrical practice of mimetic acting-out leads to a phantasm of full identification, or, as he terms it in reference to the discourse of tragedy, a '"tragic" identification or rather uncontrolled transferential relation', which attempts to 'provoke repetition of trauma in the other and in its desire to relive that suffering in the shattered self' (LaCapra 1998: 101). Contrasted with this is a 'performative' mode: 'Performativity in a larger sense may be argued to require the conjunction of necessary

lost object. Mourning, on the other hand, brought the opportunity to engage and work through trauma. For a full discussion see LaCapra 1998: 44ff. See also Phelan's discussion of Freud's distinction between hysterical and narcissistic identification as the two paths of mourning in Phelan 1997: 130ff.

acting–out in the face of trauma with attempts to work through problems in a desirable manner – attempts that engage social and political problems and provide a measure of responsible control in action.' (LaCapra 1998: 111) [25]

How may this conjunction of acting-out and working-through *work* in theatrical performance itself? Within the European cultural tradition, theatre has acted as a privileged *lieu de mémoire*, in which collective memories of the past have been re-enacted imaginatively to re-assert a shared identity and insert into it the perspective of the individual.[26] Theatre has functioned thereby not only as a medium for 'acting-out' memories, but also for 'working-through' them in order to transform the multiplicity and specificity of memory into the singular narrative of continuous temporality that we refer to as 'history'. Theatre historian Freddie Rokem, in a recent study on theatrical representations of the past in contemporary theatre, likens theatre therefore to the practice of historiography: 'History can only be perceived as such when it becomes recapitulated, when we create some form of discourse, like the theatre, on the basis of which organized repetitions of the past is constructed, situating the chaotic torrents of the past within an aesthetic frame.' (Rokem 2000: xi) He, too, emphasises theatre's role in the articulation of identities through such historiographic practice: 'Collective identities, whether they are cultural/ethnic, national, or even transnational, grow from a sense of the past, the theatre very forcefully participates in the ongoing representations and debates about the pasts, sometimes contesting the hegemonic understanding of the historical heritage on the basis of which these identities have been constructed, sometimes reinforcing them.' (Rokem 2000: 3) Rokem, an Israeli scholar, approaches the issue of performing history and identity from what we may term the 'limit-event' (LaCapra 1998: 48) of the Shoah.[27] Thus, questions of witnessing and transference are

[25] In its integration of both the embodied and the discursive aspects of memory work, LaCapra's model shows obvious debts to Butler's notion of performativity. However, he also distances himself from her 'conception of theoretical possibilities', which 'at times remains too confined', and 'her very notion of normativity', which is 'primarily negative and delegitimating' (LaCapra 1998: 46n.) According to LaCapra, Butler's model of repetition remains fixated at two extremes – either repetition in the service of total mastery (i.e. the repetition of acts which constitute the subject), or endless repetition-compulsion, which sets limits to that mastery (cf. Butler 1990a: 244).

[26] See Chapter 2.

[27] Rokem devotes his study to theatrical representations of the Shoah in Israel (notably the works of the Acco Theater Center, Yoshua Sobol and Hanoch Levin) and European and American productions dealing

also central to his model. According to Rokem, the act of testifying becomes vital for any kind of performance of history in theatre.[28] He proposes that the actor, by means of performing a historical figure on stage, 'becomes a witness of the historical event' (he also calls the actor a 'hyper-historian' (Rokem 2000: 13)), thereby enabling the spectators 'to become secondary witnesses, to understand and, in particular, "to form an opinion" about the forces which have shaped the accidents of history' (Rokem 2000: 9).[29] Watching becomes an act of transference: in this case, a transference of 'restorative energies', 'recreating something which has been irretrievably lost and attempting, at least on the imaginative level and in many cases also on the intellectual and emotional level, to restore that loss' (Rokem 2000: 13).[30] His analysis focuses on the way in which 'the aesthetic potentials of the actor's body as well as emotions and ideological commitments are utilized as aesthetic materials through different kinds of embodiment and inscription' (Rokem 2000: 13). In his emphasis on the two practices of theatrical embodiment and inscription, and their related modes of emotional and ideological identification, Rokem strongly evokes LaCapra's model of conjoining the two practices of acting-out and working-through traumatic memory. For LaCapra, their conjunction is 'performative' rather than theatrical, as it enacts a relation to the past that recognizes its difference from the present, instead of reliving it mimetically. Rokem proposes a similar distinction between a theatrical and what he terms a 'meta-theatrical' mode of representation: 'performances about history frequently also draw attention to different metatheatrical dimensions of the performance, frequently showing directly on the stage how performance about history are constructed. The making of a performance about

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with the French Revolution (productions by Peter Brook, Ariane Mnouchkine, Ingmar Bergman and Robert Wilson).

[28] This is most manifest in his discussion of how to represent the Shoah on stage: 'In order to create some form of narrative order in the chaotic universe of the Shoah, we have to rely on the subjective experiences which in different ways contextualize the private suffering within the public sphere in the form of some kind of testimony.' (Rokem 2000: 16)

[29] Rokem here uses the example of Brecht's 'Street Scene - A Basic Model for an Epic Theatre': 'It is comparatively easy to set up a basic model for epic theatre. For practical experiments I usually picked as my example of completely simple, "natural" epic theatre an incident such as can be seen at any street corner: an eyewitness demonstrating to a collection of people how a traffic accident took place. The bystanders may not have observed what happened, or they may simply not agree with him, may "see things a different way"; the point is that the demonstrator acts the behaviours of driver or victim or both in such a way that the bystanders are able to form an opinion about the accident.' (Brecht 1978: 121)

[30] For a full discussion of Rokem's theory of theatrical energies see Rokem 2000: 187–207.

history and the making of history as a "theatrical" event are themes frequently dealt with [...] (Rokem 2000: 7) Rather than conflate a historical past with a theatrical present by representing it mimetically, a 'meta-theatrical' approach highlights the different time registers at work in theatrical representation: '[b]y performing history a double or even triple time register is frequently created: the time of the event and the time the play was written and [...] the later time when it was performed' (Rokem 2000: 19).[31]

By allowing for a consideration of the 'complex paradoxes and tensions created by the efforts to bring the historical past and the theatrical present together through different forms of witnessing [...] when everything else has been said' (Rokem 2000: xiii), Rokem offers a model for the possibility of transference through forms of identification, which presents an alternative to the widespread opinion amongst theatre scholars that Holocaust representations must prohibit any form of identification[32], here articulated by Isser: 'An event such as the Holocaust [...] defies the possible and the probable. There can be no ego transference[33] into the unimaginable world of the concentration camp universe: There can be no catharsis in the enactment of mass murder. The Holocaust is an event which should not, logically, lend itself to conventional dramatic representation.' (Isser 1997: 13) Although calling for a non-conventional mode of representation, Isser argues strongly against any form of 'acting-out' in performance[34], calling instead for a strictly sublimated form of theatrical transfiguration and spiritualization.[35] However, such sublimation does not address what LaCapra has identified as the compulsion to repeat, relive, be possessed by, or act out traumatic

[31] Lehmann identifies the following 'Zeitschichten' (time levels) in theatrical performance: 1. Text-Zeit [Time of text]; 2. Zeit des Dramas [Mythos] [Time of Drama - Mythos]; 3. Zeit der fiktiven Handlung, dramatische Zeitästhetik als *Dematerialisierung der Zeit* [Time of fictitious action; dramatic aeshetic of time as dematerialization of time]; 4. Zeitdimension der Inszenierung, historische Zeit [Time of *mise en scene*, historic time]; 5. Zeit der Performance, Theaterzeit = Lebenszeit, reale Zeit [Time of Performance, theatre time equals time of life, real time], see Lehmann 1999: 309–59 [My translation]

[32] Other studies of theatrical representations of the Holocaust can be found in Ben-Zvi 1996; Isser 1997; Kaynar 1996a; Kaynar 1996b; Kaynar 1998; Rokem 2000; Schumacher 1998; Skloot 1979. See also Urian 1997for a study of theatrical depictions of the relationship of the Arab population of Israel with the Holocaust.

[33] After Friedrich von Schiller.

[34] For example, Isser objects strongly to Pip Simmons's influential *An die Musik* (1975) as an example of 'pornographic titillation' through enactments of graphic violence. For a discussion of violent pornography in Holocaust representation as a mode for representing the 'excess' of atrocity that conventional theatre conceals see Patraka 1999: 87ff.

[35] Isser devotes his study in particular to examples of American Holocaust Drama, German and French theatrical responses to the Shoah, the works of Tabori and Szajna and Gay Drama.

scenes of the past. In her study of 'Spectacles of Suffering', Vivian Patraka attempts to rethink matters of repetition by proposing the notion of a 'Holocaust performative'. Patraka too sees the Holocaust as a challenge to the conventional representational apparatus of theatre:

> Representation [...] inevitably is about goneness, is itself a mark of goneness, and, in the case of the Holocaust, is the way in which we continually mark a spectacular and invisible absence in order to remember who once was and what once happened. Those who would represent the Holocaust necessarily make manifest the struggle with a content predicated on its own goneness. Representing the Holocaust, then, is inevitably an ongoing struggle, an ongoing performance. That this is so need not dispel our horror or prevent our judgement of the actual historical events in which these representations are grounded. The struggle to represent the Holocaust in its goneness clarifies the limits of representation in general. Representation (viewed as process) assumes that there is a fixed set of norms or a closed narrative that can be translated, made 'real', through its own reiteration. Representation, however, is also an object, one that is always a reconstruction, a pre-framed, pre-narrativized set of practices that attempt to make visible certain events, practices, and / or beliefs assumed, to be fixed, essential and pre-existing. This is not to suggest that all representations constitute a closed system for producing knowledge, wherein the representation and its own reiterative nature are somehow elided. [...] I suggest that the relationship between representation and reiteration must be posited as a risky struggle (between object and process, between history and memory) that has certain consequences.
>
> (Patraka 1999: 4–5)

Patraka bases her model of a 'Holocaust performative', which addresses the 'risky struggle between representation and reiteration', i.e. the struggle to articulate trauma and mark the absences it has created, on a critical reading of Butler. She follows Butler in differentiating performative reiteration from a mimetic re-embodiment or re-enactment of the 'real'. But whilst for Butler a historical and material 'real' plays a minor role, as the performative power of discourse produces material effects through reiteration, thus constituting a new reality, Patraka argues that the Holocaust demands a reconsideration of the 'historical real'. Referring to Diamond's proposal of an intersection between performativity ('a doing') and performance ('a thing done') (Diamond 1996b: 5)[36], Patraka claims that 'the absoluteness of the thing done [i.e. the genocide] weighs heavily on any doing in the Holocaust performative' (Patraka 1999: 7). 'Performativity' in her

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[36] See Chapter 2.

definition refers to 'the constant reiteration against the pressure of a palpable loss and not merely a set of discursive conventions' (Patraka 1999: 7). It acknowledges the compulsion to reiterate the loss and memorialize it, whilst realizing that 'there is nothing to say to goneness' (Patraka 1999: 7), thus marking the gap between the historical events and their representation in the present. It also limits the play of subversion in performativity, which is central to Butler's model, by what Patraka terms a sense of 'accountability' (Patraka 1999: 7). 'Theatre reiterates the Holocaust, then, by announcing itself as performative.' (Patraka 1999: 6)[37]

The Acco Theater Center's director at the time, David Maayan, does not use the term performance for his own practice, instead he calls it a theatrical 'event'[38], which he places in opposition to theatrical orthodoxy, defined here by its negligence of the spectator's 'reality':

> Fifty percent of the responsibility for a performance rests with the audience. The passive spectator in fact does not exist. [...] the idea of the passive spectator is a myth. Yet, at most, the theatre appeals to only five percent of the audience's capacities – its intelligence, its imagination, its ability to respond. Its vitality is not respected. If in 5000 years one were to publish a book on the history of the theatre, our century would be described as the one which brought about a great deformation of the audience's role: the spectator was invited only to sit down, to watch and to go home. But without the spectator there is no event and no experience. He is a participant in a dialogue who is not addressed when the actor plays facing a wall. In a 'theatre event' the spectator possesses a concrete identity. He has eyes, a nose, a mouth, a scent, energy. He lays claim to a certain space. Usually the spectator claims space only in the way a common audience commonly lays claim to a certain space. From the very beginning, his capacities are castrated. [...] I don't really see any division between the understanding of what theatre is and what life is. [...] In 'Arbeit macht frei' there is real life going on on stage. The characters of the story, [*sic*] don't live anywhere else only in that space and at the same time you can recognize them. Theoretically we can say that we, the actors and the public, can live together till we die, if we continue the performance.
>
> (Maayan in Hurtzig 1994: 254, 256, 258, 260)

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[37] Patraka's theory too implies an aesthetic model: she herself admits to her own 'critical investments in the efficacy of performance over theatre' (Patraka 1999: 9).

[38] Lehmann describes the notion of the 'event' in contemporary theatre in similar terms to those of performance or happening: event emphasises presence rather than representation, process rather than product, the physical, affective and spatial relationship between actors and audience, and the possibilities of participation and interaction. (See Lehmann 1999: 178–9). Reviews have variously called *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* a happening, a theatrical enterprise, a performance, a collage, a group therapy, a travesty, a farce, a multi-media spectacle, Grand Guignol, promenade theatre, processional theatre, a psycho trip, a horror trip, an event, a non-play, a journey, a black mass, a passion play, or a mystery play.

In Maayan's understanding, the theatrical event challenges the spectator in his identity as a 'real' person, whilst the spectator carries this identity, his 'real life', into the theatre, thereby changing it in return. This opens the potential for a different kind of involvement of the spectators: an involvement that is *performative* as it is constituted entirely by the *work* of the spectators. The interview scene in *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* is a good example for this: the audience's real biographies, traditionally kept outside of theatrical representation, became an integral part of the performance. [39]

The intentions of the work were thereby highly self-critical: the Acco Theater Center set out to critique the limits of the Holocaust as a founding trauma that helped to establish identity[40] (rather than pose the question of identity problematically[41]). Rokem has described the central position of the Shoah within Israeli identity:

> Israeli culture and its public discourses resonate powerfully with stories and memories from the Shoah. They have been central for the creation of a collective Israeli identity. [...I]t is necessary to keep in mind that the Jewish majority of the Israeli society perceives itself as a direct continuation of the survivors of the Nazi genocide; the Shoah has been constructed as a collective experience, even for those who did not experience it directly. These 'secondary' survivors, the Israeli Jews who were not directly or biographically affected by the Shoah itself, have integrated that trauma as a basis of identification with the state founded only three years after the end of the Second World War. Even the Palestinians who are Israeli citizens, as well as those living in the occupied areas or under the rule of what is now called the Palestinian Authority (the future Palestinian state) or in exile, have also been affected in different ways by the trauma experienced by the Jewish people. [...] In the Israeli context, [...] the Shoah serves as a very charged focal point, a kind of filter for the collective Israeli consciousness through which most of the major events of present-day Israeli life are experienced and interpreted.
>
> (Rokem 2000: 27–8)

Commemorative rituals have played a major role in integrating the trauma of the Shoah into a positive identification with the state of Israel[42]. Young, in his comprehensive

[39] The Acco Theater Center developed this scene into their next performance, *I LAB U* (Berlin 1993), in which interviewers and interviewed were placed in separated boxed linked by Video-Cameras, see Acco Theater Center 1994..

[40] 'In cultivating a ritually unified remembrance of the past, the state creates a common relationship to it[...] Having defined themselves as a people through commemorative recitations of their past, the Jews now depend on memory for their very existence as a nation.' (Young 1993: 210-211)

[41] For a discussion of the implications of the Holocaust for modern values of identity, selfhood etc, see Bauman 1989.

[42] 'Memory of historical events and the narratives delivering this memory have always been central to Jewish faith, tradition, and identity. [...] To this day, history continues to assert itself as a locus of Jewish identity, memory as a primary form of Jewish faith.' (Young 1993: 210).

study of Holocaust commemorative practices, has analysed the official approach to Holocaust memory in Israel as one that 'has long been torn between the simultaneous need to remember and to forget, between the early founders' enormous state-building task and the reasons why such a state was necessary [...]. [...] Ironically, however, by linking the state's raison d'être to the Holocaust, the early founders also located the Shoah at the center of national identity: Israel would be a nation condemned to defining itself in opposition to the very event that made it necessary. The question for the early state became: how to negate the Diaspora and put it behind the "new Jews" of Israel, while basing the need for new Jews in the memory of the Shoah?' (Young 1993: 211–2)[43] This identification also implies the exlusion of an Otherness – in this case the victimization of the Palestinian population of Israel. The Holocaust played a similarly important role for the constitution of German national identity after the Second World War[44]: German historian Hans Mommsen argues that 'the memory of Auschwitz which symbolizes the murder of European Jewry as well as the decay of Germany as a civilized nation in an orgy of crime, violence, cynicism and inhumanity, forms an indispensable element of the emerging new collective consciousness of the Germans' (Mommsen 1999: 8).[45] The question of how a state can incorporate its own crimes against others into its national memorial landscape, however, has led to the fact that 'Holocaust memorial-work in Germany today remains a tortured, self-reflective, even

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[43] For a detailed account of the changing attitudes of the Israeli nation to the memory of the Shoah, see Loshitzky, forthcoming, Segev 1993, Young 1993: 209–18.

[44] For a detailed account on the changing attitudes of the German nation to to the memory of the Shoah, see Geyer and Hansen 1993; Koonz 1994; LaCapra 1998; Mommsen 1999; Young 1993.

[45]'See also the famous German Historikerstreit' (Historians' Debate) about Holocaust commemoration: 'The Historians' Debate took place in the course of 1986. Conducted largely in newspapers and periodicals, rather than scholarly journals, it started with a controvery between historian Ernst Nolte and philosopher Jürgen Habermas, but soon involved all renowned German historians. The crux of the debate was 'the extent to which certain interpretative procedures, notably the comparison of Nazi crimes with other modern genocidal phenomena (particularly Stalin's Gulags), tended to relativize, normalize, or even "air-brush" Auschwitz in order to make it fade into larger historical contexts and out of conscious focus.' (LaCapra 1998:49–50) 'Thus a positive identity could be sought without working through the diferential implications of members of one's nation in the events and aftermath of the Shoah.' (LaCapra 1998: 50) LaCapra rephrases the debate by contrasting attempts at acting-out (Nolte) with attempts at working-through (Habermas). Habermas called for a 'postconventional identity' based on 'universal norms and a constitutional patriotism.' (as quoted in LaCapra 1998: 63) [See Chapter 1.] 'Habermas strongly criticized the kind of uncritical, uncustomary identity that seeks an affirmative conception of the past and self-confirming normalization or national identity even at the price of denial and distortion.' (LaCapra 199863)

paralyzing preoccupation'. (Young 1993: 20)[46] Yet, if, as Kaplan has argued, a 'true memorial to the Holocaust gives first an approximate, a distant sharing with the experience of the victims' (Kaplan 1994: 9)[47], memory culture in Germany raises the ethical question of whether an identification with the victims may actually divert from identifying with the guilt of the perpetrators.

These issues are at the centre of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa.* It is important to stress at this point that the performance did not attempt to 'represent' the Holocaust as the actual historical event, but to the 'Shoah–as–performance' (Kaynar 1998: 58), to the performativity of its memorialization in contemporary Israel. By articulating the psychic 'Real' of the Holocaust through emphasizing their own autobiographical connections with it as a starting point for the performance, the members of the Acco Theater Center explored how the performances of commemoration cause the memory of the Holocaust to haunt not only the surviving victims but also the generations of their children and grand-children – even those not directly affected by the atrocities committed. 'Man gedenkt der Vergangenheit, hält natürlich die Erinnerung wach, behandelt sie aber in gewissem Sinn als abgeschlossen. Unsere Arbeit bemüht sich um ein anderes Denken, das die Gegenwart des Holocaust zuläßt.'[48] (David Maayan in Wille 1992: 124) The gap that opens between a public form of commemoration which confines the past to an industry of museums and memorials, and the enduring, but often suppressed trauma of individual recollection is where the company places its work.

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[46] For an account of Germany's troubled memorial culture see, above all, Koonz 1994; Young 1993; Young 2000.

[47] American critics have also commented on the role that the commemoration of the Holocaust plays for the construction of American identity, with particular reference to the Holocaust museum in Washington, see Kaplan 1994; LaCapra 1998; Patraka 1999; Patraka 1996; Young 1993.

[48] 'The past is commemorated, the memory kept alive, but dealt with as something finished and closed. Our work attempts a different way of thinking, one that acknowledges the presence of the Holocaust'. (My translation)

I BIOGRAPHY

Details of the Acco Theater Center's artistic development are scarce. This seems of particular significance in the light of the wealth of biographical information that is available about each of the Theater Center's members (see below). Reviews and interviews with the company rarely discuss its aesthetic concerns and instead focus entirely on the issues expressed. It appears that the gravity of the Theater Center's chosen subject matter – the life of Second Generation Israelis in the shadow of the Shoah – prevents the critics from making an aesthetic judgement about the formal aspects of the work. This is another variation of the general conundrum of Holocaust representation: the challenge which the Shoah presents to theatrical representation is here simply ignored by effacing the performance's construction as a work of art. Jürgen Beckelmann, reviewer for the German newspaper *Frankfurter Rundschau*, goes even further by claiming the performance's worth *in spite* of its formal qualities:

> Eine Theaterkritik im üblichen Sinn ist nicht zu geben. Anzukreiden wäre der Irrtum, daß allein die Benennung historischer Tatsachen oder deren bloße Zelebration schon seelenbefreiende oder bewußtseinserhellende Folgen hätte; anzukreiden ein laienspielhafter Dilletantismus, der aber anspruchsvoll daherkommt, sich begründend aus der Gewichtigkeit des Themas.[49]
>
> (Beckelmann 1992)

Beckelmann's background in conventional theatre criticism does not allow him to recognize that the 'mere naming and celebration' of facts is never merely that, but contains a strong performative element, which the Theater Center exploited to the full. The critic's main objection, however, is targeted at the performers' acting style – amateurish here serves as another term for 'too private', not sufficiently fictionalized: throughout his review, he refers to the main character of the work not by her fictional name (Zelma Greenwald), but by the name of the actor who plays her ('Frau Maayan' – Engl.. Mrs Maayan). A similar confusion between the fictional character and the real

[49] 'A review in the normal sense is impossible. One could criticize the error that the naming of historical facts alone or their mere celebration would have soul-liberating or consciousness-illuminating effects; one could criticize the amateurish dilettantism, which comes along full of ambition, legitimized by the gravity of the subject matter.' (My translation)

biographical identity of the performer is confirmed by the wide-spread interest that the writings about the Theater Center betray in the real life of the performers. The key to the work is seen to be located outside of it, in the reality of the performers' biographies. Yet, the way in which *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* made use of autobiographical details in its creation of fictional characters is far more complex than this assumption suggests. Indeed, one of the performance's main aesthetic strategies was to make manifest the way in which the performer transformed herself and her biography into a fictional character, thus problematizing on one level the individual's place in a collective historical narrative, and on another level the fictionalization of the Shoah and our identification with it. These strategies can only be properly understood if one acknowledges the Acco Theater Center's place not outside of 'proper' theatre, in the realm of 'amateurish dilettantism', but firmly rooted in the tradition of experimental theatrical aesthetics, in which amateurish dilettantism is a carefully constructed formal device.

David Maayan, the Acco Theater Center's former director[50], studied theatre directing at the Department of Acting and Directing at the University of Tel Aviv. Among his first productions as a director were *Ghost Inn* (1980), inspired by the political poetry of Israeli writer Nathan Alterman, and *Until Death* (1981), based on a collection of novellas by Israeli novelist Amos Oz[51]). Although still referring to literary sources, his early works as a director have been described by Maayan himself as a search for a theatre that was breaking away from the authority of the written dramatic text:

> In the early years of my study and work I always thought about structures, dramatical structures in the play, according to shapes and rhythm. I only later understood that I had to throw everything out and not relate to dramaturgy as a particular way of arriving at a performance, but just to do what I feel – and dramaturgy will be there. [...] I usually hate shelves and what is on them. But I had a very positive encounter with Arrabal and Ionesco. I put on *The car cemetry* [*sic*] by Arrabal in the big lecture hall at university. In one night we brought hundreds of old cars there, so for one week when students came to this place where they usually had lectures, they opened the door and saw a car cemetry [*sic*]. In Ionesco's *The Chairs*

[50] Maayan left the company in 1998. Most of the Acco Theater Center's recent productions have been directed by Moni Yosef.

[51] The collection was published in English under the title *Unto Death: Crusade and Late Love*, transl. Nicholas de Lange, Harcourt 1985.

there were only seats for ten people so the audience was sitting three meters from each other in an empty space. Towers of chairs were piled up in the corners. During the performance the old people in the play put the empty chairs in the empty spaces between the ten spectators. And for the next play I directed, I had already used the scissors and cut the book into single words.

(Maayan in Hurtzig 1994: 248–50)

Maayan's own account of his first directorial experiments betrays an early interest in working with the audience, with its expectations (*The Car Cemetery*), its perception and its placement in space (*The Chairs*). There also seems to be a strong thematic link between Maayan's beginnings and his later works such as *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*: with Alterman and Oz, Maayan had chosen two eminently political writers whose writings are concerned with the tensions underlying life in contemporary Israel, the experiences of the Jewish Diaspora, the influence of Zionism, and the generational conflicts between the founders of the Israeli state and their children.

In 1984 Maayan moved back to Acco[52] (Acre), the old medieval crusaders' town in Galilee in North Israel where he was born, to form the Acco Theater Center.

It all began at a very clear point of the present, at a place where I met a group of people, or a group began to form, people who embarked on a creative journey forwards and backwards in the process of our various projects. For me, the real beginning, that I can pinpoint as a beginning, is the moment I arrived in Acco.

(Maayan in Tlalim 1994)

Acco at that time had gained some prominence through its annual Alternative Theatre Festival, but outside of the festival had no theatre scene to speak of. The decision to work there was a clear move away from the theatrical establishment in Tel Aviv. Urian, who calls *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* 'the most experimental play ever to be performed on an Israeli stage' (Urian 1993: 61), describes the situation of the Israeli theatre at the time as one of prevailing artistic conservatism:

It should [...] be noted that the Hebrew Israeli theatre has had little to do with experimental productions. The influence of 'importing' the Living Theatre, the Bread and Puppet Theatre, and the Théâtre du Soleil, as well as several of Peter Brook's productions, has affected only a few plays since the beginning of the 1970s, and these were generally in the Fringe or University theatre. The Israeli Experimental

[52] The town's Hebrew name is transliterated into English variously as Acco or Akko.

Theatre has been relegated to the annual Akko Fringe Theatre festival which lasts for only a few days.

(Urian 1993: 61)

The relocation to Acco presented a conscious move to the periphery[53], to a place without an established theatrical environment, but with a high percentage of Palestinian citizens of Israel[54], where the cultural tensions between Jews and Palestinians were tangible. And although the Theater Center's aesthetic concerns may have been at odds with the theatrical landscape surrounding it, it was far from isolated. The Center was strongly influenced by the aesthetics, social politics and work ethics of Eugenio Barba and the Third Theatre movement[55] (see Urian 1993: 62). The influence of Barba's manifesto for a 'Third Theatre' on the Acco Theater Center seems self-evident:

> The Third Theatre lives on the fringe, often outside or on the outskirts of the centres and capitals of culture. It is a theatre created by people who define themselves as actors, directors, theatre workers, although they have seldom undergone a traditional theatrical education and therefore are not recognised as professionals. But they are not amateurs. Their entire day is filled with theatrical experience, sometimes by what they call training, or by preparation of performances for which they must fight to find an audience.
>
> (Barba 1979: 145)

Like Barba's Odin Teatret, the Theater Center emphasises long and detailed research, extensive physical preparation and training, an intensive devising process, and the focus on the performers, most of whom have no previous professional experience, as the main

[53] Maayan himself describes the motivation behind the move as follows:
'Wir hatten schon länger den Wunsch nach einem eigenen Theater, und haben uns abseits der Großstadt Tel Aviv auf die Suche gemacht. Schließlich sind wir auf Akko gestoßen, was sich als günstiger Ort erwiesen hat. Zum einen wegen des dortigen jährlichen Fringe-Festivals, dann ist es eine schöne alte Stadt. Wir waren damals zwei Regisseure und viel mehr Schauspieler und wollten ein Theater machen, wie wir das in der Universität gelernt hatten. Eine richtige Bühen mit allen Abteilungen, einer eigenen Verwaltung etc. Einigen von uns ist dann bald klargeworden, daß wir nicht einfach noch ein weiteres Stadttheater eröffnen wollten, und es kam zur Trennung.' (Maayan in Wille 1992: 124)
('We had for a long time harboured a desire to have our own theatre, and we began our search outside the metropolis of Tel Aviv. Eventually we found Acco, which proved to be a suitable location. Firstly because of its annual Fringe festival, and secondly because it is a beautiful old town. At the time we were two directors and many more actors and we wanted to make theatre as we had learned it at university. A real stage with all the various departments, its own administration, et cetera. Soon some of us realized that we did not want to establish merely another civic repertoire theatre and the company split.' [My translation])

[54] The term, 'Palestinian citizens of Israel', is used here in preference to 'Israeli Arab' or 'Israeli Palestinian'. On the ideological implications of these terms, see Loshitzky, forthcoming: Footnote 34)

[55] Maayan took part in the 6th ISTA session in Bologna (Italy) on 'Performance Techniques and Historiography' (see Skeel 1994: 82).

creators. The company was founded on the same 'group' ethos that Schechner has described as being the driving force for most of the experimental theatre companies since the 1960s (see Schechner 1973a: 243–84): the Theater Center has been run as a collective by its four (now three) core members, who each have contributed in equal parts both to the creative process and to the administrative management of the company (see Urian 1993: 62). The core members of the Theater Center, apart from director Maayan, who left the company in 1998, include performers Smadar Yaaron Maayan, Moni Yosef and Haled Abu Ali[56]. Only Yosef was a trained actor and had already worked professionally in theatre and film before joining the company – Smadar Yaaron, who studied theatre pedagogy and worked with special needs groups, and Abu Ali, who trained as a carpenter and originally got involved with the Theater Center as a set-maker, both had a background in music and first worked for the company as musicians before becoming actors. The four have been joined at times by other performers, most of whom have been students in Acco Theater Center's own theatre school.

The Acco Theater Center is firmly rooted in the aesthetics of twentieth century avant-garde theatre, an aesthetics that, as Féral has described it, 'explores the under-side of [...] theatre, giving the audience a glimpse of its inside, its reverse side, its hidden face' (Féral 1982: 176) by manipulating the performer's bodies, the performance space and the relation that performance institutes between the artist and the spectators.[57] The Theater Center's productions are characterized by the use of unconventional theatrical spaces, the articulation of corporeality, an open dramaturgy and an active involvement of the audience.[58] Staging initially approximately one production per season in one of the four so-called 'Knights' Halls' (Ulamot Ha'abirim) in the Old City of Acco, the Theater Center's early work included *The Prince*, *Vienna-Prague* and *Drums. Memories*

[56] The English transliterations of the names are inconsistent: they appear variously as Maayan or Ma'ayan, Yaaron or Ya'aron, Yosef or Josef, Haled, Chaled or Khaled. I have chosen to use the English transliterations that the Theater Center itself lists in its publicity, but retain other spellings in quoted materials.

[57] See Chapter 2.

[58] Urian has identified specific influences with regard to *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*: 'Some of the spectators may identify the ideas of Antonin Artaud or those of Tadeusz Kantor; the sitting round a table – apparently borrowed from Jerzy Grotowski; the "stations" of Armand Gatti's travelling theatre; or Joseph Chaikin's concept of acting.' (Urian 1993: 62)

of the Second Generation in the Bosom of the Old City[59], which won First Prize at the Acco Festival in 1988 and remained in the company's repertoire for two years, was in many ways a kind of étude for *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* (Maayan later called *Arbeit* its 'natural extension' (Acco Theater Center 1994)). It dealt with the conflict between the first generation of Israeli citizens and their children, and it made a similar connection between the Holocaust, the emergence of the Israeli state and the so-called 'Palestinian issue':

> Da wollten wir zeigen, was aus den Ideen und Träumen unserer Eltern, einen Staat aufzubauen, geworden ist, vor allem ihren Erwartungen an uns. Wir wollten herausfinden, was passiert ist zwischen ihrem Traum und unserer Wirklichkeit. Ausgangspunkt war die Biographie eines jeden Schauspielers. Jeder hat einen Stammbaum seiner Familie rekonstruiert und dann sein Leben und seine Geschichte gespielt. Die Zuschauer sind in einen langen Korridor gekommen, in dem die einzelnen Lebensbäume aufgezeichnet waren und dazu jeweils noch ein Regal mit Gegenständen, die eine persönliche Bedeutung in der Geschichte des Schauspielers haben. Jeder hat einen Baum gewählt, wurde dann in einen von vier Räumen geführt und hat eine von vier parallelen Vorstellungen gesehen. Danach sind alle zu einer Art gemeinsamen Pessach-Essen[60] zusammengekommen. Währenddessen hat Chaled langsam vor sich eine Wand aus Steinen aufgebaut, von der er schließlich herunterstieg und den leeren Platz eingenommen hat, der an jedem Pessach-Tisch freigehalten wird für den Propheten Elia. Er setzte sich und brachte einen Stein aus einer Holocaust-Gedenkstätte.
>
> (Maayan in Wille 1992: 124)[61]

The use of autobiographical material as both a starting point and a structuring device was a technique that the Theater Center would return to in their next work, *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa.*

The Acco Theater Center began work on *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* in 1988, and the performance finally opened at the Acco Festival in 1991. Unlike Brith

59 Sometimes translated as *Remembrances of the Second Generation in the Bosom of the Old City.*

60 *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* also featured a common meal for performers and spectators.

61 'We wanted to show what had become of our parent's ideas and dreams of building a nation, and, above all, of their expectations of us. We wanted to find out what had happened between their dream and our reality. The starting point was the biography of the actors. Each actor reconstructed his or her family tree and then performed his or her life and story. The audience entered a long corridor in which the family trees were drawn on the wall, surrounded by shelves full of objects that had a personal significance in the story of the actors. Each spectator had to choose one tree and was then taken into one of four rooms and saw one of four parallel performances. In the end everyone gathered at a communal meal, a kind of Passover-celebration. Throughout the meal Haled was building a wall of stones in front of him, from which he finally descended to take the empty chair that is kept at each Passover table for the prophet Elia. He sat down and presented a stone from a Holocaust memorial.' (My translation)

Gof or Guillermo Gómez-Peña & Coco Fusco, the Acco Theater Center has not published any documentary material that would allow an insight into the three-year long working process. However, there has been no overt reluctance on behalf of the company to talk about the work: apart from giving a series of interviews[62], the company also collaborated closely in the making of two documentary movies which both attempt to chart the development of the performance and the personal motivations behind it. Asher Tlalim[63], an Israeli film maker, followed the company for three years between 1991 and 1994. His film *Don't Touch My Holocaust (Al Tigu Le B'Shoah[64])* (Tlalim 1994)[65] intercuts scenes from the production with statements by its four protagonists in an attempt to unravel the personal stories that informed the work. For the second part of the movie, Tlalim accompanied the Theater Center to Berlin, where *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* was shown in 1992, to focus on the German reception of the performance. German film-maker Andres Veiel first saw *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* in Berlin. His filmed account of the work, *Balagan* (Veiel 1993a)[66], is a similar collage of extracts from the theatre production and interviews with its three main performers.[67] Although frank in their depiction of the autobiographical aspects of the

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62 See, for example, Hurtzig 1994, Wille 1992.

63 Also appears in the literature as Asher Tellalim, see Loshitzky, forthcoming.

64 Also transliterated as *Al Tigu Li Bashoa*

65 *Don't Touch My Holocaust* (Israel 1994), Director: Asher Tlalim, Winner 'Best Documentary' 1994 "Israeli Oscars".

66 *Balagan* (Germany 1993), Director: Andres Veiel, made with the support of the Filmbüro Brandenburg, the Berliner Filmförderung, the Hamburger Filmbüro and the Filmbüro Nordrhein-Westfalen. In Cooperation with the ZDF and ARTE-TV. Awards: Friedensfilmpreis (Peace Film Award) der Internationalen Filmfestspiele Berlin 1994, Bundesfilmpreis (German National Film Award) 1994, First Prize from the International Federation of Film Societies as well as an Honourable Mention at the 1993 Leipzig International Documentary Festival, and the 1994 Otto Sprenger Prize.

67 Here is not the place to compare the two films in details, but their differences are significant. Whereas Tlalim explores the complex intertwining of the fates of contemporary Israelis, Palestinians and Germans in the shadow of the Holocaust without ever putting the blame on one side alone, Veiel focuses entirely on the tensions between Jews and Palestinians with a clear bias towards the plea of the latter. His own position as a German of the so-called 'Second Generation' is never mentioned in the film. 'Balagan' was thus widely criticised upon its release in Israel and in the US for reinforcing both anti-Semitism and anti-Arabism. Terri Ginsberg gives an interesting account of the debate:
'Yosefa Loshitzky ('Memory in Transition: Second Generation Israelis Tell the Holocaust', *Society of Cinema Studies Conference*, Ottawa, Ontario, 1997) [...] draws a negative comparison between *Balagan* and *Don't Touch My Holocaust*, on grounds that the German production network of *Balagan* funded the latter in lieu of the former, thus expropriating for German purposes (never clearly explicated by Loshitzky) the subject-matter of the Holocaust from its prsumed [*sic*] rightful owner, the (Mizrahi-) Jewish Israeli, director Tlalim. For a more sustained interrogation of this comparison, see Terri Ginsberg, 'Regarding the Holocaust: Politics of Hermeneutics in Four Contemporary Holocaust Films', dissertation, New York University, 1997.' (Ginsberg 1998) Rokem gives the following account of the production of both films:

work, both films contain very little material about the working process that led to it. Tlalim uses some video footage filmed by Maayan himself during the making of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* in 1989. The video shows Maayan, Yaaron, Yosef and Abu Ali on a journey through Israel, on which they visited the ruins of a former reception camp for Jewish immigrants. From behind the camera Maayan asks the performers questions about terms taken randomly from a lexicon of Zionism. One of the entries is the phrase "Arbeit macht frei" – and only Yaaron is aware that the slogan is German for 'Work makes free' and was used as an inscription on the gates of concentration camps[68]. Apart from this video, there are only a few scattered references in the film to the working process, primarily to the extensive research on the history of the Holocaust that the company undertook.

The performance itself, however, contains a number of references to its own making. The programme notes for *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*, which the audience were handed at the end of the evening, include an enigmatic paragraph, printed without spaces between the words in a form of written imitation of breathlessness, which gives a poetic account of the working process:

> DasSammenschriftlicherDokumenteBelletristikZeitungsausschnitteBilderChaimRumkowsky[69]BriefePhilosophieBetrachtenunzähligerVideofilmeIchhabedieSelektiondurchg

'[T]he genesis of both these films was a proposal by Asher T'lalim, who had been following the rehearsals of the production, to a German TV channel to make a documentary about the performance. When the project was accepted, however, the assignment was given to the German director Andres Viel [*sic*], while T'lalim went on to make his own independent film, indirectly referring to his struggle in the title of his own documentary, *Don't Touch My Holocaust*.' (Rokem 2000: 58). In his production notes, director Andres Veiel remembers the difficulties surrounding the filming of *Balagan*: he was attacked by Israelis for what they interpreted as using the internal affairs of Israel to avert from Germany's own responsibility for her past and present deeds (the film was shot shortly after German Neo-fascists burnt the home of a Turkish family in the German city of Mölln in 1992); Haled's family refused cooperation because of a rumour that the film-makers were collaborating with the Israeli secret service, the Mossad, in order to document anti-Israeli sentiments amongst Arab Israelis; and Moni Yosef distanced himself from the project because of what he saw as its overt pro-Palestinian stance. (see Veiel 1993b) See also Loshitzky's article on *Don't Touch My Holocaust* (Loshitzky, forthcoming).

[68] Most notably in the camps of Theresienstadt/Terezin, Dachau and Auschwitz-Birkenau.

[69] Chaim Rumkowsky (also Mordechai Rumkowski): 1877–1944, chairman of the Judenrat in Lodz [Jewish Council of the Lodz Ghetto]. 'The Judenrat was a Nazi-controlled structure imposed upon the Jewish communities of Nazi-occupied Europe. [...] Once the Judenräte were established, the Nazis wasted no time in presenting them with demands: drafting Jews for forced labor, taking a census of the Jewish population, evacuating apartments and handing them over to Germans, paying fines or ransoms, and confiscating valuables owned by Jews' (Edelheit and Edelheit 1994: 263). 'Rumkowski [...] considered to be a self-styled messianic figure and ghetto dictator; supported deportations of Jews with few protests; deported to Auschwitz, where he perished' (Edelheit and Edelheit 1994: 265). The ghetto in Lodz was the first to open and the last to close, and under Rumkowsky it attempted to make itself 'indispensable' to the German war effort by fabricating uniforms for the German army. Rumkoswky introduced ghetto

emachtDokumentarfilmeSpielfilmeüberdenHolocaustDieFluchtausSobibor[70]Aussagen DokumentationZeugenundÜberlebendeAuswahlvonMusikstückenDieMusikenthältal lesBesuchvonGedenkstättenVerfluchtseidieErdeEuropasBesuchvonGedenkversanstal tungenMeinGottmeinGottessollniemalsendenDeklamierenundAuswendiglernenArbeit smaterialien[71]SieheObenErstellungdesSpielortesEreignisseLaborVernichtungsstätteG hettoAppellierplatzFlureWachtürmeIhrNameseiausgelöschtEineschrecklicheFrauVer wöhntesBalgTorGrubenBewegungenDieZuschauerwerdenhereingebetenImOrangenhai nnebenderTränkeIchhabekeinanderesLandHierbinichgeborenIsraelischeHölleDreiJahre saßenwirinderlebendenTodesmaschineundwarenglücklich. Lacht![72]

(Acco Theater Center 1992)

This text contains one of the keys to the understanding of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*. It provides a summary of the process which led from the long period of research via the building of the set, with its reconstructions of watchtowers, corridors and gates, and the creation of the characters to finally staging the work in front of an audience. This process is mirrored in the sequence of events during the performance itself, which moves from a museum via a commemoration ceremony to a depiction of the 'Israeli hell', exploring the use of documentary material, testimonies and music on the way. The finished performance is thus not just the result, but a continuous reiteration of the process of its own making. The paragraph also alludes to the complex thematic concerns of the piece: the link that is drawn between the horrors of the Holocaust, including examples of both Jewish collaboration (Chaim Rumkowky) and Jewish

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currency to keep the ghetto separate from its surrounding town. Rumkowsky remains one of the most controversial Jewish figures of that time, and a symbol for one of the most difficult chapters of Jewish history during the Holocaust, that of enforced collaboration with the Germans. For a full discussion, see Trunk 1972.

[70] *Escape from Sobibor* (Yugoslavia 1987), director: Jack Gold, based on the novel by Richard Rashke. Fictional recreation of the escape from the Nazi Death Camp Sobibor. 'On October 14, 1943, as the camp was readying for conversion to a KL [i.e. Konzentrationslager or concentration camp], inmates, led by Lieutenant Aleksandr Pechersky (a Soviet Jewish POW) and Leon Feldhendler (a Polish Jew), revolted; 300 managed to escape of whom 50 survived the war.' (Edelheit and Edelheit 1994: 294).

[71] 'Arbeitsmaterialien' or 'Work materials', also a 'Nazi term applying to categories of Jews, in ghettos or camps, capable of doing productive work for the SS or for German private industry. Those designated thus were permitted a brief reprieve before being murdered' (Edelheit and Edelheit 1994: 189).

[72] 'Compiling written documents Novels Newspaper cuttings Images Chaim Rumkowsky Letters Philosophy Viewing of numerous videos I have survived the selection Documentary films Movies about the Holocaust Escape from Sobibor Statements Documentations Witnesses and Survivors Choice of Music The Music contains everything Visit to Memorials This cursed earth of Europe Visit to commemoration ceremonies My God My God it shall never end Declaiming and memorizing Work materials See above Preparation of the set Events Laboratory Site of extermination Ghetto Roll call Corridors Watchtowers Their Names Shall Be Obliterated A terrible woman Spoilt Brat Gate Pits Movements The Audience is asked to enter In the orange grove next to the watering hole I have no other country I was born here Israeli hell Three years we spent in the living machine of death and were happy. Laugh!' (My translation from the German)

heroism (Escape from Sobibor), and the contemporary state of 'Israeli hell', with its paradoxical existence between the experience of death and the happiness of survival. Historical process and theatrical process here overlay one another: the 'three years we spent in the living machine of death' could refer to both the three year long rehearsal period and the three years between 1942 and 1945, the period of the death camps (between the installment of the so-called 'final solution' at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942 and the liberation of the camps in 1945). This play with the ambivalence between the time of the represented and the time of its representation is a major structural device in *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa.*[73] Yet, rather than highlighting their difference through a 'meta-theatrical' approach, in the manner Rokem has described as being characteristic for many recent theatrical productions dealing with the trauma of the Shoah (Rokem 2000: 19; see above), the Theater Center here provocatively conflates the 'hell' of the historical past with that of the theatrical present.

In an interview Maayan stresses the difficulty of reconstructing the working process from the perspective of the finished work:

> What you are doing now is archeology. We are now looking at the complete structure of a performance and even if I were to deny what you are describing or if I said nothing, you would actually be able to write a book on this performance and describe a legitimate process of work. But I was blind both at the beginning and during the course of the three years work it took to make the play. I didn't have the knowledge of the form. I just accepted this long work process. [...] I'm always starting from a place I don't know, I just don't know.
>
> (Maayan in Hurtzig 1994: 251–2)

One definite, and as such well-documented, starting point for the work was the biography of each of the members of the Acco Theater Center and their very different relationships to the Holocaust. As Maayan stated in another interview, 'Zuerst haben wir selbst an uns Erinnerungsarbeit geleistet. Jeder Schauspieler bringt sich mit seiner eigenen Biographie ein.[74]' (Wiener Festwochen 1995: 8) Both documentary films made

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[73] Similarly, 'Arbeitsmaterialien' may refer to both the working materials for the performance and the historic Jews in the labour camps (see Footnote 15) – who indeed also became 'material' for the performance.

[74] 'At the beginning, we did some memory work ourselves. Each actor brings his or her own biography into the work.' (My translation)

about the performance spend ample time on exploring these biographies in interviews with each of the performers, which they intercut with scenes from *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa.* The aim appears to be to illuminate the one through the other, and to explore the way in which the characters of the play were developed from the biographic material of the actors.

Smadar (Madi) Yaaron Maayan is the only member in the company from an Ashkenazic background and the only one whose family was directly affected by the Holocaust. Her father, Karel Yaaron Greenwald, was born in Czechoslovakia, and was interned in the camp in Sobibor. He survived the death camp, but both his parents were killed in the Holocaust. After the war he moved to Israel, where he started his family, but returned to Prague as a diplomat for three years in the early 1960s, when Yaaron was seven years old. Yaaron regards herself as a 'displaced Central European' (Yaaron in Tlalim 1994), who was brought up with the cultural aspirations of a middle-European bourgeois household, such as studying the piano. Her account of growing up in the shadow of the Holocaust with the silence surrounding the missing paternal side of the family is characterized by her as being typical for the experience of many children of her generation:

> [...] it was 'in the air'. Because many people did not speak about it. And until today. They take it to the grave, they don't speak about it, but of course you can feel it not in a verbal way, but you can feel [...] that they are carrying something, that my father was living with a big hole with a big wound, with something that is like a well, like a 'Schwarze Loch' [i.e. black hole].
>
> (Yaaron in Veiel 1993a)

David (Dudi) Maayan, a *Maghrebi*[75]-Jewish Israeli of Moroccan decent, was born in Acco. His parents had emigrated to Israel from Casablanca. The reception camp in Acco was the first stop in a series of abodes which the family moved to over the years. His father worked as a director for an amateur theatrical group that specialized in commemoration ceremonies (see Seifert 1992). Although not directly affected by the Holocaust, Maayan describes the power of its indirect effect on his upbringing:

[75] In Arabic, Maghreb means the time and place where the sun sets. For the Arab conquerors, the Maghreb region included today's Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, home to a large Jewish community.

[...] I see myself as a Holocaust-survivor just as well. I was no less hurt by that thing. I live in this country, I went to the same schools like everybody, most of my friends are, just as there are 'Commando Graduates', they are graduates of the 'Survivorship Academy'. The terminology, all those phrases that we know as 'Holocaust' phrases. I know them just as well. I always lived near Holocaust survivors, so as a child in this country, I had to go through all those ceremonies year after year, recite absolutely meaningless texts. I had to open up my innermost soul to all those places where I'm supposed to feel guilty. To be responsible for something that had nothing to do with me. I mean, on a very basic level, I am just as hurt. I am not the son of someone who was born and died, was killed. But all of Israel are brethren, we are all in the same boat, in the same traumatic plot.

(Maayan in Tlalim 1994)

Moni Yosef was the son of Iraqi Jews, who, according to Yosef, were treated as 'second class' citizens when they first came to Israel – as immigrants from Iraq they had not shared the traumatic experiences of the Eastern European Jewry, and as new citizens they had no share in the achievement of securing an independent statehood for Israel. Yosef's father worked as a teacher in a village (Mazor) that had been founded by Hungarian survivors of the Holocaust. Yosef describes his experience of being brought up in the village as one of being adopted as a 'quasi' survivor:

You can see by the names who's new and who's an old timer...When I started looking, we sat and tried to find connections. What's your connection with the Holocaust? I said, I have none, my parents are from Iraq, what is it to me? And I looked for my link to the Holocaust and then I saw it. I was born in a settlement founded by Hungarians, all Holocaust survivors. I felt awe, a special feeling towards Holocaust survivors, and I think it was born here.[...] There has always been here, maybe there wasn't a Holocaust atmosphere on the surface, but there was something below the surface. You could always feel it. There was always a secret that people didn't talk about. I'm beginning to remember. Many people lost their families there and started new families. And there are all sorts of secrets, dark secrets, and it was all below the surface.

(Yosef in Tlalim 1994)

Haled Abu Ali was born in the small Palestinian settlement of Sakhnin in Galilee, where his family had lived for more than eight generations. Abu Ali possesses Israeli citizenship, but identifies strongly with the Palestinian quest for political independence. He oscillates between the disavowal of and belief in Holocaust:

The Holocaust wasn't mentioned in the neighbourhood. I did not know what is the Holocaust until I was twenty-seven. Until I went to Yad Vashem and I saw what

was the Holocaust, and then I went and saw some more and then I began to think that the Holocaust belongs to the Jews, it hadn't occurred to me. [...] When I got into the Holocaust thing, it took me months to grasp that there really was a Holocaust. An Arab, he could tell you, I also went through a Holocaust. He does not know the meaning of the Holocaust.

(Abu Ali in Tlalim 1994)

All four members of the Acco Theater Center here express the omnipresence of the memory of the Holocaust in Israel, and the way in which they, whether or not their families were directly affected by its atrocities, had learned to identify with its ambivalent presence between the hidden, latent, intangible 'black hole' of loss, grief and pain and its representation in commemoration ceremonies and museums. Their own experiences are presented as exemplary for the experiences of the different sections of contemporary Israeli society. 'Making these groups [the *Mizrahim*[76] and the Palestinians] part of the Holocaust experience goes against a Zionist dichotomizing mechanism which distinguishes between those who experienced directly, or through their families, the horrors of the Holocaust, and those who remain outside that experience.' (Loshitzky, forthcoming: 11).

Indeed, in both film documentaries about the Acco Theater Center, the biographies of the performers are represented in such a way that they not merely appear as exemplary, but as together embodying the full range of problematics of the Holocaust in Israel. In her comparative analysis of the two films, Ginsberg proposes that in *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* these 'characterological personification[s] of societal problematics become hypostatized into "reified", sociopsychic archetypes, super-protagonal figures whose status as components of the so-called "reality" convention[77] has deteriorated' (Ginsberg 1998). Her interpretation is aimed at the way in which the performance develops its characters out of the raw biographical material of the performers into archetypes with which the audiences can identify. However, her reading is more suited

[76] Jews whose families came to Israel from Middle Eastern countries. These Arab Jews were given the name *Mizrahim* ('the Eastern ones').

[77] 'Reality convention is a phenomenological concept which denotes the conceptual and emotive overlapping of "actual" reality and the typical polysystemic notions – empirical, as well as cultural-artistic – of a certain social sector in a certain period.' (Kaynar 1996a: 202) - see below for a full discussion.

to the filmic portraits of the work, in particular to Veiel's documentary, than to the performance itself. (Ginsberg's analysis suggests that she did not actually see the performance live.) In his film, Veiel creates, as Ginsberg rightly identifies, a 'typological composition of the play's three central characters [...] into a super-protagonal triad' (Ginsberg 1998) – the female Ashkenazi (i.e. white, Euro-Israel) Yaaron, the deeply religious *Mizrahi* Jewish Israeli Yosef and the Palestinian Abu Ali – in order to 'allegorize a racialized, aestheticized "Semite"', which functions as the 'operational locus of ecumenical identification' (Ginsberg 1998). The performance of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europe*, on the other hand, presented a far more complex composition of characters. Its main axis was built along the confrontation of its two main protagonists: Zelma[78] Greenwald, an Ashkenazic Holocaust survivor, played by Smadar Yaaron, and Haled, a Palestinian, played by Haled Abu Ali. From the first scene of the performance, in which both appeared as guides in a Holocaust museum, to the end, at which the survivor was rocking the Palestinian in her arms in a kind of *pietá*, different aspects of the character of the Israeli Holocaust-survivor and the young Palestinian are set against each other in various contexts. Yet, these figures were not consistent theatrical characters: 'Haled' was at first a museum guide, then later reappeared as Zelma's servant; and Yaaron also played a young Israeli woman at a dinner dispute. Moni Yosef played Zelma's son 'Moni' (or Menashe) as a child and as a grown-up (although the identification between the child and the adult as two ages of one character was not made by all spectators), but also appeared as a Holocaust survivor. The characters were not presented as fictional 'identities' with a continuous and identifiable sameness across the time of the performance, but were placed in changing constellations with each other, thus defining their identities through their difference from others. Although indeed more akin therefore to 'types' than traditional characters, their differing constellations inserted a fluid dynamic into the 'super-protagonal triad' of archetypes that Ginsberg has identified.

[78] The character's name also appears transliterated as 'Selma'. I will retain this alternative in quoted material.

One of the most commented-on aspects of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* is the way in which it blurred the distinction between the 'character' as fiction and the 'self' of the performer as an outer-representational reality. The performers were constantly slipping between 'self' and 'character', creating a deliberate confusion in the spectators about the status of what they were watching. Moni Yosef and Haled Abu Ali both used their real first names for their rôles, Smadar Yaaron's character was called 'Zelma Greenwald' after her father's family name. Abu Ali works part-time as a guide in a museum, as does his character, and his character's life-story resembles his own. Richard Schechner has thus called *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* a form of 'believed-in theatre': '*Arbeit* inhabited a conceptual and actual space between what is usually thought of as theatrical – symbolic, not-for-real – and what is actual: [...] actors whose identities slip from "self" to "character". [...] The theatrical signs were surpassed by the actuality of the actions, the doubleness of the performers. [...] *Arbeit* is believed-in theatre [...] because, using experimental theatre techniques, its creators explore and express feelings and ideas at the precise point where the personal, the historical and the political intersect'. (Schechner 1997: 80). According to Schechner, it is the 'real' autobiographical identity of the performers that allows for the creation of the contents of the work: 'Only by means of the presence of Khaled Abu Ali could *Arbeit* dare to speak directly of Israeli and Palestinian Arab experiences; only because of who the rest of the company are, could *Arbeit* examine with such acerbity Jewish-Israeli attitudes.' (Schechner 1997: 80) Although *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* was not 'autobiographical' in the strict sense (Abu Ali is not a servant, Yosef is not the son of a survivor, and Yaaron is not a Holocaust survivor herself), the social and personal identities of the performers' autobiographical selves and those of their characters, according to Schechner, overlapped sufficiently to make this 'believed-in theatre' – as opposed to on the one hand 'believed-in performance', in which 'people are who they perform, playing their social and/or personal identities' (Schechner 1997: 77), in which therefore the identities of performers and performed are fully congruent; or on the other hand 'orthodox theatre', in which the identities of performer and performed are separate and only linked by fiction (cf.

Schechner 1997: 77). What Schechner attempts to formulate theoretically here is a form of theatre that combines the formal characteristics of conventional theatrical representation (characters, dialogues, conflict) with what he has identified as the 'truth' value of performance, defined by its autobiographical content and expressed through the materiality of spaces and bodies and an address to the audience as community. Such a third model is only necessary, however, if one, as he does, defines theatre and performance as mutually exclusive practices, assuming the former to be the realm of mimetic representation, and the latter to be the realm of truthful presentation.[79] However, the Theater Center Acco's formal and political concerns are far more complex than this simple binary model allows. A similar blurring between the 'self' of the performer and the performed persona has been discussed above in detail in relation to Gómez-Peña's work. At this point I would like to reiterate Auslander's suggestion that when 'we speak of acting in terms of [...] the actor's revelation of self through performance, we must realize that we are speaking at most metaphorically, and that what we refer to as the actor's self is not a grounding presence that precedes the performance, but an effect of the play of *différance* that constitutes theatrical discourse.' (Auslander 1997a: 36) In the case of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* this play of difference was achieved precisely by encouraging a continuous comparison of the character's story with the actor's private life. The intention behind this play is described by Maayan: '[i]n *Arbeit macht frei* there is real life going on on stage. The characters of the story, [*sic*] don't live anywhere else only in that space and at the same time you can recognize them' (Maayan in Hurtzig 1994: 260). Auslander has described a similar technique in the case of the American performance company, the Wooster Group: 'Performances are structured around the performers and their personae, personae which originate as the performers' self-presentation, and are then refined through confrontations with texts, and the act of performing. [...] Wooster Group performances, indeed, are less representations of an exterior reality than of the relationship of the performers to the circumstance of the performance.' (Auslander 1997a: 41) *Arbeit macht*

[79] See also Chapter 2 for Schechner's differentiation between performance and theatre.

frei vom Toitland Europa uses a similarly self-referential performance technique. As Rokem has noted, Yaaron 'not only shows, but at the same time also implicitly reflects on, how she in creating the fictional character of Zelma transforms herself into a work of art.' (Rokem 1996b)[80] This performative strategy will be the focus of the following discussion, expanding the discussion to include not only the actor's work in creating her character and reflecting on its creation but also a reflection on audience's contribution in comprehending this process. Yet, whilst for Auslander the performances of the Wooster Group produce the material effects of the performers' 'personae' through performative reiteration, a model highly reminiscent of Butler's notion of performativity, Acco's performances, to quote Patraka's response to Butler, demands a consideration of the 'historical real' of the trauma of the Holocaust and its influence on 'real' biographies.

Schechner has attempted to address the issue of a shared communal 'real' by calling 'believed-in theatre' 'audience-specific' (Schechner 1997: 90) – it is only by means of the shared communal identity of performers and audience that believed-in theatre for Schechner acquires its collective impact. 'The actors and spectators in *Arbeit* co-performed a shared history, problematizing their roles in creating that history.' (Schechner 1997: 80). Israeli theatre scholar Gad Kaynar has argued in a similar manner in reference to *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* in particular, and theatrical representations of the Shoah in Israel in general (Kaynar 1996b; Kaynar 1998). He proposes the concept of 'reality convention' to help describe a mutual interdependence between the representational practice of theatre and 'reality': '*Reality convention* is [...] a phenomenological concept that relates to the complete spectrum of any social reality, including the cultural-artistic polysystem pertaining to it. This concept denotes the overlapping of "actual" reality and the typical notion of a certain social sector in a certain period: the collective images, archetypes, characteristic behavioral and verbal patterns, aesthetic conventions, etc. These notions have become so entrenched and institutionalized in the collective consciousness that they no longer interpret reality but,

[80] This auto-reflective transformation of Yaaron into the character of Zelma is also reflected in the film documentaries, both of which include a scene in which Yaaron is shown putting on her costume and make-up.

rather, define it categorically according to the history, ideology, and interests of society.' (Kaynar 1996b: 293–4) In Israel, a country of immigrants that is preoccupied with continuously defining and redefining its identity, Kaynar has identified an exceptionally high awareness of its shared reality conventions. Israeli theatre, therefore, more strongly than other theatrical traditions in his opinion, employs this awareness to devise affective strategies aimed at transforming the collective identity of its addressees. 'Such strategies are intended to redefine their constituents according to the aims and style of the particular play, and thereby characterise the *dramatis persona* of the work's implied spectator, whom the addressee must enact as a dramatic part in order to be able to elicit the play's described effects.' (Kaynar 1996a: 202). The 'implied spectator' becomes a 'super-protagonist' who shapes the drama by 'conducting a continuous interaction of reactions and counterreactions with the text from which he emerges. Thus, the play re-enkindles – or even engenders – the addressee's attention to his or her latent reality convention.' (Kaynar 1996a: 202) According to him, it even creates and transforms this convention, finally helping to engender a new communal identity. What Kaynar describes here with the help of the concept of 'reality convention' is what I would identify as theatre's ability to create points of identification with the subject positions which define a cultural identity, and its ability to transform these positions. His notion of the 'implied spectator' as a rhetorical-poetic position within the theatrical text attempts to theorize forms of affectual identification *with* the text.

I shall focus on a different form of spectatorial implication and identification as explored by *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* – one that constitutes the audience's implication as an actual spatial, corporeal and temporal presence in the performative event in order to construct their affectual identification with a process of mourning as incorporated in the body of the performer. By transforming herself into the character of Zelma, a survivor witness of the Holocaust, Yaaron, as Rokem rightly points out, 'becomes a witness able to testify for the survivors, the real witnesses. In this sense her "performance" is a response to the crisis which we are experiencing and which is soon going to become reality, when all the survivors will have died and it will be impossible

to give a testimony' (Rokem 1998: 51). This transference of witnessing as an identificatory process, which lies at the heart of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*, always includes the audience within it. By first challenging the audience's identification with the work, and then creating a new sense of identification in the moment of performance, *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* also enables the spectator to become witness to the Holocaust.

The emphasis which the Acco Theater Center places on the personal and autobiographical is shared by many Israeli artists of the Second Generation. As Yael Feldman notes, young Israeli writers have in common 'a rejection of the collective model of representation that they inherited from their parents and cultural mentors', and instead search for 'a close subjective encounter with the experiences' (Feldman, as quoted in Loshitzky forthcoming: 9). Her description of the work of novelist David Grossman applies equally well to *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*: 'By emplotting [the] long journey into the heart of the death camps as an intensely personal odyssey, [... he] has attempted to release the Shoah from the shackles of the collective and reclaim it as a *subjective experience*' (Feldman, as quoted in Loshitzky forthcoming: 9; emphasis added).

For Maayan, the 'shackles of the collective' consist in the paradoxical attitude that Israeli society takes towards the memory of the Holocaust:

> In Israel haben wir uns inzwischen angewöhnt zu sagen, der Holocaust sei 'dort' und 'dann' geschehen. Eine Geschichte, die bis 1945 an jenen traurig-bekannten Orten stattgefunden hat. Es gibt in Israel eine den ganzen Staat einnehmende Verdrängung der Judenvernichtung, verkürzt nach dem Motto: Damals haben wir uns wie Schafe abschlachten lassen, uns heute könnte das nicht mehr passieren. Man gedenkt der Vergangenheit, hält natürlich die Erinnerung wach, behandelt sie aber in gewissem Sinn als abgeschlossen. Unsere Arbeit bemüht sich um ein anderes Denken, das die Gegenwart des Holocaust zuläßt.[81]
>
> (Maayan in Wille 1992: 124)

[81] 'In Israel we have become used by now to saying that the Holocaust happened "there" and "then". A piece of history which took place until 1945 at those sad and famous sites. There is a suppression of the Holocaust by the entire state of Israel, in short: Then we let ourselves be slaughtered like sheep, today this couldn't happen to us again. The past is commemorated, the memory kept alive, but dealt with as something finished and closed. Our work attempts a different way of thinking, one that acknowledges the presence of the Holocaust'. (My translation)

The distinction between a form of public and collective commemoration, which confines memory to an industry of museums and memorials and thus deprives it of its experiential dimension, and a form of private and individual recollection, which testifies to the enduring 'presence' of the memory of the Holocaust, is central to *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*. Whereas the Holocaust as an individual and collective traumatic experience of pain and suffering is suppressed by the Israeli state, according to Maayan, the 'Holocaust' as an ideological construct[82], created and perpetuated by a 'Holocaust industry'[83], has become exploited for socio-political ends. It is this attempt to nationalize and instrumentalize the Holocaust which the Acco Theater Center sets out to critique. Such criticism was beginning to be more widely articulated in Israeli society at the time[84]:

> In the 1990s, Israeli public discourse on the Holocaust has shown greater openness toward the more contradictory and disturbing aspects of the Holocaust. The emergence of the Israeli 'new historians', with their revisionist reading of the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; the corrosive effect of the *Intifada* (the Palestinian popular uprising) on the Israeli public; and the start of the peace process with the Palestinians and Israel's Arab neighbours, have all worked to synthesize the concerns of Israeli's artistic, intellectual, and academic communities, encouraging the Israeli public at large to re-examine the space occupied by the Holocaust in the grand narrative of Zionism. Israeli attitudes towards the Palestinian 'Other', the disturbing charges of collaboration between Zionism and Nazism, and the traditionally arrogant and patronising attitude of Israelis towards the Jewish Diaspora, have all been publicly discussed and debated. Furthermore, the abandonment of the melting-pot ideology, and growing awareness (and acceptance) since the 1980s of the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, composition of Israeli society, is generating an increasing fragmentation and segmentation of the memory of the Holocaust along lines of ethnicity and/or religion.
>
> (Loshitzky, forthcoming: 5–6)

[82] Kaynar argues that the Holocaust 'has become a *phenomenon*, an extremely biased, emotionally burdened, perspectivised and teleologically expounded factor' (Kaynar 1996a: 203)

[83] Maayan in Seifert 1992. See also the critique of the 'Holocaust Industry' as a 'public spectacle of anguish', used to 'justify criminal policies of the Israeli state and US support for these policies', in Norman G Finkelstein's recent controversial study of the same name (Finkelstein 2000).

[84] Hartman has identified this critique as the 'duty' of the Second Generation: 'The generation after, because of its closeness to the survivors, has the essential and ungrateful task of criticizing specific aspects of a Holocaust remembrance that turns into a politics of memory. [...] The eyewitness generation expressed a return of memory despite trauma; this "second" generation expresses the trauma of memory turning in the void, and is all the more sensitive, therefore, to whatever tries to fill the gap.' (Hartman 1994: 8, 18) For a contemporary critique of the instrumentalization of the Holocaust in Israeli Politics see, above all, Segev 1993. Segev gave his study the title *The Seventh Million*, alluding to the life of the one million contemporary Israelis in the shadow of the six million Jews who were killed in the Holocaust.

The changed attitudes towards Israeli-Palestinian identity politics and the role the Holocaust plays in this context, the acknowledgement of a highly stigmatized aspect of Jewish identity, and the conflict of different multi-ethnic identities in Israel society are all reflected in *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*.[85]

Kaynar draws a link between these political changes and the changes in aesthetics which Israeli theatre has undergone in recent years:

> No wonder, then, that this Holocaust-obsessed generation of dramatists and directors would regard itself as a victim of the victims and foster a double, love–hate relationship to the subject. Their enigmatic theatrical syntax, their alienated attitude to the society in which they live coupled with their apparently bizarre empathy towards the German culture, including its fascist traits, and stage aesthetics – are means to spite the parents' generation which bequeathed them the Holocaust complex and, which is worse, converted this complex into the normative and political code of Israel.
>
> (Kaynar 1996a: 214)

This 'love–hate relationship', in Acco Theater Center's case, leads to a very complex relationship with the subject matter that goes beyond simple 'spite'. On the contrary, both Smadar Yaaron ('I think that all my work is, in fact, variations, or different aspects, of mourning my father, my childhood', in Tlalim 1994) and David Maayan (in Seifert 1992) describe the work as an 'homage' to their fathers. (Yet Yaaron also stresses that she would not have been able to make the work if her father had still been alive (in Veiel 1993a).) The importance of the distinction between the 'Holocaust' as an imagined construct and the Holocaust as a traumatic, psychic 'Real' for their work cannot be stressed enough here. *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* sets out to criticize the way in which Israeli society has come to identify with the 'Holocaust' as a phantasmagoric fetish, yet at the same time to explore a new way of identifying with

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[85] See also Rokem's account of recent political and ideological changes towards the Holocaust in Israel, which he links to his analysis of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*. 'The Holocaust serves as an historical focal point which has gained such a strong direct as well as symbolic presence in the collective Israeli consciousness that, in particular during times of crisis, it is almost automatically triggered or activated as a kind of coded and well-prepared reaction or even defence mechanism.' (Rokem 1996a: 219). These words echo almost exactly those expressed by Maayan in an interview, where he speaks of a trauma carried by every 'post-holocaust' Israeli, which creates a 'ritual suffering' that repeats itself 'on occasion of every war, attack or mere accident'. 'Jedes private oder gemeinschaftliche Unglück wird sofort mit diesem grundsätzlichen Trauma verbunden und wirkt sich auf alle Lebensformen der Israelis aus'. (Maayan in Wengierek 1992) ('Every private or collective disaster is immediately traced back to this basic trauma and thus affects the entire life in Israel'. [My translation])

the reality of individual pain and suffering in the shadow of the Holocaust: an 'attempt to revive a genuine experiential, traumatic, critical and actuality linked consciousness of the catastrophe, as well as of its enraging present-day repercussions and manifestations, in the minds of the second and third generations of Israeli spectators, who are weary of the stock commemorative rites and their manipulative aspects.' (Kaynar 1998: 55) Yaaron has described the audience's reaction to the work in manifestly experiential terms: 'The proof is that people come and they want to see, also people that are really, that were in the camps, that are really victims of this time, they come. They want to see, they want to taste it. And of course, it's, we, all the time we say it's not a performance about the Holocaust, it's a performance about our life as Israelis here and now.' (Yaaron in Veiel 1993a) This desire to experience directly addresses the dilemma of the Second Generation of not 'having been there': 'Except for being there, actually being there, we did everything, and that's the tragedy of our generation, that we weren't there, a big tragedy, a big spiritual tragedy, that we weren't there.' (Maayan in Tlalim 1994) Saul Friedlander has described this dilemma:

> I had lived on the edges of a catastrophe; a distance – impassable, perhaps – separate me from those who had been directly caught up in the tide of events; and despite all my efforts, I remained, in my own eyes, not so much as a victim as – a spectator. I was destined, therefore, to wander among several worlds, knowing them, understanding them – better, perhaps, than many others – but nonetheless incapable of feeling an identification without any reticence, incapable of seeing, understanding, and belonging in a single, immediate, total movement.
>
> (Saul Friedlander, as quoted in Hartman 1994: 7)

Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa presents an attempt to overcome the distance of spectatorship and to create an identification with the catastrophe and its aftermath. As the Acco Theater Center phrases in their publicity,

> [t]he work of Acco Theater Center deals with the situation of the present Israeli generation and the Israeli existence in the shadow of the Holocaust. The event manifests the intention of its creators to reach the symbolic gate of Auschwitz, which bore the heading 'Arbeit macht frei', enter the personal/collective 'camp', and exit afterwards through the same gate towards a new road. The idea is to keep walking along this road, contrary to the accepted Israeli conception that all stopped there – in front of the gate, and inside the camp.
>
> (Acco Theater Center 1994)

This journey involves both the children of the victims and those of the perpretrators:

> From our experience of meeting audiences in Europe, particularly in Germany, and lately in Austria too, we understood that this story has two sides, partners if you like. The descendants of the victims of the Holocaust, and the descendants of the Holocaust generators: the Second and Third Generations of both sides. The direct interaction between Acco Theater Center, through its work, and individuals from these generations in Europe, have created a new reality, and a channel of hope to the present generation in Germany and Austria.
>
> (Acco Theater Center 1994)

The programme notes for *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* feature a central image, which for Kaynar offers a representation 'of the entire theatrical event' (Kaynar 1998: 53). It features a drawing of the infamous gate at Auschwitz with its notorious wrought-iron inscription, its vertical bar and the sign in its centre, which demands passers-by to stop ('Halt') and present their passports ('Ausweise vorzeigen'). Around it,

> we see a profane kitsch assemblage of the most trite iconography of Nazi evil, Zionist redemption and Jewish victimology: Hitler on top, with speech bubbles coming out of his mouth; below him, hands on barbed wire; Theodor Herzl's[86] official portrait; the Israeli flag enmeshed in the railway leading to the gas chambers overprinted with 'Halt'![87]; Ben Gurion[88] declaring the establishment of the State of Israel; and finally the headline 'Yiddische Meluche' (literally 'Jewish Kingdom' and metaphorically 'Jewish Sovereignty'). [...] They overshadow piles of corpses [...].
> (Kaynar 1998: 53)

For Kaynar, '[a]ll these symbols are thrown together, the unbridgeable contrast between their meanings and emotional imports questioned by being totally erased' (Kaynar 1998: 53). The image anticipates an iconoclastic performance style that Kaynar elsewhere has identified as belonging to new phase in Israeli Holocaust dramaturgy, which he terms 'The Iconic Phase'[89] (Kaynar 1996a: 213). This phase is characterized by a deliberate misuse of the eroded sign repertory and iconic codes of Holocaust representation[90],

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86 Theodor Herzl (born 1860 in Hungary, died in Austria in 1904), was the founder of the Zionist movement, which demanded a sovereign Jewish state in Palestine and the unity of all Jewish people.

87 Kaynar here apparently mistakes the vertical iron rims of the middle part of the original gate [illustration] for a railway track, an association that, if not 'correct', is certainly legitimate.

88 David Ben Gurion (born 1886 in Poland, died 1973 in Israel), lived in Palestine since 1906. In 1944, he became President of the Jewish Zionist World Council, in 1948 he proclaimed the State of Israel. He was Prime Minister of Israel between 1949 and 1953, and again between 1955 and 1963.

89 Kaynar differentiates four phases in total: the 'Negation Phase', the 'Analogous Phase', the 'Metonymic Phase' and the 'Iconic Phase'. 'One may generally depict this process as a progression: from a generalised, stereotypic and historicised conception of the catastrophic past, backgrounded and falsified by the thematisation of the apotheosised or problematised Israeli present; through the stage of foregrounding re-evaluated segments of the Holocaust chronicle and converting them into provocative, non-consensual metaphors of the current reality; and finally towards the presentation of the Holocaust experience (defiantly including the German experience of it) as internalised and reincarnated in the Israeli identity, i.e. as a "declared" constituent of the current reality-convention.' (Kaynar 1996a: 205)

90 'Simply because the Holocaust is no longer a personal experience but an inherited one, i.e. bereft of an ontic, thus having merely a borrowed, imagistic, existence acquired through erudition, narrated stories, works of art, socio-ethical norms, the *Weltanschauung* and norms of the young generation's peers, etc. – it all the more accentuates the manner in which it deep-structured the conceptual, ethical and aesthetic

leading to 'a revision of [the Holocaust's] current dehistoricised, phenomenal manifestations as they assert themselves in the Israeli scene' (Kaynar 1996a: 216). I would like to add a couple of observations to Kaynar's interpretation of the image: the title of the play, *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*, is itself in one of the speech bubble that comes directly out of Hitler's mouth – a provocative statement, which seems to anticipate a possible criticism of the performance as being 'anti-Jewish'. On close inspection the drawing appears to represent various stages of the gate being *opened* towards the viewer.[91] The performance's subtitle above the image reads: 'We opened the gate. We opened it wide. It was hell and this was the work'.[92] The symbolic opening of the concentration camp gate, expressed here both verbally and pictorially, refers to the company's intention quoted above 'to reach the symbolic gate of Auschwitz, which bore the heading "Arbeit macht frei", enter the personal/collective 'camp', and exit afterwards through the same gate towards a new road. The idea is to keep walking along this road, contrary to the accepted Israeli conception that all stopped there – in front of the gate, and inside the camp.' (Acco Theater Center 1994) What the Theatre Centre encountered once they opened the gate was 'hell', and this was 'the work' – in the triple sense of the task that had to be undertaken, the labour that had to be invested, and the performance, the art 'work', that resulted from it. It is thus that – as the title of the performance promises in a reversal of the cynical camp motto, *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland*[93] *Europa* (literally 'work makes free from the deathland of Europe') – one may be liberated from the events that made Europe the land of death. 'Arbeit', in the sense of physical labour, which was intended by the Nazis as a means to kill their Jewish prisoners (the

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world and reaction patterns of the victims' offspring. These features, as expressed in the theatre, may consequently be regarded as iconic clusters of the Holocaust and its immediate repercussions although they bear no sensuous resemblance with the historical manifestations of the event, but preserve and revive [...] its spiritual and psychological imprint.' (Kaynar 1996a: 213)

[91] This effect is achieved by copying both sides of the gate and reproducing it a number of times, each time a little further to either side and drawn a little larger than the original gate. The reappearance of both sides of the 'Halt' sign points to the various stages of opening. The effect of this is slightly surreal – the vegetation behind the gate (e.g.. the tree underneath the letters 'M' and "A' in the inscription) seems here to be trapped within the barbed wire of the gate and moved with it.

[92] My translation from the German 'Wir öffneten das Tor. Wir öffneten es weit. Es war die Hölle und das war die Arbeit' (Acco Theater Center 1992). Kaynar translates the subtitle slightly differently: 'We opened the gate we opened it wide it was hell and it was work'. (Kaynar 1998: 53.) He has pointed out that the subtitle 'subverts a naive ditty by Kadja Molodowska'. (Kaynar 1998: 53).

[93] Yiddish for 'deathland'

'extermination through labour'-policy), is here turned into a spiritual concept and a key for survival. In an interesting reading of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*, which focuses on the repeated use of the concept of work throughout the performance, Rokem has pointed out the complexity of the term 'avoda' (work) in Hebrew[94]:

> 'Anachno na'asse po avoda bejachad' – We will do some work together here. This short introductory statement [the first sentence spoken by Yaaron Maayan's character in the performance in Israel] serves not only as a direct comment on the first part of the title of the performance, the ominous inscription, but it also has an ironical function, albeit much less sinister in the context of the performance. Zelma [Yaaron Maayan's character] is constantly exploring the possibility that the theatre is a kind of labour, an artistic working-through, which will in some way (hopefully) liberate her, and perhaps also the audience, from Toitland Europa.
> The words Arbeit and Avoda – 'work' in Hebrew – have quite different connotations. The Zionist slogan 'Avoda hi chajeno'[95] – work is our life – no doubt functions as an ironic backdrop to the fact that in the death camps the kind of 'work' referred to is not life but death, while on the soil of the old-new homeland the 'work' is a collective emancipatory act. The Akko performance explores in which sense, because of that Nazi inscription, the emancipatory struggle of the survivors as well as the following generations has not yet ending. [sic!]
> The Hebrew word Avoda can also designate works of art as well as worship, which is very relevant in the context of this Grotowski inspired performance, while the German word primarily refers to labour[96]. This distinction becomes quite important in the performance, gradually favouring its Hebrew connotations with its meta-theatrical reflexivity with regard to the aesthetic and performative strategies employed. Semadar Yaron-Ma'ayan, the actress, not only shows, but at the same time also implicitly reflects on, how she in creating the fictional character of Zelma transforms herself into a work of art.
>
> (Rokem 1996b)

These 'meta-theatrical' aesthetic and performative strategies will be the focus of the following discussion, extending them, as I have remarked above, from the actor's 'work' in creating her character and reflecting on its creation to the work that the audience must contribute in comprehending this creation as two intrinsically related phases of the same identificatory process. In the words of the performance: 'We will do some work together here'. I shall base my analysis of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* on an extensive

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[94] See also the Yiddish slogan 'Arbet vet rateven dos geto' - 'Work will save the ghetto', 'meaning that the majority of a ghetto's population could be saved through productive work for the Nazi war machine' (Edelheit and Edelheit 1994: 190).
[95] Also transliterated as 'Avoda hi hayenu' (Rokem 2000: 61).
[96] The German word 'Arbeit' can also be used to designate works of art, but this does not affect the substance of Rokem's argument.

description of the show. Such detail seems to me indispensable to fully comprehend the strategies at work in this complex performance. One preliminary remark is necessary at this point: there is no such thing as the 'definite' version of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*. Not only did the piece vary from performance to performance, as much of its dialogue was improvised in response to the audience. With each new venue the Theater Center adapted the performance according to the location in which it took place. Each adaptation was preceded by extensive research *in situ*. The resulting changes were often substantial, and I will mention the variations whenever possible. In general, I will refer to a kind of 'idealtypical' version of the work, a sum of its various instalments in Germany.[97] Interpretations of the Israeli version of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* and its reception in Israel are widely available.[98] Judging from their description of the work, one observation suggests itself: that for the German versions of the performance, the Acco Theater Center put less emphasis on the Palestinian character in the piece and thus shifted the focus from the Israeli-Palestinian to the Israeli-German relationship. It is the articulation of the latter that I will focus on in my analysis.

Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa begins its excursion into the past where the majority of such journeys sets out today: on a sight-seeing trip. A small party of only twenty to thirty spectators[99] is asked to mount a coach where a colourful (and authentic) tourist commercial[100] for the medieval crusader town of Acco[101] introduces them to its long record of bloody conquests: 'Acco, where one can feel the breath of history. The history of millennia, captured and alive in the old walls and narrow streets. Between the hidden, underground Acco and the pulsating Acco of the surface lies our

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[97] I saw *Arbeit macht frei in Toitland Europa* in Hamburg in 1993 and in Recklinghausen in 1995.

[98] See Deutschkron 1992, Herzberg 1992, Kaynar 1998, Rokem 1996a, Rokem 1996b, Rokem 1998, Rokem 2000, Schechner 1997. I myself did not see the performance in Israel, and I have to rely therefore on the account of these critics.

[99] The intimacy created by such a small group of spectators was vital to the working of the performance.

[100] *Acco* (Israel 1985), 22 min, colour, German.

[101] 'The Crusaders who conquered Palestine almost a millennium ago are also intimately connected to that dark European past, culminating in the Shoah, which today's Israeli society in different ways is trying to liberate itself from. The Crusades, as a historical parallel that casts its shadow on the present, also figure frequently in the political-ideological discourses of the Middle East conflicts, most prominently in anti-Israeli propaganda, comparing the temporality of the Jewish state to that of the Crusader invasion of Palestine, which will end in the same fashion, by expulsion.' (Rokem 2000: 59)

Acco and your Acco.[102] See for yourself[103] – Acco is worth a conquest.'[104] The video serves as the first example of a number of different modes for representing history that the performance sets out to explore. Yet one event is significantly absent from this historical rendition: the Holocaust. This omission points to the fact that the Holocaust, which probably has had more effect on the Israeli present than any other historical event, happened elsewhere, is not 'of the place' in the same way that the crusades have left their marks on the architecture of the town. At the same time the video helps to emphasise the performance's relocation to the 'Toitland' of Germany, where the history of the Holocaust is indeed 'captured' – though not 'alive' – in the sites of destruction. The tourist video thus serves several purposes: it introduces the German audience to the local setting which informed the making of the original production, whilst at the same time marking the initial encounter between a contemporary German audience and an Israeli performance as one which is inevitably limited by the desires and incomprehensions of the 'tourist gaze'[105]. Moreover, the Theater Center appears to suggest that the first encounter with the memory of the Holocaust in a country where the sites of the genocide have long become tourist commodities[106] is through the eyes of the 'memory tourist' (Young 1993: 30). Yet the trip is also invested with a different meaning, which is to gain prominence during the course of the performance: that of deportation. The meeting points where the coach picked up the audience were chosen carefully: in each of the German-speaking locations the spectators were instructed to gather at sites which used to house their cities' former Gestapo headquarters, from where historically most of the deportations of Jewish citizens to the ghettos and camps

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[102] The video thus already places the performance in the realm between the visible and invisible traces of history – or between the hidden, underground levels of memory and its surface.The realm between the hidden, underground levels of memory and its surface is indeed where the Theater Center places its work.

[103] The appeal to replace a mediated experience with a real sensual one, which is at the heart of tourism's 'rule of presence' (MacCannell 1979 (1976): 11), is also of great resonance for the performance.

[104] Original German text: 'Man fühlt den Atem der Geschichte. Die Geschichte von Jahrtausenden, eingefangen und lebendig in den alten Gassen. Zwischen dem verborgenen, unterirdischen Acco und dem pulsierenden Acco der Oberfläche liegt unser Acco und Ihr Acco. Überzeugen Sie sich – Acco ist eine Eroberung wert.' [My translation]

[105] For a discussion of the 'tourist gaze' see MacCannell 1979 (1976).

[106] For a in-depth study of the touristic exploitation of the 'sites of destruction' see Young 1993. Young has also contributed an introductory essay to a publication by German photographer Reinhard Matz, which provides a photographic record of the use of concentration and death camps as tourist attractions today (Matz 1993).

departed[107]; although these places were not always clearly 'marked' as sites of that history. In the Israeli version, the coach awaited the audience at the entrance to the Arab market in Acco, near the Knights' Hall where the Theater Center has its home (see Urian 1993: 62). The party there was accompanied by a young female soldier (played by the actor Miri Zemach) instead of the tourist video. Many commentators have highlighted the familiarity of the presence of a military representative at such occasions in Israel (see Herzberg 1992: 4; Rokem 1996a: 232; Schechner 1997: 78; Urian 1993: 63). The soldier provides the journey in Israel with a signification that is less that of a tourist trip (or deportation), than that of an officially organised and compulsory pedagogical excursion. 'Israeli spectators are not particularly surprised by a soldier giving them their tickets. [...] They connect her, somewhat confusedly, with the educational purposes of the army, one of which is "teaching the Holocaust".' (Urian 1993: 63). In either case the bus trip helped to 'position' the spectator, who enters the performance from the perspective of a well-known social routine. The strategy of making the audience itself a semiotic element in the performance, embodying (inadvertently) a particular position in relation to the collective identiy under scrutiny, a strategy already familiar from Brith Gof's work, is here too a device constructed by the environmentalist and site-specific aspects of the performance.

In Germany, the first stop on the journey is a memorial site[108] where a ceremony is held in commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust in the presence of two 'visitors' from Israel, a survivor, Zelma Greenwald (Smadar Yaaron Maayan), and her son Menashe (Moni Yosef). This scene was devised specially for the presentations outside of Israel and was first inserted at the work's second German manifestation in Hamburg in 1993. Speeches, songs, the placing of wreaths, a minute of silence: the whole ritual of guilt and atonement that lies at the heart of today's German-Israeli relationship is played

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107 The meeting point in Berlin was at the former site of the very centre of the Nazi persecution and surveillance apparatus, the Geheimes Staatspolizeiamt and Reichssicherheitshauptamt (the Gestapo and SS headquarters). In Vienna, the meeting point was the site of the former Gestapo headquarters at Morzinplatz, in Recklinghausen the site of the former Gestapo headquarters at Steintor.

108 In Hamburg the ceremony is held at the former concentration camp Hamburg-Neuengamme, next to a sculpture commemorating the victims of the camp, entitled 'Sterbender Häftling' ('Dying inmate') by the French artist Françoise Salmon (1965). In Recklinghausen the ceremony takes place in front of the Holocaust memorial on the city's Jewish cemetery.

out. It mirrors a similar scene later in the performance, in which the actors parody a children's commemorative ceremony in Israel. Whereas the latter is clearly marked as a parody – adult actors impersonating children, a satirical exaggeration of mishaps etc. – the former re-enacts precisely the performative structure of a conventional commemorative ritual, thus providing the audience with a familiar frame for its experience and often preventing it from recognizing this performance as 'fictional'. Such a distinction between a real commemorative ritual and a fictional one may indeed be difficult to draw: a commemorative ritual can be defined as an inherently performative act in Austin's sense[109] – uttering the sentence 'I remember' in the appropriate circumstances (here an authentic memorial site) is to do it. The Theater Center's commemorative ritual, however, is also 'hollow or void' in Austin's sense as, according to Austin's definition of the theatrical utterance, language here is 'used not seriously', 'parasitic upon its normal use' (Austin 1962: 22)[110]: the speeches consist entirely of citations, and are spoken by actors. Yet the scene only reveals its theatricality in the context of the whole performance, where its 'ordinary circumstance' (Austin 1962: 22) will be reframed within different performative contexts. Following Derrida's critique of Austin[111] we may say that through placing the utterance in a new context, iteration thus constitutes a deviance from its previous conditions – and thereby also the possibility of a subversive re-articulation. At the same time, however, the ambivalence between the performative and the theatrical, between the doing of remembering and its citation in theatre shows how even the 'unserious' act of remembering *is* an act of remembering.

A similar ambivalence is at work in the scene that follows, which takes place in a museum, the final destination of this part of the journey. In Israel the company used the museum of the nearby Kibbutz Lohamei Hageta'ot[112] (Fighters of the Ghettos), which

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[109] See Chapter 1. 'In these examples it seems clear that to utter the sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circum-stances) is not to *describe* my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it.' (Austin 1962: 6).

[110] 'I mean, for example, the following: a performative utterance will, for example, be *in a peculiar way* hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage or if introduced in a poem, or spoken in soliloquy. [...] Language in such circumstances is in special ways – intelligibly – used not seriously, but in ways *parasitic* upon its normal use – ways which fall under the doctrine of the *etiolations* of language.' (Austin 1962: 22)

[111] See Chapter 1.

[112] Also transliterated as Lochamei HaGhettaot

was founded by survivors of the Shoah.[113] For Rokem the connection between the Crusader fortress (symbolizing the European occupation of Palestine), the Shoah museum and Auschwitz constituted a 'geo-conceptual subtext of the performance, creating both its real and conceptual scenographic space' (Rokem 2000: 59). In Germany, the company translated it into a different geo-conceptual landscape[114]: in Berlin, for example, the part was set in the Wannsee Villa, the location for the Wannsee-Conference, where on the 20th January, 1942, the Nazi bureaucracy formulated the plans for the so-called 'Final Solution', the total annihilation of the European Jewry, and which today houses a small commemorative exhibition; in Hamburg the company used the museum of the former concentration camp Neuengamme.[115] However similar on a functional level these places of exhibition and commemoration may be, they are distinguished by their different histories and the present contexts in which they are located, a difference that the Acco Theater Center incorporates into its performance.[116] This difference can be summarized as that between 'memory sites' or 'lieux de mémoire' (Nora 1989, see above) and what Claude Lanzman has called 'non-lieux de mémoire' (as quoted in LaCapra 1998: 10), or 'trauma sites' (LaCapra 1998: 10). Young offers an analysis of this difference: 'At the same time [...] where memorials and museums in

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[113] In his survey of Holocaust Memorials, Young gives a detailed description of the museum: 'Nowhere in Israel does the survivors' spirit animate a museum more than at Kibbutz Lohamei Hageta'ot [...]. Not only do the fighters who live here embody the link between memorial sites and an actual past, but their experiences have left an unmistakable imprint on the very forms remembrance takes here. [...] the ghetto fighters and partisans recall this era in the image of their own resistance and fighting.' (Young 1993: 237–8).
According to Young, the museum draws a strong link between European destruction and Israeli rebirth. Segev highlights another connection: '[...] there is no settlement in Israel that better illustrates the link between the Holocaust and the Palestinian tragedy' (Segev 1993: 451).
Both these associations are activated in Acco Theater Center's performance.

[114] For a discussion of Germany's memory landscape see Koonz 1994.

[115] In Vienna, the part took place in an exhibition on anti-Semitic imagery, 'Antisemitismus - Die Macht der Bilder', in Recklinghausen, the venue was a small Jewish cemetery on the outskirts of the city.

[116] The lack of differentiation between the sites in Israel and those in Germany in a review article I wrote about the performance (Roms 1996) became a major starting point for a critique by Rokem: 'Heike Roms, in her analysis of the performance, fails to realize this, calling the performance *Arbeit macht frei in Deathland Europe* (suggesting that the work is done *in* Europe) and arguing that in all of these places where the performance has been shown "the museums' principles of representing the past and constructing a collective memory are exposed in the provocative irony of the commentary". The differences between the site of a concentration camp or the Wannsee Villa, no matter what kind of exhibition they contain, and a museum commemorating the Shoah in Israel, however, are not a matter which can be muddled over. This distinction *in* and *from* is actually one of the most important subjects of the performance, transforming what may seem like a "provocative irony" into a burning plea for a serious and critical reconsideration of the Zionist myth, showing that a new form of exile has actually been created in the new "homeland".' (Rokem 2000: 60)

Europe, especially those located at the sites of destruction, focus relentlessly on the annihilation of Jews and almost totally neglect the millennium of Jewish life in Europe before the war, those in Israel locate events in a historical continuum that includes Jewish life before and after the destruction.' (Young 1993: 216). At Beit Lohamei Hageta'ot, '[o]ut of twelve exhibition halls, only two are devoted to the killing process; the rest relate what had come before and what now comes after in Israel' (Young 1993: 237–8), whereas the KZ Gedenkstätte Neuengamme, for example, focuses entirely on the operation of the former Nazi work camp. I would like to add another distinction, which becomes of particular importance to this part of the performance: in German museums, the past is represented through the presence of artefacts alone, while the victims are known only by their absence. As Young has pointed out, this presents an ethical problem for any museum representation: '[...] in a perversely ironic twist, these artifacts also force us to recall the victims as the Germans have remembered them to us: in the collected debris of a destroyed civilization.[117] [...] That a murdered people remains known in Holocaust museums anywhere by their scattered belongings, and not by their spiritual works, that their lives should be recalled primarily through the images of their death, may be the ultimate travesty. [...] Even the new museums in America and Europe risk perpetuating the very figures by which the killers themselves would have memoralized their Jewish victims.' (Young 1993: 132–3). At Beit Lohamei Hageta'ot, as in many other Israeli museums, a living link between the past and the present is embodied by the presence of survivors, who often work as guides in the museum. As Young has pointed out, '[n]ot only do the fighters who live here embody the link between the memorial site and an actual past, but their experiences have left an unmistakable imprint on the very forms remembrance takes here' (Young 1993: 237). It is this imprint which *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europe* examines critically.

When the audience in Acco enters the museum, they are welcomed by one such survivor guide, who introduces herself as Zelma Greenwald. In Germany, where they

[117] The Nazis themselves planned to establish a Holocaust museum. It was to stand in Prague, and house the collected remnants of the murdered European Jews as a memorial to their complete annihilation. (Cf. Hanno Loewy in Matz 1993: 22)

had already met Zelma and her son at the commemoration ceremony, the spectators are invited to accompany the two Jewish visitors on a tour, on which they are shown round the little museum by a German guide. Zelma introduces herself as the director of a similar Holocaust museum in Israel. She wears her hair in the upswept style of the 1930s, and is dressed in an old-fashioned suit and thickly-soled orthopaedic shoes. The character speaks a curious mixture of Yiddish, German, English and Hebrew, with the typical accent of the middle European. Israeli commentators have remarked on the fact that her Hebrew is stilted and full of grammatical errors (see Herzberg 1992).[118] Yaaron describes her character as follows: 'The image that I had is of a woman that she will give the impression or the taste of someone who is not sixty or seventy years old but one thousand years old. That she is dead-alive, like a ghost. She doesn't belong to reality, but she is somewhere in the twilight zone. She comes and she goes.' (Yaaron Maayan in Veiel 1993a)[119]

Rokem gives an account of the ensuing scene as it was performed in Acco:

> When entering the museum [...] Zelma slowly descends on a stairway gesturing for the audience to approach her. She wears an elegant but rather old fashioned dress and she introduces herself as a survivor, adding in a broken Hebrew, which is often mixed with expressions in German and in English – 'Anachno na'asse po avoda bejachad'[120] – We will do/some/work together here. [...] At several points during the tour of the museum Zelma emphasises that a special kind of creativity was needed in order to survive during the Holocaust. Pointing at a photograph with two young women in the ghetto Zelma speculates that they are probably hiding a secret under the many layers of their clothes. And this secret will enable them to survive. Every human being, Zelma goes on to explain, has a kind of black hole, where the key to his or her survival is hidden. Even the ghetto itself contains such black holes the sewage-systems, the cellars and the attics of the almost destroyed buildings contain black holes where Jews hid to save themselves. A special kind of creativity under extreme pressure was needed to bring about what may seem like a miracle.

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118 This mixture of languages and the inability to speak 'proper' Hebrew not only marks Zelma as a survivor, but also as an outsider in Israeli society: 'Many of the Zionist leaders [...] fought Yiddish as the language of the hated Diaspora and insisted on promoting Hebrew as the only recognized language in Israel. [... The survivors epitomized] the ideological construct of the old Jew. They symbolized, in particular, Jewish weakness, and there were real fears that the new, heroic Jews would be "infected" with this by the survivors. Although the state laid claim to the memory of the Holocaust, then, this did not refer to the real survivors and their suffering: Israel remembered the Holocaust but forgot the survivors.' (Loshitzky, forthcoming: 3)

119 Kaynor describes the effect of the character as follows: 'She seems to represent at one and the same time a brand saved from the flames, a subtle parody of this type, and a kind of self-referential criticism on the explotation of the Holocaust for sociopolitical ends' (Kaynar 1996b: 286).

120 Also transliterated as 'Anahno na'ase avoda beyahad' (Rokem 2000: 61).

All the exhibits in the museum are not of the same interest to Zelma. She prefers the photographs and the exhibits of authentic objects, to which she refers as her own 'works'. They trigger an intimate, almost uncanny, attitude. When entering the museum gallery where art objects made by survivors are exhibited she says that she feels no particular attraction for them. In order to come to this gallery Zelma asks us to climb a staircase, which she claims leads to heaven, and she adds, 'don't be afraid, the work must be done'.

Before leaving this gallery section, she wants us to look at a statue of a 'Muselman'[121], a person who has been almost starved to death. Since he is naked, and 'is so thin that his skin is glued to his bones, he has no place to hide his bread'. And she adds 'I would give a fortune to know where this Muselmanchick hides his bread; millions to know where the scream comes out, the *Bat-Kol*[122]'.[123]

(Rokem 1996b)[124]

Zelma goes on to show the spectators a model of the death camp at Treblinka and demonstrates how the Nazis developed the concentration camp into a death factory. 'In the middle of her explanation she passes over the pointer to Khaled Abu Ali [introduced by Zelma as 'our expert for destruction', see Veiel 1993a], a Palestinian actor (playing 'himself'), who says that when, as a guide in the museum, he shows this model to Arab youngsters they do not believe that such things were possible.' (Rokem 1996b) Both Veiel and Tlalim have recorded different responses from the audience in Acco to this scene, which testify to the great provocation that is implied in the gesture of passing over the pointer from Jewish survivor to Palestinian: in Veiel's film, the Jewish audience discusses heatedly whether an Arab has the right to explain to them what has become an intrinsic part of Jewish history and identity; in Tlalim's film, Arab schoolchildren compare their fate with that of the Jews during the Holocaust. Both groups seem to

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121 'Muselman – "muslim": Concentration camp slang term referring to an inmate on the verge of death from starvation, exhaustion, and despair. It appears that the term originated with the similarities between a concentration camp victim and the image of a Muslim prostrating himself in prayer.' (Edelheit and Edelheit 1994: 377) For an account of the history of the term, see Agamben 1999: 44–5.

122 The Bat-Kol is a mystical cabalistic revelation. 'The Bat-Kol [is] the mystical heavenly female voice emerging from heaven, to bring redemption' (Rokem 2000: 64)

123 Zelma: 'If you can watch the Muselman, that is a human being that his body weight was like the weight of my bones, and the brain sclerotic, the living dead, and could you imagine, where else now you can see how the stomach sticks to the back but really, where he or she hide a piece a food in his body, even when he cannot eat this ... The creativity of these people who had no pretences of artists of course, just wanted to live, I think this is one of the climaxes of that era, you know [...]. I would give a fortune for only once for a moment to hear this creature. When he is lying on his bunk and he is breathing there is some squeal there, a squeak so what does it sound like? Where does it come from, the sound? From what shakra? Where is that energy of the body, where does she awaken there? For that I would give millions.' (extract from *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*, as quoted in Tlalim 1994)

124 See also a more in-depth description of the scene in Rokem 2000: 60ff.

struggle with what the gesture argues so provocatively: 'the possibility of seeing the extermination of the Jews as the point of departure in forging a new attitude towards the continuous oppression of the Palestinians, without reverting to the simplistic and senseless comparison between two kinds of national catastrophes ('holocausts') which is made by the Arab youth in Tellalim's film' (Loshitzky, forthcoming: 17). This argument had already been carefully prepared in the tour that preceded it: Rokem describes how earlier in the performance Zelma suggested a comparison between the ghettos of Eastern Europe and the refugee camps on the West Bank.[125]

> [W]hat Selma wants us to understand through her guided tour in the museum is that the concentration camps, which as she expresses it, were the most 'effective' way to exterminate Jews, were only gradually 'invented' and 'perfected'. [...] [T]here is an inner deterministic evolutionary process in oppression and discrimination, which, once the goals have become more clearly defined, inevitably leads to a gradual sophistication of the methods used. [...] Selma's message is quite clear in the contemporary Israeli context and she wants us to understand how this development was possible [...]
>
> (Rokem 1996a: 235)

For Rokem, 'the whole performance is about the meaning of this gesture, when a Holocaust survivor passes over the pointer to a Palestinian who has to confront the fact that such things have been (and perhaps will be ?) possible' (Rokem 1996b).

In Germany, the scene with Haled was left out completely. Instead, the museum part shifted the focus from the Israeli-Palestinian to the contemporary German-Israeli relationship. On the tour round the exhibition, the audience is confronted with two colliding narratives: that of the young German guide with her carefully chosen didactic phrasing and that of her Israeli guest. With the double authority of victim and colleague, Zelma interrupts the German with provocative comments and ironic asides. She envies the beauty of the authentic relics available in the 'Deathland' ('Excuse meine excitement. Aber bei uns in Israel wir haben nicht diese variety of evidencie. Wir sind sehr far from die Zentrum of die Schwarze Loch. Wir haben nur eine Pyjama in der Vitrin, ja, eine

[125] In Tlalim's film, Yaaron points to the architectural similarities between the Arab quarter of Acco and the Jewish ghettos of Eastern Europe. (Tlalim 1994).

Stück.'[126]) and admires the immaculate working of the Auschwitz death-machine ('Die Kirsche auf der Sahnetorte Das KZ.'[127]). She calls attention to the abstraction behind the perfectly rounded death statistics of the Holocaust ('We look at the numbers. They move us... Which one is the most prominent number. The zero, is it not? Zero, Zero. Yes, the Zero. The human life is zero.' [128]), and to the percentage of Jewish victims among the total number of victim of World War II ('How many are six millions compared to a total damage of fifty-five millions? Again, twelve per cent, right?. Yes, we are laughing. But in our hearts a question arises. Am I right? The most natural question in the world. God, you are only ten per cent. [...] Why must you make such a fuss about your history? Why must Jews always be something special?'[129]). She discusses the Nazi race theory ('According to the Germans – their names shall be obliterated – it is the Arabs of all people, our cousins, who are a pure race. [...] Why? They haven't mixed. The blood of the Arabs is very ... pure, pure. Pure humans. But we are no humans. We are not part of that table. We are like the gypsies. Animals, real animals we are.' [130]) and draws provocative parallels between the 'Übermenschen'-ideology of the Nazis and the Jewish belief in being the chosen people. ('Was sagt die Führer to his people. Ihr seid gut, Ihr seid schön, ihr seid clever, ihr seid blond bläuauig, Ihr seid etwas special, aber wir wissen genau das in unsere Bibilia das ist geschrieben a thousand years ago, dass wir sind etwas special, wir sind die elected Volk.'[131]) The museum's principles of

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126 'Excuse my excitement. But in Israel we do not have this variety of evidence. We are very far from the centre of the black hole. We only have one pair of pyjamas on display, only one item'. (as quoted in Flemming 1993 [My translation])

127 'The cherry on the cake. The concentration camp'. (as quoted in Veiel 1993a [My translation])

128 'Wir schauen uns die Zahlen an. Sie bewegen uns... Was ist die hervorstechende Zahl. [...] Die Null, nicht wahr? Null. Null. Ja, die Null. Das Leben des Menschen ist Null.' (as quoted in Veiel 1993a [My translation])

129 'Wieviel sind 6 Millionen im Vergleich zu dem Totalschaden von 55 Millionen Opfern? [...] Wieder 12 Prozent, nicht wahr? Ja, wir lachen. Aber in unserem Herzen macht sich eine Frage breit. Stimmt? Die natürlichste Frage der Welt. Gott, ihr seid ja nur 10 Prozent. [...] Warum macht ausgerechnet ihr soviel trara um eure Geschichte? Müssen Juden immer etwas Besonderen sein?' (as quoted in Veiel 1993a [My translation])

130 'Den Deutschen zufolge – ihr Name sei getilgt – sind ausgerechnet die Araber, unsere Vettern, die sind eine reine Rasse. [...] Warum? Sie haben sich nicht vermengt, sich nicht vermischt. Das Blut der Araber ist sehr ... rein, rein. Reine Menschen. Aber wir sind keine Menschen. Wir sind nicht auf der Tabelle. Wir sind wie die Zigeuner. Tiere, richtige Tiere sind wir.' (as quoted in Veiel 1993a [My translation])

131 'What does the Führer say to his people. You are good, you are beautiful, you are clever, you are blond and blue-eyed, you are something special. But we know that in our bible it was written a thousand

representing the past and constructing a collective memory are exposed in the provocative irony of the commentary. As Young argues, '[l]ike other representations of events, the exhibitions at Holocaust museums can be approached as aesthetic, artistic creations. They juxtapose, narrate, and remember events according to the taste of their curators, the political needs and interests of their community, the temper of their time'. (Young 1993: viii). In her asides, Zelma points to this very createdness of the collection. And her confrontation with the German guide poses the question as to who holds authority over this creation.

The museum scene already contains the central elements of the performance like a nucleus from which the next four hours of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* will be developed: not only are its main themes presented (the teleological link between the Shoah and the Israeli state; its relation to the Palestinian issue; the difficulty of an 'appropriate' remembrance of the Holocaust; the role of art as a means for survival), but its leitmotifs are played out for the first time (hunger and food[132]; nationalist music; numbers). Objects are introduced which will later reappear in the performance. They include a torture table from Treblinka, on which (naked) Jewish inmates were whipped before being rushed to the gas chambers, whilst camp guards were looking on smoking and drinking beer.

Though largely improvised, every statement in this scene was a citation taken from authentic documents, collected by the company during its three years of intensive research.[133] 'My instruction for the actors was that they could use during the performance any text they wanted to, whatever gesture they wanted to but it has to be a quotation from someone, somebody, a book, a film, something they saw, it has to be a reference, not just an improvisation. Every actor is able to do a guided tour through a

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years ago that we are something special, we are the chosen people' (as quoted in Flemming 1993 [My translation])

132 'The hunger, then, she was a completely different hunger, it was the hunger of months, years, like at some point becoming my intimische freundine, my friend, so I don't know anymore where I end and she begins' (as quoted in Tlalim 1994)

133 Yaaron gives an account of the working process:' When we went to this museum, it began really, we went because we wanted to learn. We went into a deep research, [...] Dudi [...] wanted every actor to be a 'commander unit of the Holocaust'. And then, when we went there, Dudi said, 'well, let's make all the performance in a museum'. Then it developed in a way that we decided it will be the first part' (Yaaron in Veiel 1993a)

museum so authentically that the audience don't [*sic*] realise it's theatre.' (Maayan in Flemming 1993). The strategies at work here are similar to those in the previous scene: as was the case with the commemoration ceremony, the museum scene is at once a 'real' guided tour and its theatrical citation. Again the tour only reveals its 'theatricality' (its citational nature in Austin's sense) in the context of the whole performance. Rokem claims that this is largely an effect of the authenticity of the site: 'with the museum as the scenery for a theatre performance the realities of the past almost completely cancel out the theatrical aspects of the guided tour'. (Rokem 1996a: 233). For him, the performance thus 'blurs an extremely important semiotic dividing line' by transforming 'the documentary objects in the museum into theatrical sign' (Rokem 1996a: 235). I want to argue that the semiotic division between documentary object and theatrical sign (i.e. that of 'reality' and 'fictional representation') are already blurred, and that the Acco Theatre Center only manifests this blurring. It alerts the audience to the already performative nature of guided tours, and to that of the museum itself. In her comparative study of two American Holocaust museums, Patraka offers a definition of their performativity:

> It is the museum-goers (along with the guards) who constitute the live, performing bodies in museums. They are the focus of a variety of performance strategies deployed by museums [...]. Some of these strategies produce the passivity and fascination of 'gawking', some induce a confirming sense of 'seeing' by covering over what cannot be 'seen', and some position us to struggle *to see* at the same time we are conscious of our own difficult engagement in 'seeing'. If this applies generally to museums, it has special significance for museums that represent the Holocaust. In a museum of the dead, the critical actors are gone, and it is up to us to perform acts of reinterpretation to make meaning and memory. [...]
> Along with the notion of a moving spectatorship, the museum is a performance site in the sense that the architect, the designers, and the management of the museum produce representations through objects and so produce a space and a subjectivity for the spectator. The museum is a complicated, crowded stage, always soliciting a certain spectatorial gaze through very skilled presentation. Everything one sees in a museum is a production by somebody. A Holocaust museum, in particular, can be a performance environment where we are asked to change from spectator/bystander to witness, where we are asked to make our specific memory into historical memory. In a Holocaust museum, when we are really solicited to change, we are asked to become performers in the event of understanding and remembering the Holocaust.
> (Patraka 1996: 99–100)

Patraka links the performativity of Holocaust museums to the strategies they employ with which they position their spectators as performers. *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* reiterates some of these strategies. The performance choreographs the audience's movement through the exhibition, directing its gaze toward specific objects. It positions the audience in a role as '"naive" listeners' (Rokem 1998: 49), i.e. listeners who have no direct experience of the Holocaust. Yet it also constantly provokes the audience through its controversial commentary to overcome this 'passive' position and intervene in the performed museum tour, although this intervention remains merely an anticipated possibility and is never actually executed.

> The Israeli implied spectator [and, we may add, the German too] is designed to stand there without knowing just how he is supposed to react. Should he be shocked by the evidence, or by the manner of its presentation, or by himself as a 'collaborator' who does not protest against such 'sacrilege' [...]? Or should he rather be appalled by the realisation that he himself is the originator of those assumptions that led to this artistic response and underlie it throughout? In other words: may his communal consciousness of the Holocaust be really thus defined, as a mixture of genuine shudder, kitsch, cheap emotionality, sado-masochistic voyeurism and sheer political demagoguery?'
>
> (Kaynar 1996a: 215)

All three scenes in the first part of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*, the bus, the memorial and the museum, locate collective forms of memory within conventional social frames for remembrance. The sequence takes the audience through various forms of public commemoration, re- and de-constructing ritualised ways of dealing with the past, and placing them within authentic sites of memory, making use of both the real spatiality and temporality of these re-enactments (authentic locations, the 'real time' duration of bus trip, ceremony and guided tour). Sociologist Paul Connerton has expanded on Halbwachs's concept of collective memory to explore how such memory is actually conveyed and sustained in performance. He argues that collective commemorative re-enactments 'depend for much of their rhetorical persuasiveness [...] on prescribed bodily behaviour. (Connerton 1989: 72). He concludes that, 'the past is, as it were, sedimented in the body' (Connerton 1989: 72), and goes on to analyse various

culturally specific bodily practices[134] to ascertain how commemorations re-enact images of the past, and thereby enable the transmission of cultural memory through collective performative participation.[135] *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* encourages the audience to re-enact such familiar physical behaviour (whether as a tourist, a mourner at a memorial or a museum visitor) in order to activate its identification with the familiar communal performances of commemoration.

At the same time, however, *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* also defamiliarizes these performances in order to trouble the audience's identification with them. This is achieved primarily by recontextualizing the activities retrospectively, thus transforming them to acquire a different meaning. We may call this technique, in reference to Goffman, one of 'framing'[136]. Only in the case of the Acco Theater Center, framing is used as a cognitive device that helps to confuse, rather than separate, the order of cultural performance and that of theatrical performance. This recontextualization is already being prepared in the first part of the work, in which a number of provocative gestures and comments are inserted into the proceedings to break with the conventional structure of these commemorations and point to their fictionality. (Maayan calls this technique of manipulating a familiar frame of perception by introducing strange elements 'placing a Trojan Horse' (Maayan in Seifert 1992). The theatricality of the first part comes into full view when all three scenes are confronted with their counterparts, each this time framed by an overtly theatricalized context, which allows the audience to revisit the meaning of the initial scenes in retrospect.

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[134] Connerton distinguishes between 'techniques of the body', e.g. gestures; 'proprieties of the body', e.g. table manners; and 'ceremonies of the body', e.g. ceremonial display of privilege at court, see Connerton 1989: 79ff.

[135] Commemoration rituals are clearly example of cultural performances (see Chapter 1). Joseph Roach has described the relationship between cultural performances and memory, reiterating the familiar binary between memory and history: 'performance highlights a distinction between social memory and history as different forms of cultural transmission across time: memory requires collective participation, whether at theatrical events, shamanic rituals, or Olympic opening ceremonies; history entails the critical (and apparently solitary) interpretation of written records. [...] The persistence of collective memory through restored behavior [...] represents an alternative and potentially contestatory form of knowledge – bodily knowledge, habit, custom. [...] Knowledge of such memories comes more readily to the observer-participant, who has danced the dance or joined the procession, than it does to the reader.' (Roach 1993: 47–8)

[136] See Chapter 1.

Back on the bus, a short feature film[137] is shown, in which a group of schoolchildren and their teacher[138] are killed by exhaust fumes diverted into the interior of a false ambulance.[139] The film overlays the comfort of the tourist coach trip with overt associations of deportation and extermination. In Israel, these associations are temporally deferred. The film is shown in a small cinema in the museum just before Zelma hands over to the Palestinian guide. Rokem describes its effect as follows:

> While the film is shown Selma appears several times in front of the screen, pointing out the exact shape of the exhaust pipe and how the children were deceived. She is thus inserting herself in the film, as if she had been present at the scene itself as an omniscient observer and commentator. But the film is also projecting the past on her, inscribing the images of the past on her fragile body.
>
> (Rokem 1998: 50)

Rokem argues that '[b]y placing the documentary and semi-documentary (*Ambulance*) images within the framework of a theatrical performance, which, even if we are not really sure at this point if the "performance" itself really has started, we are in a way forced to re-read or re-interpret these images in relation to Selma's body and the ways in which they become projected and inscribed on it.' (Rokem 1996a: 234–5) For Rokem, the scene articulates an impossibility of distinguishing between the past, which is literally projected onto Zelma's body, and the present. But there is another important aspect to this scene. Tlalim's film includes a full recording of the commentary with which Zelma accompanies the projection of the film. In her explication she approaches

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137 *Ambulans* (Poland 1961); 9 min, b&w. Director: Janusz Morgenstern.
In Germany, the screening of *Ambulans* is followed by a concert recording of Israeli singer Gabi Berlin: the black and white images of Jewish children victims are confronted with colourful images of healthy and happy Israeli teenagers, singing along to Berlin's songs, praising their country. The coach trip has arrived in modern Israel. (In Recklinghausen, a short film about the deportation of Recklinghausen Jews was inserted between *Ambulans* and the video of Gabi Berlin.)

138 The film alludes to the story of Janusz Korczak, one of the most famous Jewish martyrs of the Holocaust. 'Korszak, Janusz (1878-1942): Polish Jewish writer and educator; headed the orphanage in the Warsaw ghetto; deported with his charges and murdered at Treblinka' (Edelheit and Edelheit 1994: 260). Korczak volunteered in 1942 to be deported with his children.

139 The film refers to the early stages of the Nazi mass extermination policy, when gas vans, predecessors of the gas chambers in the death camps, were introduced to murder Polish Jews on a large scale:
'In December 1941 Commander Lange [commander of the death camp at Chelmno] set to work with three gas vans. In a steady stream the Jews were brought from Lodz to Kulmhof Station [Chelmno] and carted off to the mansion; there they were made to strip and climb into a closed van, supposedly to go to the showers. But their journey was to death, not to a bath hut. As soon as the doors of the van were closed behind them, the exhaust gases were diverted into the van by a concealed pipe, killing the inmates.' (Höhne 1972: 344)

the film not as a document, but as an artistic creation: she comments on its use of animal symbolism, and remarks on its overt fictionality[140]: 'You can really see the maquillage of the actor, they all is [*sic*] actors' (Tlalim 1994). By emphazising that the film is an artistic creation rather than a documentary, Zelma not only points again to the above-mentioned aesthetic status of all documentary material, but she also refers to her own character as an artistic creation. Urian has identified this as the moment when the 'spectators who have not yet discovered the actor behind the role of Zelma now become aware of her real identity' (Urian 1993: 63).

This form of overt manifestation of its own strategies of fictionalisation has been described by commentators of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* as a form of 'foregrounded theatricality' (Kaynar 1998), as 'meta-theatrical' (Rokem 2000), or as 'ostensive' (Ginsberg 1998). Kaynar argues that 'forgrounded theatricality [...] incorporates the option of *repeating the performance*, thus institutionalizing and denouncing the stock and well-rehearsed identification with the dead as it is practised by us in reality.' (Kaynar 1998: 58ff.) Rokem too interprets it as a strategy of problematizing the relationship between representation and reiteration, or, as he terms it, of an 'epistemological critique of the events and a measure for the dialectics between the real and the [fictional]' (Rokem 2000: 38). He argues that meta-theatricality creates a different form of audience involvement by placing the audience both outside of and within the frame of the performance itself (cf. Rokem 2000: 37), thus literally implicating it in the 'work'. Terri Ginsberg uses the term 'ostensive' to refer to a similar audience implication: 'the ostensivity[141] of *Arbeit Macht Frei*'s stage–audience relationship, which is effectuated not only via characterology, moreover, but formalistically, primarily by bringing the audience literally into the field

[140] This reference has not been picked up by everyone: Richard Schechner, who saw the performance in Israel, mistakes the film at first for a 'Nazi instruction film' (Schechner 1997: 78).

[141] Ginsberg here refers to Keir Elam's definition of the term: 'ostensive refers to a condition under which the field of a performance and its narrative-textual parameters appear simultaneous to one another, such that the enactment itself of that performative/structural field comes to take ontological priority over any referential and/or diegetic content which these latter aspects otherwise would signify under more traditional dramatological conditions' (Ginsberg 1998). The similarity between the semiotic notion of 'ostension' and Goffman's theory of 'framing' has already been mentioned above, see Chapter 1.

of performance – physically, via direct address, or by the device of the mobile, or, station, play – so that they are positioned as actual participants in, rather than as mere spectators of, it, compelled basically to move with the performance at the aesthetic-philosophical crux of the discursive and corporeal registers it also has been mapping, such that spatio-temporality too becomes subject to hyperrealization, and the 'ostensive enactment of the performative/structural field takes on a priority even over this primary, existential dimension' (Ginsberg 1998).

Rokem has highlighted another effect of this overt fictionalization:

> The museum section creates a strong unification between the first-person testimony of the survivor and the objective documentation in the museum which gradually develops into what I understand to be the central theme of this very complex and multifaceted performance, a theme which is both metahistorical and metatheatrical – the idea that the writing and the performing of history is a form of theatrical inscription. [...] Zelma, through different strategies of inscription, constantly places herself at the meeting point, or nexus, of testimony and documentation. This is realized by enabling the actress Smadar Yaaron-Maayan literally to transform herself into the character of Zelma, which is her own 'work'.
>
> (Rokem 1998: 49-50)

The museum section indeed creates a confrontation between testimony and documentation, or between the 'witness' and 'the archive' (Agamben 1999)[142]. Rokem here defines testimony and documentation as two forms of inscription. Following LaCapra, however, we may distinguish between them as a form of 'inscription', here objectified in the objects and documents of the museum, and a form of 'incorporation', here embodied by the recollections of the survivor guide. The entire first part of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* can be described as thus confronting an incorporated presence of memory with an inscribed representation of history.[143] And rather than merely unifying the two, as Rokem suggests, the performance suggests a reversal of the

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[142] Agamben discusses the relationship between testimony and documentation as two systems of enunciation, see 'The Archive and Testimony' (Agamben 1999: 137–171). Agamben bases his model on Foucault's definition of 'archive' as a general system of statements, rather than a storehouse of information, see Foucault 1989 (1972).

[143] The tourist video, the pattern of behaviour at the commemoration ceremony (rather than the actual physical acts of behaviour), the feature film can all be described as cultural practices of inscription. (For a distinction between inscription and incorporation as two cultural practices also see Connerton 1989: 72–3).

usual hierarchy between them: in this case, it is not the testimony that is transformed into a historical document, but the document that is transformed into testimony. This is the central metahistorical and metatheatrical theme of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*: the possibility of transforming the 'archive' into the 'witness', history into memory – and a historical 'real' into a theatrical representation. LaCapra has suggested that by interacting and counteracting the two modes of remembrance an identificatory process can be constituted, which allows for a transference of witnessing to take place. By transforming herself into the character of Zelma, a survivor witness of the Holocaust, Yaaron, as Rokem rightly points out, 'becomes a witness able to testify for the survivors, the real witnesses.' (Rokem 1998: 51). Not only is Yaaron transforming herself into a witness, by handing over the pointer to Abu Ali, the Palestinian in return is also taking on the responsibility to testify. But it is the audience, who the performance ultimately sets out to transform from mere spectators or 'naive listeners' to active witnesses. This will counteract what Young critizises as the displacement of memory-work in the 'fetishization of artifacts' in Holocaust museums: 'Memory-work becomes unnecessary as long as the material fragment of events continues to function as witness-memorial. Are we delegating to the archivist the memory-work that is ours alone?' (Young 1993: 127) The guided museum tour in *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* queries this fetishization of artefacts, and confronts the supposed 'objective' material fragments of events with the subjective and immaterial narrative of testimony. The scene thus prepares the ground for delegating the responsibility of memory-work back to the spectators.

III Memory

The second part of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* is set in a location which, though not a conventional theatre, is nonetheless clearly marked as a theatrical space, where the spectators are asked to present their tickets before entering, 'signifying in a way that now the theatre begins, and implying that what has happened so far is something different' (Rokem 1996a: 237).[144] The audience is greeted by a carrot-munching girl carrying a canister, a flashlight and a roll of toilet paper (later introduced as a young worker from a kibbutz). The girl guides the group through a darkened space, illuminated sparsely by the flash of her torch. Noises can be heard from within the space: at some performances, the company used the sounds of barking dogs, at others they played roaring Nazi songs and speeches. 'As we walk through cold, dark cellars, the visceral experience heightens. The distant sound of barking dogs and the empty blackness rouse images from our journey thus far.' (Rovit 1993) An image appears from the darkness: a wooden watchtower, in front of it a leather armchair, from which Zelma rises slowly. She unwraps a bandage which she has carried around her left arm and reveals a number tattooed on her forearm. She drops headlong on the floor, where in the light of a projection showing documentary footage of the Holocaust[145], she is trying in vain to wipe off the number. Rokem has pointed out how this scene again articulates a double 'inscription' of the past on Zelma's body: through the projected film – Zelma is literally haunted by images of the past – and the tattooed number of the death camp on her arm. In the scene which follows, the audience will be presented a video[146] which shows how in creating her character Smadar Yaaron Maayan tattooed her arm with a

[144] In Acco, the Theater Center used their own performance base in one of the old medieval Knights' Halls, 'fortresses from the Christian conquest of the Holy Land almost a millennium ago' (Rokem 1996a: 236). In Berlin, the work was shown in a disused brewery in the Eastern part of the city, which during the time of the socialist regime was allegedly used by the Staatssicherheit, the Eastern German Security Police, to torture prisoners. In Hamburg, the performance was set in a vault underneath the railway tracks near the central station; in Recklinghausen, an old laundrette on the abandoned site of the former British Army barracks, a building featuring a huge red-brick chimney, was chosen as the location.
[145] Urian has identified the footage as a 'documentary about the transportation of Jews to the concentration camps' (Urian 1993: 63). I am more inclined to agree with Rovit, who has interpreted the footage as 'documentary films of liberated concentration camps' (Rovit 1993: 163). Framed by these images of 'liberation', Zelma shows her desperate attempt to 'liberate' herself from her number.
[146] An extract from the video is included in Tlalim 1994.

number, the date of the death of her father, who was able to escape from Europe. 'The inscription expresses the paradoxical dialectics between life and death – of her life-giver and his death, of the death camp and her father's survival.' (Rokem 1998: 51). The audience, however, is not actually told about the connection between the number (19277) and the date (19.2.77). This connection is only revealed in an interview with Yaaron in Tlalim's documentary. What the video of the tattooing does reveal is another step in the actor's transformation of herself into the character of the survivor. It makes manifest how the transference of testimony in *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* appears as an embodied process which goes beyond the conventional theatrical embodiment of a character – here, it becomes literally a physical inscription. It shows 'how the Holocaust has become inscribed not only on the bodies of those who survived, but also on their children' (Rokem 1998: 51). But the literalness with which Yaaron 'borrows' the number, symbol for the identity of the survivors, also presents a huge provocation, as Yaaron herself has pointed out:

> Someone that has this number, he has a ticket to paradise. And to say – 'No, I don't care about it. I'll take your identity and I will do it on my hand' – especially for this generation it's terrible, it's a blasphem. How is it possible that such a young woman has such a number on her hand? And it's forbidden to do. It's not written anywhere but nobody dares to do such a thing. This was one of the reasons why I did it.
> (Yaaron in Veiel 1993a)

The blasphemy, in Yaaron's own words, consists in an identificatory act of mimetic embodiment which disrespects the boundaries between different identities as distinguished by the past experience of the Holocaust, and defines them both as essentially part of the same identity, defined by the mutual, trans-subjective impact of the Holocaust on their present lives. Kaynor has described the provocation involved in this act in similar terms as one of 'profanity':

> to profane a symbol by staging a theatrical – namely, public – act of estranging it, recontextualizing it, misusing and abusing it and thereby crassly demartyrologizing or undemonizing the typology of character-structures connected with it, means to regenerate the real experience for which this trite and overprotective symbol pretends to stand by renouncing, or rejuvenating, the hollow sign. It is, thereby, not only an

aesthetic, but also an ideological and political act that erases the mythical and mystical uniqueness of the Shoah in order to revive it as a recharged and meaningful paradigm which bears on our present existence.

(Kaynar 1998: 69)

From the scene by the watchtower, the audience is led into a memorial garden, a small room with wooden benches, surrounded by barbed-wired fences decorated with twigs and leaves, through which the walls and ceilings of the building can be seen, plastered all over with documents and photos from the Third Reich. Four monitors in every corner are displaying different filmic images: a video of the Theater Center, including the above-mentioned footage of the tattooing, interviews with Israelis of all ages, a BBC documentary, Claude Lanzmann's seminal *Shoah* [147]: the monitors function as a kind of archive, which documents the materials that have informed the making of the performance, but also once again confronts the archival with the testimonial.[148] In the middle of the room stands a miniature concentration camp with cardboard barracks encircled by a steaming toy train. Zelma welcomes the audience with an acknowledgement of the 'theatricality' of this scene: 'I have to be frank with you. Die truth is I was very much against diese theatralische Effekt. [...] It was very expensive. Und eh secondly, it is not an Israeli product. Ober nothing here is an Israeli product'.[149] Theatricality here becomes a synonym for cheap showmanship, which Zelma refuses.[150] She then directs the attention of the audience to one of the monitors where an interview with two children is being shown: the boys describe Hitler as a 'crazy king' and give him the physical attributes of David Ben Gurion. The excerpt is taken from interviews that the Theater Center conducted with school children about their

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147 Lanzmann, Claude (1985) *Shoah*, 566 min, colour, French.

148 LaCapra has criticized Lanzmann's insistence on the exclusion of archival footage and his restriction to survivor testimonies for presenting a form of compulsive acting-out, see LaCapra 1998: 95–138. For a discussion of the role of testimony in Lanzmann's film see also Felman and Laub 1992.

149 Recklinghausen, 22.6.95

150 Following the use of the term 'theatricality' in reference to *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* in articles by Kaynar (Kaynar 1996a; Kaynar 1996b; Kaynar 1998), Rokem (Rokem 1996a; Rokem 1998; Rokem 2000) and Urian (Urian 1993), the term will appear mainly as referring to elements of the performance that contain self-reflective and metatheatrical allusions to its making. There are, however, also distinct traces of a notion of 'theatricality' in their work that expresses its dependence on the presence of the spectators and the time and place of their experience. See Chapter 2.

knowledge of the Holocaust. David Maayan has pointed out that the imagery used by these children to describe the Holocaust is often derived directly from the world of fantastic literature[151]: 'A "Nazi-Monster" for the children is no human being, but a toad-like flying creature' (Maayan in Seifert 1992). The distorted relationship of contemporary Israeli children to the history of the Holocaust is further emphasised in the following scene, in which four adult actors, dressed as children, perform a parody of a school memorial for the annual Yom Hashoah, the Israeli Holocaust Remembrance Day[152]. Led by Zelma, who accompanies the festivities on the organ and drives the children with her mantra of 'remember, remember, and do not forget', the children sing out of tune into microphones that hang far too high over their heads. The words of nationalist poems are spoken with the wrong emphasis or lost in electronic feedback. The Arab child Haled – according to Zelma 'slow but nice' – is allowed to participate but has to hide behind the Israeli flag. A glance at the monitor in the corner of the room, which shows original footage of a children's memorial celebration on Yom Hashoah, reveals that the hilarious parody of a ritual bereft of its content for the children who perform it is not far from reality.

Compared to the earlier commemorative ceremony in the German version of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*, the Yom Hashoah scene is clearly marked as a *mise en scène*. Urian describes it as 'particularly theatrical' (Urian 1993: 63), with the audience having no doubt 'of the theatrical identity of all of the actors' (Urian 1993: 64). The scene derives its theatricality from its overt parodic nature (its 'cheap showmanship'). Lehmann defines parody as a form of intertextuality which, by calling up the memory of other texts (images, sounds), also 'theatricalizes' the audience (Lehmann 1999: 215). By accompanying the parody with a video document of its original, and thus incorporating both the citation and its intertextual reference point, this effect is achieved even in

[151] On the 'fantastic' in Holocaust-representation see below.
[152] The full title of the remembrance day is *Yom Hashoah* [or *Yom ha-Sho'ah*] *Vehagvurah* (Day of Holocaust and Heroism). It takes place on the Twenty-seventh of Nissan, five days after the end of Passover, and nine days before the national Day of Independence. Young stresses the significance of the date: '[...] this period could be seen as commencing with God's deliverance of the Jews and concluding with the Jew's deliverance of themselves in Israel. [...] the heroes and martyrs of the Shoah are remembered side by side (and implicitly equated) with the fighters who fell in Israel's modern war of liberation; and all lead inexorably to the birth of the state.' (Young 1993: 269)

Germany, where the audience is largely unfamiliar with Israeli commemorative culture. The text that is called up here, the Yom Hashoah, already possesses a strong performative character: ceremonies and speeches are only one example of the commemorative performances taking place on the day, others are moments of silence and mass-media programming. Again, the Acco Center re-enacts precisely the performative structure of a conventional commemorative ritual, thereby providing the audience with a familiar frame, but now they are allowing the audience to recognize this re-enactment as fictional. The move from the aura of a real '*lieu de memoire*' to the space of the theatre and the satirical overtones of the adult actors performing children permit a position of distance from the act that was not available before. This distance, though, is not welcomed by everyone: at several performances in Germany, audience members complained that the scene destroyed the reverent atmosphere of the first part. At the end of the ceremony, the audience is asked to rise for a minute of silence, followed by the Israel national anthem, which suddenly changes into a different tune – and the spectators find themselves standing up for the German national anthem.

Thus far, the sequence of scenes has taken the spectators through different forms of institutionalized commemoration. For the rest of the performance, these fairly orderly experiences of public memory, which delegate the commemoration of the past to museums and memorials, are confronted with the world of the often suppressed pain of individual recollection. The embodiment of memory, which up to this point has acted as a counterpoint to modes of historical inscription, is now being explored more fully in all its traumatic aspects.

A curtain rises and reveals a replica of the gate at Auschwitz with its infamous inscription, 'Arbeit macht frei'. Behind it stands a wooden labyrinthine construction, a kind of replica of a camp barrack[153], filled with a collection of objects such as shoes, suitcases and clothes, reminiscent of those exhibited in camp museums. The spectators

153 Loshitzky claims that the labyrinthine space of the theatre 'recalls the sewage system of the Warsaw ghetto' (Loshitzky, forthcoming: 12). It also recalls the wooden bridge in the Warsaw ghetto, which linked the two sides of the ghetto across a public street on which inmates were not allowed to walk.

enter the 'camp' through the gate, where Zelma is waiting to 'select'[154] them: to the right, to the left, into narrow and dark corridors, where the actors[155] are waiting to interview them about their personal pasts. I have already analysed this scene at length in the opening of this chapter. At this point I would just like to reiterate the following: the interview encourages both performers and audience to enunciate the point of identification where their personal recollections meet the traumatic narrative of their collective past. By thus transforming something that was marked as private and individual into something public and communally shared, the scene functions as a rite-of-passage between the public and the private spheres of memory – a passage into the inner world of the set and the deeper levels of individual recollection.

The scenes which follow explore the mayhem, pain and trauma of private memory. This part of the performance had undergone few (mainly linguistic) changes on its transport from Israel to Germany. The spectators are invited into a small and cramped wooden chamber under a low ceiling, furnished with a grand piano, a standard lamp and family photographs on the one hand, and old suitcases and scattered pieces of clothing on the other: at the same time a living-room in modern Israel and a room in the ghettos of Eastern Europe. After all the changes of location, it is now this tiny space which will change before the eyes of the stationary audience, alternating between 'interior' and 'exterior' settings. The changes of setting are achieved without actual set changes, merely through alternating 'private' activities (i.e. those associated with an interior setting, e.g. a piano recital, a mother-son exchange, a dinner) with 'public' activities (i.e. those associated with an exterior setting, e.g. a neighbourhood fight, a beggar in the street, a political demonstration). Chaudhuri has decribed the tension between the private and the public as a manifestation of the fantasy of 'total visibility' that connects naturalism and environmentalism in theatre: 'This problematic of a public privacy survives long after naturalism, persisting into environmental theatre, where its presence is occluded by new spatial arrangements designed to create 'shared experiences' (shared, that is, between the

[154] 'Selektion(en) "Selections(s)": Nazi term for the process by which members of a transport were chosen: some, generally a small number, for slave labour; the rest, usually the vast majority, being sent to the gas chambers.' (Edelheit and Edelheit 1994: 424–5)
[155] The interview were conducted by all the actors except Smadar Yaaron-Maayan.

audience and the actors).' (Chaudhuri 1995: 17) There is an obvious environmental aspect to *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* in general, and more specifically, to the lay-out of the playing area of the wooden chamber, which certainly reflects the Theater Center's desire to create a different, experiential mode of spectatorship. But in this case, it serves not to reiterate a fantasy of total visibility, but, on the contrary, to question this fantasy in relation to an event (the Shoah) whose experience is taken out of the realm of visibility altogether. There is another formal aspect to the space that is remarkable: its intimate nature. According to Lehmann (Lehmann 1999: 285)[156], the intimate theatrical space (like the vast theatrical space of Brith Gof's work) dismantles, or at least endangers, the structure of 'mirroring' on which theatrical identification is traditionally based.[157] The successful mirroring of the world of the spectators in the world of the stage relies for him on the mutual self-containment and identity of both worlds. It is this mutuality which helps to secure the border that separates the auditorium from the stage, and thus enables the process of identification between them. The intimate theatrical space, however, disables the usual distance between spectators and performers, and replaces it instead with what Lehmann calls, in reference to Grotowski, the 'proximity of living organisms' (cf. Lehmann 1999: 285[158]). The influence of Grotowski's scenic arrangements of the 1960s[159] on the Acco Theater Center's work here is indeed clearly manifest. Lehmann calls this type of intimate spatial

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156 'Allgemein kann man sagen, daß das dramatische Theater einen "mittleren" Raum bevorzugen muß. Was dem Drama tendenziell gefährlich wird, sind der Riesenraum und der sehr intime Raum. Hier wie dort entfällt oder gerät in Gefahr die Struktur der *Spiegelung* – fungiert doch der Bühnenrahmen wie ein Spiegel, der es erlaubt, daß eine homogene Betrachterwelt sich in der ebenso in sich schlüssigen Welt des Dramas wiedererkennt.' (Lehmann 1999: 285).

157 See Chapter 2.

158 The German original is 'die Nähe der lebendigen Organismen' (Lehmann 1999: 285) [My translation].

159 See, above all, Grotowski's, Jerzy Gurawski's and Joszef Szajna's spatial solution for *Akropolis* (1962–7),after Wyspianski, which was set in a Nazi death camp. Raymonde Temkine gives an account of the performance: 'The room is hung with ropes set in the shape of a spider web which the spectators hardly notice when they enter the room. But, at the end of the production, the pipes nailed to the ground are hung on the ropes, enclosing them in a metallic trap. Thus, the spectators, too, are caught in the concentration-camp universe.' (Temkine 1972125). See also Grotowski's and Gurawski's designs for *Kordian* (1962) after Slowacki, which was set in a mental hospital with the spectators being treated as patients; *Dr Faustus* (1963) after Marlowe, in which the spectators were seated at tables as dinner guests at Faustus's last supper; or *The Constant Prince* (1965–8) after Calderon-Slowacki, in which the spectators were looking down on the event, their positioning suggesting an operating theatre; see Grotowski 1969: 157–64.

configuration 'centripetal', and describes its effect on theatrical reception as a change from the communication of meaning to the communication of energy:

> Reduziert man die Entfernung zwischen Akteuren und Zuschauern so sehr, daß physische und physiologische Nähe (Atem, Schweiß, Keuchen, Muskelbewegung, Krampf, Blick) das mentale Bedeuten überlagert, so entsteht ein Raum von angespannter *zentripetaler* Dynamik, in der das Theater zu einem Moment der *mitgelebten Energien* statt der übermittelten Zeichen wird.[160]
>
> (Lehmann 1999: 285–6)

By moving the spectators from public and social spaces (bus, ceremony, museum) via an (inter-) personal space (interview) to an intimate space [161], *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* also changes their mode of identification with the proceedings: after re-enacting familiar and socially prescribed behaviour in the communal public rituals of the first part, and contributing personally in the interpersonal discourse of the interview scene, the audience's involvement in the intimate space of the wooden chamber changes to a more visceral, energetic and emotional level of identification.[162]

The chamber first becomes Zelma's home, where the spectators are seated on suitcases surrounding the piano, on which their hostess gives a virtuoso musical lecture about the similarities between the nationalist sentiments expressed in both Fascist and Zionist music (the so-called 'Anthology' scene): seductive marching rhythms and lyrics about homeland, young idealists who sacrifice everything for the sake of the greater national good, and the fight against people who are different. Zelma takes her audience from German and Israeli children's songs, in which the seeds of anti-Jewish or anti-Arab sentiments are sown already, via the longing expressed in Yiddish music, to the celebration of nationhood in nineteenth century musical romanticism from Smetana to Wagner. Yaaron explains the background to this scene as follows:

> We came here to Israel, we came out of the ashes of the Holocaust, with a big national insanity. We grew a monster, a national monster, that you can see through the songs,

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160 'If one reduces the distance between performers and spectators to such an extent that physical and physiological closeness eclipses mental meaning, a space of tense centripetal dynamic develops, in which the theatre becomes a moment of co-lived energies rather than transmitted signs'. (My translation)

161 See Edward T.Hall's segmentation of interpersonal proxemics, 'ranging from "intimate" distance (physical contact and near-touching positions) to "personal" distance (1 1/2 – 4 feet), "social" (4 – 1 2 feet) and, finally, "public" distance (12 – 25 feet)' (Elam 1980).

162 As in the case of Brith Gof, this 'energy' is created through spatial means.

you can learn about it through the songs, it's the same musical structure, the textual structure.

(Yaaron in Veiel 1993a)

The motif of nationalist song, first touched upon in the museum scene and then again in the video of Gaby Berlin, is here revisited and further explored, as is the question of the relationship of art and survival: 'dies music kept me alive in die schwarze Zeiten'[163] ['This music kept me alive in the black times']. The provocative peak of Zelma's lesson is her rendition of the so-called 'Horst-Wessel-Lied' – *Die Fahne hoch* [Raise high the flag], regarded as the unofficial anthem of the Nazi state, written by a member of the Berlin section of the Sturmabteilung (SA), who was killed by a Communist and turned into a national martyr[164]. Zelma plays the song with all the musical sophistication of a classically trained pianist: 'This song is really arousing ... Doctor, doctor, I fell in love with a monster'[165]. The 'apparently bizarre empathy with the German culture, including its fascist traits' that Kaynar identifies for the present 'Iconic Phase' of Israeli Theatre and which he interprets as a 'means to spite the parents' generation' (Kaynar 1996a: 214), also has a strong effect on its German audience. The German jury which awarded the Peace Film Award to Veiel's documentary about the performance, *Balagan*, refers in its laudation to its difficulties in accepting a scene in the movie in which Yaaron is humming appreciatively to a tape of the song in her home in Acco: 'beim Abspiel des – Horst Wessel Liedes – und der positiven Begleitung dieses Abspieles [ist] die Schmerzgrenze nicht nur für viele Juden, sondern auch für viele Nicht-Juden , die im Zeichen dieses Liedes in den Tod gejagt wurden, erreicht [...].'[166] (Jens 1994) Yet, it is precisely this pain threshold which the Acco Theater Center attempts to first locate and then transgress.

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[163] Recklinghausen 22.6.95

[164] 'Horst Wessel (1907-30). A young university student and early martyr of the Nazi party who is best known for his stirring lyrics that became part of the party's anthem, the 'Horst-Wessel-Lied'. Wessel was killed by Communists in a personal brawl in February 1930.' (Fischer 1995: 668) Chorus: 'Die Fahne hoch! Die Reihen dicht geschlossen! SA marschiert mit mutig festem Schritt. Kameraden, die Rotfront und Reaktion erschossen, Marschier'n im Geist in unseren Reihen mit.' (Fischer 1995: 596–7)

[165] Recklinghausen 22.6.95

[166] 'The playing of the Horst Wessel song and the positive commentary accompanying it crosses the pain threshold not only for many Jews but also non-Jews who were sent to their deaths in the name of this song.' [My translation]

The piano scene changes into a neighbourhood tumult 'as the actors enact the roles of Holocaust survivors in Israel in the 1950s, their problems of absorption and the Arab who serves them.' (Urian 1993: 64) Neighbours competing over who suffered most in the camps, priding themselves for having survived Dr Mengele's selection at Auschwitz ('Ich habe die Selektion durchgemacht' – I have gone through the selection) as if this were a new form of 'chosenness'; survivors driven by obsessive cleanliness; the white Jew's feelings of superiority over her fellow citizens from Russia ('They are very nice, but they stink a little') and Ethiopia ('They are very nice, like little monkeys that came from the trees.'); a child wanting to swap pictures of Mengele and 'the naked Eichmann'; a blind beggar in rags and tatters dancing and chanting a Yiddish song about the ghetto; a son re-enacting the traumatic experiences of his mother ('Moni – do the selection, just for Mummy'); the comparison of the Palestinian's fate with the Holocaust ('I also have gone through the selection.'): the contradictions of life in the shadow of the Holocaust are set against depictions of new discrimination in the racist humiliation of the Arab servant ('He is very, very nice. But they are slyly, it is something inside them, excuse me. I always tell Moni, he can never turn his back to them, they can with the knife... ').

The pace of the sequence grows ever faster, the mood ever more hysterical, until the scene erupts into an absurd choreography, with characters appearing heads down through trapdoors in the ceiling or fighting over scraps of food, and Zelma sliding back and forth across her piano, cabbage leaves stuffed into her clothes. Urian describes its form as '"theatrical" in character – including several episodes that are very hard to watch'. (Urian 1993: 64) Rovit gives a similar rendition of it: 'The situation is both ridiculous and disturbing.[...] Perhaps some of us laugh because we are confused by the scene's incongruity: Smadar's sudden hysteria and her physical antics appear both comic and desperate. [...]. The absurdity of our situation escalates as we are privy to additional family tensions which border on the grotesque' (Rovit 1993: 166). The theatricality of the scene is again located in its over-determined nature, in what Rovit describes as its grotesque character. Kayser argues that 'the grotesque is experienced only in the act of

reception' (Kayser 1981: 181).[167] There appears to be a line of development from the parody of the commemoration ceremony to the grotesque of the neighbourhood scene. Whereas the parody theatricalizes the audience by calling up the memory of other texts (see above), the grotesque here is supposed to call up in the spectator a memory which is located at a deeper level, in this case the memory of childhood. Yaaron has described the sequence as a homage to an Israeli upbringing in the post-Holocaust years: 'In almost every neighbourhood around this country, there were infected people, Holocaust infected. Survivors. To this day there are remnants of those little insane asylums inside which we all grew up in the 1950s.[168]' (Yaaron in Tlalim 1994) The sequence, in her opinion, appeals to a memory shared by all Israelis of her generation. Furthermore, while the parody works with exaggeration to achieve comic effect, the grotesque, defined as the combination of the incommensurable (or 'incongruous' to use Rovit's term), namely the comic and the terrible, takes one step further towards a depiction of horror and monstrosity, and is thus 'disturbing' and 'hard to watch'. Rovit has described its effect on the watcher as one of voyeurism: 'As we witness such mounting chaos within Israeli domestic life, our shifting role from cocktail-lounge guests to silent voyeurs has become more apparent.' (Rovit 1993: 166) However, the representation of something that is regarded as intensely private (e.g. an intimate interaction between mother and son, revelations of personal feelings and pains) alone would not evoke the impression of silent voyeurism on the part of audience, as the majority of modern drama revolves around portraying the chaos within domestic dramas and personal traumas. It is rather

[167] Wolfgang Kayser, in a seminal study on the subject, defines the grotesque as the 'objectivation of the "It", the ghostly "It"', which intrudes as an 'incomprehensible, inexplicable, and impersonal' force into our lives. (Kayser 1981: 185) The grotesque presents an *'estranged world'*, which is nothing but 'our world which has to be transformed' (Kayser 1981: 184) It is experienced as incomprehensible and terrifying. However, according to Kayser, '[i]n spite of all the helplessness and horror inspired by the dark forces which lurk in and behind our world and have power to estrange it, the truly artistic portrayal effects a secret liberation. The darkness has been sighted, the ominous powers discovered, the incomprehensible forces challenged.' (Kayser 1981: 188) In its consideration of the 'secret' liberation implied in the artistic representation of the incomprehensibility of horror, Kayser's notion of the grotesque seem to be more appropriate to the work of the Akko Theater Center than Bakhtin's better known, more positive concept of the carnivalesque grotesque as a liberating force of social change. For a full discussion of both theories, see: Adams and Yates 1997.

[168] Because of the marginalisation of Holocaust survivors in Israel in the 1950s, 'survivors [...] were subject to alienation, latent repression, and self-suppression. [...] [M]any old and sick Holocaust survivors still live in poverty in Israel with hardly any state support. [...] The survivors' stories could not be heard in case they turned the country into a "big insane asylum" [...]' (Loshitzky, forthcoming: 4).

the result of a combination between this portrayal and the intimacy in which it is set, which draws the attention to the act of watching itself, which thus appears 'voyeuristic'. The silence of the audience, usually regarded as one of the privileges of modern theatre, becomes difficult to bear as attitudes are being tested and interventions provoked.

> The spectators [are] virtually participating in the transformation process of the influence exerted by the Holocaust on the collective Israeli consciousness, which converted the trauma into a manipulative vehicle for vindicating perversive aspects of Israel's social and political reality, such as the inflated security complex; the deprivation and stigmatisation of ethnic minorities; the social tendency towards spiritual, physical and behavioural violence; the twisted educational images; the simplified and basically offensive evaluations and the inherent vulgarity of the popular culture and the media, etc.
>
> (Kaynar 1996a: 214)

The mayhem ends abruptly when part of the ceiling falls in and the spectators find themselves sitting at a table laid for dinner.[169] In place of a table cloth, the table is covered in photographs and documents referring to the Holocaust. The host is Menashe (Moni Yosef), the distraught son of Zelma, who was seen re-enacting the selection for his mother moments before, now grown into a reserve officer in the paratroops, who intimidates his eating guests with a torrent of racist and chauvinist jokes. (The connection between the character of the son and the dinner host is not explicitly made, but needs to be drawn by the audience.) Yosef uses the information given to him during the interview scene and addresses the spectators directly by name, inviting them to join in. 'Don't compare', he barks at his wife (Smadar Yaaron Maayan) when she contradicts his Holocaust obsession with a list of other historical and contemporary atrocities.

> [He] bellows out the brutal 'I believe' of the fanatical Israel right wing, accompanied by anti-Arab racist jokes. He challenges the liberal viewpoint of his wife and cites the long path of suffering and heroism of the Jewish people, with the Holocaust at its climax, as justification for his attitude towards the Palestinian as an enemy who must be suppressed.
>
> (Urian 1993: 65)

[169] The dinner was already 'announced' by menus that had been passed around and food that had been displayed behind windows.

In Germany, Menashe adds comparisons between the Israeli treatment of the Arabs and the German treatment of the Turks. The argument is accompanied by music, which grows louder and louder as the verbal abuse increases, until it stops abruptly at the point when the volume has become unbearable, leaving the audience to finish their meal in silence. Everything is designed to make the spectators feel uncomfortable and embarrassed, but again interventions from the audience were rare[170]. The scene not only theatricalizes the audience by drawing them into the performance as another semiotic element (here as diners – and few refuse to eat) or provoke the audience to actively intervene, it also requires an act of memory from them: the food is at once a comfort, an act of sharing, and at the same time a reference to the ongoing motif of food and hunger in the performance, to the hunger in the camps, mentioned by Zelma in the museum, and to the fight over food in the previous scene. Another act of recollection required of the spectators refers to the motif of music. While the table is being lifted and cleared, Zelma returns to her piano and invites everyone to join her in singing Hebrew and German children's songs. 'The spectators who heard Zelma's "musical lecture" now unwittingly sing nationalist Hebrew songs similar to the Nazi songs mentioned by Zelma.' (Urian 1993: 65)

As the table is being lifted, Haled appears from underneath to serve the audience coffee and baclava. 'The tray is on the floor and the spectators expect Khaled Abu Ali to serve them. He asks them: "Are you waiting for the Arab to serve you coffee?" The question is received with laughter; but is significant in the context of the Israeli economy that employs Arabs in the lowliest services'. (Urian 1993: 65). While the spectators are drinking their coffee, Haled speaks to them about his plight as an Arab in Israel: 'I am a simple Arab, the eight generation in this country, an Arab of pure race. I was born 1961

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[170] Moni Yosef describes different reactions to the meal in Israel and Germany:
'Die Zuschauer bei uns zu Hause reizen mich mehr. Es ist immer ein kleiner Kampf zwischen mir und ihnen, wer gewinnt, wer die Situation beherrschen kann, manchmal schreiben wir uns an. Gewöhnlich kann ich mich durchsetzen. Hier wollen die meisten zunächst nur essen. Nur einmal hat mich eine Frau angeschrieben, es sei jetzt genug.' (Yosef in Wille 1992: 130).
['The audience at home provokes more. There is always a little struggle between me and them about who will win, who will be able to dominate the situation, sometimes we shout at each other. But usually I win. Here [in Germany] most people just want to eat. Only once did a woman scream at me that she had enough.' My translation]

[Abu Ali's true birthday] and until today I don't know if I am dead or alive.'[171] He continues with an allegory by Rabbi Nachman[172] about a prince, who spends his life sitting under a table.[173] Haled finishes his story with a (near verbatim) quotation of Shylock's famous speech in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*: 'Don't I have a head? Don't I have eyes? Don't I have senses? Don't I have feelings? If you prick me, do I not bleed? If you tickle me, do I not laugh? If you poison me, do I not die?'[174] The monologue takes further the analogy proposed by *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* between European anti-Semitic sentiments and the anti-Arab feelings in modern Israel. Haled too, like Zelma before him, acts out an identificatory transference by associating himself in his role as a victim with Shylock and the prince under the table. Haled is interrupted by a group of demonstrators, who force their way into the room, shouting interchangeable political phrases. 'Arabs go home! With blood we liberate Palestine! Who are we? Jews! What are we? Intelligent! The world is against us. We don't care! Israeli people live! PLO-Israel no!' (Veiel 1993a).

A siren, then a sudden silence. The table rattles down once more. On it lies Zelma, now a half-naked anorexic skeleton of skin and bones.

> She lies outstretched on her back in the same position as the statue of the Muselman [in the museum] with her head turned slightly backwards. She slowly fondles her vulva and in a strange mixture of pain and ecstasy she takes out the piece of bread that has been hidden inside her body. This is the answer to the question where the Muselman hides the bread and where the scream of the *Bat-Kol* comes from, the dark hole containing the key to survival.
>
> (Rokem 1996b)

The theatrical effect of this image cites that of a *deus ex machina* [literally: god out of the machine], which refers to the technique used in ancient Greek theatre of the sudden appearance on stage (often helped by a mechanical device) of a god-character, whose rôle it was to bring resolution and comprehension to the plot in accordance with the underlying myth. Aristotle, who in his *Poetics* rejected the use of the *deus ex machina*

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171 Recklinghausen 22.6.95

172 *Sippurej Rabbi Nachman Mi-Brazlaw* [The Stories of the Rabbi Nachman from Brazlaw], a collection of moralist fairy tales by Nachman Ben Simcha, a Russian Hasidic rabbi, published in 1815.

173 At the same time Zelma is playing the song that traditionally marks the acceptance of the Sabbath.

174 Recklinghausen 22.6.95

device for the purpose of plot resolution, advised its application instead 'for events outside the play, whether earlier events of which a human cannot have knowledge, or future events which call for a prospective narrative; for we attribute to the gods a vision of all things.' (Aristotle in Halliwell 1987: 48) The scene in *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* fulfils this function: it evokes the *Muselmann*[175] as the only one who has knowledge[176] (i.e. vision or experience) of the event 'of which a human cannot have knowledge' – the event of destruction, of death. But this *deus ex machina* functions in reverse: the image remains silent and enigmatic, its (his)story unresolved. Yaaron herself has likened the Holocaust in modern Israel to Greek mythology, and the figure of the *Muselmann* to a god-like figure:

> What I received is true mythology. [...] There is Greek mythology, with the gods, and there is Holocaust mythology. Of that planet[177], of the people who lived there, who were gods, who were saints, satans, angels, sacrifice and sacrificer. They were larger than life. The immensity of their destruction, of their suffering, was not of this world.
> (Yaaron in Tlalim 1994)

Yet, Yaaron's notion of mythology seems to reverberate not only with the ancient Greek understanding of mythology as a corpus of traditional tales featuring the fate of superhuman beings, but also with our modern concept of mythology as ideology's close relative. Barthes has described mythology in the twentieth century as a way in which ideology is revealed and naturalized in the discourses and images of society (Barthes 1973). For Barthes, who gives the example of a magazine image showing a 'young Negro

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[175] *Muselmann* appears in the literature as an ungendered term, although Agamben also lists a little-known female synonym, *Muselweib* (female Muslim), which was used in some women's camps (Agamben 1999: 44).

[176] Rokem argues that 'when the theatre is performing history, and this is most obvious in theatre about the Shoah, the victimization has preceded the dramatic action. [...T]he witness is already a victim who is giving some form of testimony within the framework of the performance of what he or she has seen. Theatre about historical events generally focuses on a character with knowledge (sometimes even too much knowledge), where the victimized spectator is given the position of the witness. This witness is able to tell the spectator something about the experiences previously hidden behind the "veils" of his or her past and now, through the performance, revealed to the spectators. The cathartic processes activated by the theatre performing history are more like a "ritual" of resurrection, a revival of past suffering, where the victim is given the power to speak about the past again.' (Rokem 2000: 205) I shall look at the issue of catharsis in more detail below.

[177] The metaphor of the camp as a different planet or star was first introduced in the testimony of one of the witnesses at the Eichman trial in Jerusalem in 1961, the author K-Zetnik (a.k.a. Yehiel De-Nur). Hannah Arendt records his appearance in the witness box: 'He continued with a little excursion into astrology: the star "influencing our fate in the same way as the star of ashes at Auschwitz is there facing our planet, radiating toward our planet".' (Arendt 1994: 224)

[*sic*] in a French uniform [...] saluting' (Barthes 1973: 116) signifying French imperialism, the form of the myth (its signifier, here the image of a saluting black soldier) is not a mere (transparent) symbol of the concept (the signified, here the French Empire), but a reality in itself, which does not need to be interpreted or deciphered: for the myth reader, the Negro becomes 'the very *presence* of French imperiality' (Barthes 1973: 128). In bourgeois society, its rôle is to depoliticize: 'In the case of the soldier-Negro, for instance, what is got rid of is certainly not French imperiality (on the contrary, since what must be actualized is its presence); it is the contingent, historical, in one word: *fabricated*, quality of colonialism'. (Barthes 1973: 143). What Yaaron appears to imply in her notion of the Holocaust as 'true' mythology is that it performs a similar function for contemporary Israel society: the image of the *Muselmann* acts not as a symbol of the Holocaust, but as its ongoing presence, which in its mythical status disguises the material, social and historical conditions for its implementation and instead elevates the Holocaust to a transhistorical telos. Yaaron articulates a similar sentiment, although more provocatively phrased, in Veiel's documentary:

> The Holocaust – this is the new religion. The Holocaust is the new religion, it's the opium for the masses in Israel. For me, this work is a blasphemy, to take something that is sacred and to go against – to make a big Balagan [i.e. chaos] in this sacred thing, to do the anti.
>
> (Yaaron in Veiel 1993a)

Alluding to Marx's dictum about the role of religion as a fantastic and illusionary reflection of the reality of capitalism[178], Yaaron suggests that the Holocaust has come to play a similar ideological role in post-Holocaust Israel, where it acts as an identificatory bond for religious and non-religious Jews alike[179]: 'a function which, insofar as the state of Israel supports capitalism, servers to bolster that support in the form of an ideational fetish, with which the Israeli citizenry, the bulk of them Jews, presumably have come to identify' (Ginsberg 1998). The Acco Theater Center attempts to critique this ideology

[178] 'This state and this society produce religion, which is an *inverted consciousness of the world*, because they are an inverted world. Religion [...] is the *fantastic realization* of the human essence since the human essence has not acquired any true reality. [...] Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people.' (Marx 1975 (1844): 244)

[179] Segev has analysed the Holocaust as a new 'religion' for non-religious Jews, see Segev 1993.

by profaning its mythology: when performing the *Muselmann*, Yaaron not only evokes the continuing presence of the Holocaust, she also literally embodies and thus secularizes it (an act of 'blasphemy' in Yaaron's opinion). This process of secularization is fully enacted in the next scene, where Yaaron's *Muselmann* is seen engaged in extreme, obscene bodily acts.

But in the context of the whole performance of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*, the complex *deus ex machina* image of the *Muselmann* is not just an act of 'doing the anti'. It not merely critiques the ideological aspects of mythology, but also articulates what, following Marx (see above), we may call its 'fantastic' character, which spring from an inability to fully comprehend the events that shaped it. Yaaron herself has called the Holocaust 'fantastic. At least in the way in which it's transmitted to us and how we were fed that theme.' (Yaaron in Tlalim 1994) For Rokem, the use of the fantastic, which he defines with Tzvetan Todorov as an 'event which cannot be explained by the laws of [our] familiar world' (as quoted in Rokem 1998: 43), is an established device in recent Holocaust performances which allows theatre to deal 'with the incomprehensibility and the inherent difficulties of communicating what [...] happened "on the planet called Auschwitz"' (Rokem 1998: 40). The image of the *Muselmann* remains 'fantastic' not only in that it cannot be fully explained in reference to a distorted world, but also in reference to the work itself.[180]

Though relating back to Zelma's question in the museum: 'I would give a fortune to know where this Muselmanchick hides his bread; millions to know where the scream comes out, the *Bat-Kol*' (Rokem 1996b), the image is not a true 'answer' to this question. No scream leaves this body, the *Muselmann* remains silent. It is the secret of survival that Zelma is after, yet the *Muselmänner* were the ones who did *not* survive, the 'living dead', the ones 'who had long since lost any real will to survive' (Kogon as quoted in Agamben 1999: 45).[181] The image of the *Muselmann* in *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland*

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[180] Rokem's definition of the fantastic closely resembles Kayser's definition of the grotesque, see above.
[181] Kogon refers to the following quote by Levi: 'the Muselmänner, the drowned, form the backbone of the camp, an anonymous mass, continually renewed and always identical, of non-men who march and labour in silence, the divine spark dead in them, already too empty to really suffer. One hesitates to call them living: one hesitates to call their death, in the face of which they have no fear, as they are too tired to understand.' (Levi 1989: 44)

Europa thus remains fantastic, paradoxical, and incomprehensible. Yaaron expresses these limits of comprehension in an interview with Tlalim: 'I can't understand, what is a Muselman? I can't. How can I understand what it is. I can try to get very close to it or walk around it. But understand it?' (Yaaron in Tlalim 1994). Rather than attempting to comprehend the *Muselmann*, Yaaron tries instead to embody it in a mimetic, corporeal act of identification which for Rokem is the prerequisite for her attempted transferral of testimony: 'Selma is the Muselmanchik – she has a number on her arm. [...] By inscribing the past *on* and *in* her body Selma is as fantastic and enigmatic as survival itself. [...] She becomes a witness able to testify for the survivors, the real witnesses' (Rokem 1998).

According to Primo Levi, however, the survivors are not the 'real' witnesses of the Holocaust:

> I must repeat – we, the survivors, are not the true witnesses. [...] We survivors are not only an exiguous but also an anomalous minority: we are those who by their prevarications or abilities or good luck did not touch bottom. Those who did so, those who saw the Gorgon, have not returned to tell about it or have returned mute, but they are the 'Muslims' [i.e. *Muselmänner*], the submerged, the complete witnesses, the ones whose deposition would have a general significance. They are the rule, we are the exception. [...] We who were favoured by fate tried, with more or less wisdom, to recount not only our fate, but also that of the others, the submerged; but this was a discourse 'on behalf of third parties', the story of things seen from close by, not experienced personally. When the destruction was terminated, the work accomplished was not told by anyone, just as no one ever returned to recount his own death. Even if they had paper and pen, the submerged would not have testified because their death had begun before that of their body. Weeks and months before being snuffed out, they had already lost the ability to observe, to remember, compare and express themselves. We speak in their stead, by proxy.
>
> (Levi 1989: 63–4)

For Levi, even the survivor's testimony is thus already an act of transferral. He bears witness not for himself, but in the name of the *Muselmann*, 'who did not bear witness and could not bear witness' (Agamben 1999: 34), yet is the 'true' witness, the 'complete witness'.[182] It is this witness into which Zelma transforms herself in order to bear

182 Giorgio Agamben has dedicated his recent study on post-Auschwitz ethics to a discussion of this paragraph and what he terms 'Levi's paradox': 'The sense and nonsense of this paradox become clear at this point. What is expressed in them is nothing other than the intimate dual structure of testimony as an act of an *auctor*, as the difference and completion of an impossibility and possibility of speaking, of the inhuman and the human, a living being and a speaking being. The subject of testimony is constitutively

witness in his name. *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* presents two distinct stages in this process: The first step articulates an inscription of the Holocaust on the body, in the form of the tattooing of the number on the arm, which marks Zelma as a survivor-witness; the second step, which transforms her into a *Muselmann*, a 'true and complete witness' of the Holocaust, articulates the incorporation of the Holocaust in the body. This corresponds with Yaaron's statements about the Holocaust as a 'viscerally manifest experience of living in a 'well', a 'big hole' or 'wound', a 'Schwarze Loch' [black hole][183] that is internalized [...]' (Ginsberg 1998). Again, this process of incorporation is not merely a theatrical device: Tlalim's documentary includes a (shocking) piece of film which shows how the actor became so dangerously anorexic during the period of rehearsals that she had to be hospitalized. 'I stopped eating and ended up weighing only 39 kilos. It started to get dangerous. My family intervened and there was a lot of turmoil. I was at death's door. I was close to crossing a boundary. I know what the reason was. I had seen all those films, all those skeletons in the concentration camps, ... and they stimulated me.' (Yaaron in Hurtzig 1994: 252) Watching stimulates identification which takes a direct physical effect[184] – resulting in a boundary-crossing act of incorporation. To bear witness in the name of the *Muselmänner* is here not just to speak in their proxy (essentially a theatrical act of mimesis), but to literally transform oneself into one of them (an act of total mimicry). Herein lies the answer which *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* proposes for Zelma's question: the true 'key to the

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fractured; it has no other consistency than disjunction and dislocation – and yet it is nevertheless irreducible to them. This is what it means 'to be subject to desubjectification', and this is why the witness, the ethical subject, is the subject who bears witness to desubjectification. And the unassignability of testimony is nothing other than the price of this fracture, of the inseparable intimacy of the *Muselmann* and the witness, of an impotentiality and potentiality of speaking.' (Agamben 1999: 151)

[183] See Yaaron's description of being brought up in post-Holocaust Israel quoted above: 'my father was living with a big hole with a big wound, with something that is like a well, like a 'Schwarze Loch' (Yaaron in Veiel 1993a).

[184] Yaaron has articulated the relationship between watching and experiencing in more general terms: 'When we were collecting the material and we saw lots of films, I, all of us, whoever worked on "Arbeit", the symptom of this work – in the beginning we had dreams at night, all kinds of very difficult dreams. And another symptom is that we would really see, live, we would attach what we saw in movies, to all sort of things we saw in reality. I mean, it was a time when I saw reality, through the filters of the visual material that I saw. I mean, everything, many things I encountered in reality reminded me of the material I had seen that day or the day before. And we saw lots of stuff about the ghetto. And in the old city in Acco, there are places ... So I'd be walking in Old Acco and suddenly there was the ghetto, there was a resemblance in the visual aspect, feeling, essence, there was a connection. There was a link to the movies, especially the Warsaw Ghetto ones.' (Yaaron in Tlalim 1994)

survival' of the *Muselmann*, the one who has already died, is Yaaron's act of transformation in order to bear witness in his name.

In another interview, Yaaron has described this act as one of love and desire: 'I wanted to be a Muselman, apparently, I just wanted to be one, and I lost weight, A lot of weight, I didn't eat, I just didn't eat, I just fell in love with, a little more and more and more until it really became I was anorectic! It had to be stopped, for it really could, it could hurt the tissues, the proteins and the organs, the inner part.' (Yaaron in Tlalim 1994) The words strongly evoke Freud's description of the psychic process of mourning, which can provoke a form of 'hysterical identification' between the one who grieves and the lost object of love: 'in the transference neuroses, too, identification is the expression of there being something in common, which may signify love' (Freud 1957 (1917): 250) Phelan has used Freud's analysis of hysterical identification to explore the relationship between private and public grief, the possible conversion of mourning into political action, and the role of performative repetition in 'curing' hysterical identification in the case of white women's acts of mimicry (Phelan 1997: 129–152). Phelan is interested primarily in the gender and racial aspects of the 'visible body' as the 'stage' on which these identifications are usually made. The connection she thereby establishes between feminine mimicry and the imperative of reproduction as the basis for the 'repetition-compulsion' that underlies hysterial identification seems to be also of relevance to Yaaron's performance. Rokem has described her act of mimicking the *Muselmann* in terms of an act of reproduction: 'At this point Selma / Semadar Yaron-Ma'ayan is also showing us where the energies and the nutrition for her survival have been hidden, the source of her own life, as opposed to the inscription on her arm which she has "inherited" from her father as well as her own "labor", the *work* and the *birth* (which is also a form of labor)' (Rokem 2000: 72).

At the same time, however, the 'visible body' of the actor as the stage on which the identification with the *Muselmann* is enacted is made invisible. It is striking that only one commentator (Rokem, in Rokem 1996a; Rokem 1996b; Rokem 1998; Rokem 2000) has acknowledged the importance of the image of the *Muselmann* for an understanding of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*. Although most scholarly articles describe

every scene of the performance in detail, the *Muselmann* image is either only mentioned in passing (Rovit 1993 [185], Roms 1996[186]), or missing altogether from the analysis (Deutschkron 1992; Herzberg 1992; Schechner 1997; Urian 1993). The same is true for newspaper reviews of the performance in Germany.[187] This may be the result of the dramaturgy of the piece, which relies on the audience to make connections (here between the *Muselmann* image and its mention in the museum scene) across a considerable length of performance time and across different performance spaces[188]. But it may also be evidence for the audience's difficulty in actually 'seeing' the image. Agamben speaks of the impossibility of gazing upon the *Muselmann,* the threshold between the living and the dead, to which many survivors testified: 'As Elias Canetti has noted, the heap of dead bodies is an ancient spectacle, one which has often satisfied the powerful. But the sight of *Muselmänner* is an absolutely new phenomenon, unbearable to human eyes.' (Agamben 1999: 51) What makes the sight of the *Muselmann* unbearable is that 'everyone in the camp recognizes himself in his disfigured face' (Agamben 1999: 52). Looking at the *Muselmann* in the case of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* also functions as a moment of recognition, of identification with something that is at once one's future and one's history. In reference to Levi's description of the *Muselmänner* as

185 Rovit makes the link between the image and museum scene: 'Smadar has disappeared. Suddenly a piece of the ceiling drops revealing her naked body. She appears to be alive, yet somehow dead, like the museum photos we saw of survivors, of whom she had said: "They passed from one hell into a new hell–Israel".'(Rovit 1993: 168)

186 In my first article on the work, I failed to make the connection between the *Muselmann* of the museum and Zelma's appearance: 'Then, a sudden silence. The table rattles down once more. Zelma, a naked skeleton of skin and bones, brings out a piece of bread she has hidden in her vagina. An image as unexpected and disturbing as a long forgotten memory which suddenly appears in one's conscience.' (Roms 1996: 61). This failure becomes the central target of Rokem's criticism: 'I think however that Roms' failure to contextualise the performance becomes most evident when she describes the scene where the figure of Zelma descends on the board which has previously served as a dinner-table [...] [O]n the same page there is also a photograph entitled *The Naked Skeleton* where the half-naked actress is lying on her back with her head titled backwards holding a piece of bread in her left uplifted arm while the faces of some spectators can be seen in the background. What is a reader to make of this "description" and of the photo ? [...] Failing to understand this image it merely becomes a disturbing memory. (Of what?) Looking at it more closely and contextualising it, which is necessary if we want to write about performance, it becomes one of the central meta-theatrical keys to this complex "work".' (Rokem 1996b)

187 I have analysed around one hundred reviews of the performances of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* in Berlin, Hamburg, Vienna and Recklinghausen, but have had access only to a handful of reviews of the Israeli performances, all of them in translation, so that a truly comparative analysis of this point has been impossible.

188 In most German venues, the reference to the *Muselmann* in the museum scene often happened only in passing, and in Recklinghausen, where the first part took place on a Jewish cemetery, the reference was missing altogether.

'those who saw the Gorgon' (Levi 1989: 64; see above) and to the Greek understanding of the Gorgon as the representation of the impossibility of vision, Agamben develops a complex reading of this point: 'The Gorgon and he who has seen her and the *Muselmann* and he who bears witness to him are one gaze; they are a single impossibility of seeing' (Agamben 1999: 54). The *Muselmann* appears in the midst of the audience, exposed to their gazes, and at the same time exposing the audience's act of seeing by placing the spectators within the field of each other's vision. By exposing herself to the audience as the embodiment of the *Muselmann* in a manner that cannot *not* be seen and yet is always overlooked, we may say that Zelma proposes a union of actor and audience in their joint identification with the impossibility of seeing that belonged to the camp inhabitant – and thus attempts to enable both performer and spectator to testify in his name.

The table is pulled up again, and Haled appears from underneath, singing a song of mourning. 'It is significant that Haled has been hiding under the table with Selma's artistic representation of the Muselman on it. This is literally an image of the repression he suffers in today's Israeli society, which is represented by the self-absorbed figure of the Shoah survivor involved in telling her painful story of the magic survival while the Palestinian literally has to carry this heavy burden on his back.' (Rokem 2000: 74) A voice orders the audience to climb through the trapdoors in the ceiling into a room above the chamber[189], from where the image of the *Muselmann* had descended – and enter the 'hell' of the Israeli subconscious[190], which is presented as part discotheque, part death camp. A deafening cacophony of national songs ('Here I was born, here were my children born', 'No miracle happened to us', 'Together, forward together', see Urian 1993: 60) and watch-towers emitting spinning lights surround performers literally stripped naked and engaged in painful forms of self-flagellation: Miri Zemach, the actor playing the neighbour, is lying in a revolving bathtub devouring food and spitting it out again; Naama Manber, the kibbutz worker, is trapped inside a glass container surrounded by

[189] For Urian, '[t]he movement reflects the movement and effort required of the Jews who were packed into the railway wagons that carried them to the death camps' (Urian 1993: 60).
[190] The Theater Center here plays with the conflicting sensation of physically ascending and emotionally descending.

scraps of paper[191] that blow around her, reading a book by Zionist Theodor Herzl; Moni Yosef is sitting on a chair suspended in mid-air, wearing short trousers and a uniform, shouting reactionary slogans through a megaphone and raising his arm in a Hitler salute; and Smadar Yaaron Maayan, the *Muselmann*, is hanging naked upside down by one leg over the remains of a broken piano, whacking herself with a whip. Bulimia as the perverse reaction to the hunger of enforced starvation, youth trapped in the glass-cage of Zionist ideas, aggressive and reactionary militarism, and self-punishment over the ruins of middle-European bourgeois culture: the scene is a forceful metaphor for a culture that 'lives, in spite of the Holocaust horrors, yet also lives off them' (Rovit 1993: 170) in a sadomasochistic mixture of pain and pleasure. Rovit quotes Maayan's own definition of Israeli's society: 'We don't literally hang naked in the streets, but somehow, we hang naked – and we enjoy it.' (Maayan in Rovit 1993: 170) TV monitors show extracts from World War II documentaries mixed with footage of popular Israeli music shows. The cacophony slowly merges into one recognisable melody, sung by Israeli singer Shoshana Damari, 'who in Israeli public consciousness is known as "the singer of the wars"' (Loshitzky, forthcoming). Yaaron describes this song as one that is instantaneously recognisable to the Israeli audience:

> Für einen Israeli ist es allerdings ein besonderer Lärm, weil das eine sehr spezielle Musik ist, mit der wir aufgewachsen sind und die sofort die Situation klärt. Für ein israelisches Publikum wirkt das wie ein Fluch aus frühen Tagen, denn der Text – ein sehr nationalistisches israelisches Lied – handelt von Licht, Zukunft, aber die Bedeutung wird in der Aufführung sehr schmerzhaft gewendet.
>
> (Yaaron Maayan in Wille 1992: 129)[192]

During the song Zelma/the *Muselmann* descends from her suspension, climbs over the gate, walks to a microphone, and joins in the singing, accompanied by David Maayan on drums. Over her shines the Auschwitz gate illuminated with small blinking lights. 'This is not a singing. This is a screaming. And it comes out of enormous fear and aggression.

[191] Urian has identified these as written evidence of Holocaust survivors (Urian 1993: 61).
[192] 'For an Israeli this is a very special noise, because this is a very special music, with which we were all brought up and which instantly explains the situation. For an Israeli audience this is like a curse from the past, because the lyrics – a very nationalist Israeli song – speak about light, future, but its meaning is turned around in the performance in a very painful manner.' [My translation]

Something is very wrong but we are trying to hold on to our songs, to our culture, our new culture that was created over the last forty years. To hold on to something that is collapsing. It is not working.' (Yaaron in Veiel 1993a) It is important to note that this desperate scream of survival here originates in the *Muselmann* – which links this scene again to Zelma's question, 'I would give a fortune to know where this Muselmanchick hides his bread; millions to know where the scream comes out, the *Bat-Kol*' (Rokem 1996b). This is the most painful lesson that *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* proposes: that the scream of survival has turned into a nationalist roar. 'We came here to Israel, we came out of the ashes of the Holocaust, with a big national insanity. We grew a monster, a national monster, that you can see through the songs, you can learn about it through the songs, it's the same musical structure, the textual structure. We have to be strong, and we have to be blond, blauäugig also.' (Yaaron in Veiel 1993a) At the far end of the room, Haled Abu Ali is dancing naked on a table, hitting himself repeatedly with a truncheon to the rhythm of the music.

It is in the chaos of this final tableau that one becomes aware of the precision with which the dramaturgy of the piece is constructed. Only now is the theme of the performance, the contemporary Israeli dialectic of Jewish victimhood and the victimhood of the Palestinians, fully disclosed. The impression of disclosure is underlined by the fact that only at this point do the spectators have a full view of the theatre space that has hosted them for the past four hours. Everything is here again (appealing to the memory of the audience): the motifs of nationalist song, of food and hunger; etc. Here is the counter-image of the museum at the beginning. Again the scene is surrounded by an exhibition of objects, photos and documents. But now the collection is a disordered and traumatised personal inversion of the museum. The rituals of public commemoration reveal their degradation into a form of 'Shoah-business'[193]. Feelings of guilt and shame[194] which have no place in the collective image of the past are breaking

[193] See Segev 1993. Maayan has provocatively called this scene an 'homage to the Holocaust industry' (in Seifert 1992).

[194] The issue of shame and guilt, which was felt by many concentration camp survivors for having been 'spared' at the expense of others, has been discussed widely. See, for example, Bettelheim 1986 and Levi 1989, and their analysis in Agamben 1999. The children of Holocaust survivors often profess to the same feelings.'Many children of Holocaust survivors in Israel felt this loss and grief. Like their parents, they

free, becoming painfully apparent on a personal level. At the same time the scene portrays a desperate act of attempted liberation from this enforced sense of suffering by the children who were brought up in the shadow of this guilt. The 'hysterical identification' with a total bodily incorporation of the trauma of the Holocaust within the bodies of second-generation Israelis is now made visible by all performers. As Ginsberg has observed, the experience of the Holocaust is portrayed as being internalized to the point of 'one's coming simultaneously to desire its evacuation (literally, by starving or purging the body in which it presumably is manifest) and the exposure (also literally, through corporeal and other sensorial exhibition) of the perceived necessity for such' (Ginsberg 1998).

These extreme acts of bodily evacuation and exposure appear deliberately obscene: nudity and sado-masochist flagellation evoke strong associations of pornographic iconography.[195] Cultural theorist Peter Michelson defines the obscene as 'bringing onstage what is customarily kept offstage in western culture, a condition which presumably necessarily entails an aestheticization of the so-called un(re)presentable [...] a perceptual alteration whereby the obscene, a species of the ugly, is reconstituted to a function akin to that of the beautiful and henceforth takes on the simultaneous quality of the culturally offensive, perversely pleasurable, and socially threatening' (Peter Michelson, as quoted in Ginsberg 1998). Ginsberg applies this to the scene in question: 'On this definition, the ostensibly most "obscene" aspect [...] is its depiction of male (not least Palestinian) frontal nudity, which until now has generally been confined to Holocaust documentaries, where representation of the penis usually occurs *vis-à-vis* the male corpse' (Ginsberg 1998).[196] But the function of the obscene in the final scene of

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also suffered from shame, guilt, and sometimes even nightmares about the camps they had never known.' (Segev 1993: 452). (For a moving account of inherited guilt and resentment see Spiegelman 1986, above all 'Prisoner on the Hell Planet' (pp. 100–103), in which Spiegelman illustrates his feelings of responsibility for the suicide of his mother, a survivor of Auschwitz.)

195 Yaaron talks about the 'arousing' effects of Holocaust pornography in Tlalim 1994. Petraka interprets the use of Holocaust material in pornography and horror as the result of a 'parcelling out' of the representation of pain and atrocity into mass culture: 'Both horror and forms of violent pornography are modes for representing the "excesses" of atrocity that, for example, conventional realism excises and conceals' (Patraka 1996; 87–8).

196 Petraka argues that '[...] after the war, Holocaust film footage and the like became the yardstick against which commodified representations of atrocity could be measured' (Patraka 1999: 90).

Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa does not merely lie in the breaking of moral taboos. As Ginsberg remarks in reference to the depiction of the scene in Veiel's film, *Balagan*:

> Yet this carnivalesque depiction – this veritable *épater le bourgeois* - is but part of an overall discursive and narrative-compositional structure across which several other, likewise 'shocking', but, for that, more properly conceptual aspects are inscribed that must be considered critically in order that the relationship we are partially conceding between *Balagan's* obscenity and its suppression must fully be comprehended. These are: 1. The intereffectuation of bodily [...] and national-political obscenity; 2. the congealment of these interffectual [*sic*] discursive registers into what we will define is an ostensive, hyperreal locus of personal-identificatory sacrifice [...]; and, in relation, 3. the typological composition of the play's three central characters [...]'.
> (Ginsberg 1998).

The obscene in *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* appears to be the culmination of a formal development in the performance that has led from a re-enactment via parody and the grotesque to an ever more exaggerated theatricality. Urian describes the final scene as making use 'of all the elements at the theatre's disposal to affect the senses and conscious awareness [...] Confused, exhausted and despairing of 'theatre', the spectators face the ultimate in theatrical expression, at least in its Israeli context' (Urian 1993: 65). The effect of this 'growing' theatricality has led from the reverence of re-enactment, via the humour and mild irritation of parody and the disturbing effect of the grotesque, to a form of final despair in the face of monstrosity and horror – but not, as Urian notes, a despair of history, but of theatre's ability to represent it. The ultimate theatricality is here at the same time its own negation, a simultaneous celebration and despair of theatre's ability to (re)present the unrepresentable, to bring the obscene on scene.

This simultaneous affirmation and negation of theatricality also extends to the role of the audience within it: what Ginsberg describes as 'an ostensive[197], hyperreal locus of personal-identificatory sacrifice' seems to be another definition for what I identified above as a form of 'theatricalizing the audience' – a direct and physical implication of the audience in the field of performance, which in the final scene of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* reaches its culmination. At the far end of the room, Haled Abu Ali is dancing naked on a table which is an exact replica of the torture device explained in the museum scene.[198] The area is marked as 'smokers' corner', and beer bottles surround him. The audience is invited to smoke and drink – to open the bottles, they have to use a bottle opener which hangs around Abu Ali's neck. Meanwhile Abu Ali is hitting himself with a truncheon, offering the audience to do the same – and indeed, some people accept the invitation, climb onto the table, take over the truncheon and beat him with it. They thus transform themselves into the beer-drinking, smoking, torturing camp guards about whom Abu Ali had earlier told them. This act breaks down the last barrier that seemingly protected the 'innocence' of watching, and instead articulates the audience's implicit complicity. I want to argue that this effect is achieved even if the audience does not take up Abu Ali's invitation and their guilty act remains a mere potentiality, or, indeed, even if they intervene in the scene and take the truncheon away. Schechner describes such an intervention: 'On the night I attended, Khaled whipped himself until there were welts on his back and buttocks. Finally, a spectator took the whip away. But this intervention did not end the violence. Khaled subverted the attempt to save him by reaching into his store of whips: as soon as one was taken away he grabbed another.'

Philip Gourevitch, a journalist and first-generation American of Eastern European Jewish descent, describes his impression on watching footage of the Mobile Einsatztruppen killing squads in a diary entry on occasion of his visit to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington: 'Peep show format. Snuff films. Naked women led to execution. People are being shot. Into the ditch, shot, spasms, collapse, dirt thrown in over. Crowds of naked people. Naked people standing about to be killed, naked people lying down dead. Close-up of a woman's face and throat as a knife is plunged into her breast – blood all over. Someone holds a severed head in his hand. Mass graves of thousands. Naked. Naked corpses. Street beatings. The gun, the smoke, a figure crumbles. Naked women dragged to death. Shooting. Screaming. Blackout. The film begins again.' (Gourevitch 1999)

[197] Ginsberg bases her understanding of the ostensive on Keir Elam's semiotic model of 'ostention' as 'the most "primitive" form of signification. [...] In order to refer to, indicate or define a given object, one simply picks it up and shows it to the receiver of the message in question. [...] Eco has argued that this elementary form of signifying is "the most basic instance of performance" [...].' (Elam 1980: 29–30)

[198] Schechner has identified Abu Ali's dancing as acting the part of a *Shi'a* Muslim during *t'aziyeh*, a cycle play depicting the martyrdom of Mohammed's nephew, Hussein. (Schechner 1997: 80)

(Schechner 1997: 80). For Schechner, the scene reminded him of the Living Theatre's 'exemplary actions', about whose effectiveness as a means of practicing intervention in real life he expresses doubts (Schechner 1997: 80). But the Acco Theater Centre does not aim at such a transposition of action. It is not the action, but its contemplation, not the act itself, but the fact that the audience is forced to consider how to act, which in *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* already transgresses the traditional passivity of the spectator's role in theatrical performance.[199] Whether or not the spectator decides to intervene and either beat Abu Ali or stop the beating is here of lesser relevance. All three possible types of behaviour – beating, stopping or 'mere' watching – are equally problematized. 'The spectator who does not interfere to stop the suffering is as indifferent as were the bystanders in the Holocaust. But had the spectator interfered, he would have collaborated in the activity of the theatre. The spectator, thus, is both an innocent and a complicit observer.' (Loshitzky, forthcoming: 18)[200]

Finally, Zelma opens the gate for the audience to leave. The last image is that of the *Muselmann* rocking the Palestinian in her arms in a kind of *pietà*, the Christian symbol of deliverance.[201] '[...] [T]heir union suggests many couplings besides that of the sexes:

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[199] Lehmann describes this effect: 'Wenn auf der Bühne das Reale sich gegenüber dem Inszenierten durchsetzt, so wie in einem Spiegel auch im Parkett. Fragt der Zuschauer sich notgedrungen (durch die inszenatorische Praxis veranlaßt), ob er auf den Bühnenvorgang als Fiktion (ästhetisch) oder als Realität (also z.B. moralisch) reagieren soll, so verunsichert ein solcher Grenzgang des Theaters zum Realen gerade diese entscheidende Disposition des Zuschauers: die unreflektierte Sicherheit und Gewißheit, mit der er sein Zuschauersein als unproblematische soziale Verhaltensweise erlebt.' (Lehmann 1999: 177) 'When on the stage the real asserts itself against the *mise en scène*, so it does, mirror-like, in the auditorium. If the spectator is forced (motivated by the theatrical practice) to ask himself whether he should react to the events on stage as fiction (aesthetically) or as reality (e.g.. morally), so this act of border crossing between the theatre and reality renders uncertain this essential disposition of the spectator: the unreflected security and certainty, with which he experiences his spectatorship as an unproblematized social activity.' [My translation]

[200] 'Haled tells how, from time to time, people who have beaten him on the wooden table call and ask him for forgiveness. Only now, they explain, have they realized what they have done. "What kind of forgiveness are you asking for" Haled asks them; "You have become Nazis yourselves". "But you gave us a club and asked to be beaten", they respond. "And if I had given you a knife?" he replies.' (Loshitzky, forthcoming: 18)

[201] *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europea* makes extensive use of Christian iconography, though it reverses many symbols ironically. Rokem has analysed this: 'What Selma shows us as she takes the bread from her vulva is not the bread which is a substantiation of the flesh for the disciples to witness, as Jesus did before his death, but rather the bread of survival [...] The bread is no miracle in the Chrisian sense – it is the scream, the Bat-Kol, the mystical female voice which comes out of her secret black hole. Instead of turning to the suffering of the male figure, which Christianity has done, even if Christ is frequently depicted with very strongly emphasized female characteristics, the Akko performance has placed the suffering female body in the center. Selma is the witness-actress who at this point also transforms the spectators of the performance itself into the witnesses of human suffering.' (Rokem 2000: 74).

past and present, victim and oppressor, Arab and Jew, or perhaps, two victims, equal in their victimization?' (Rovit 1993: 168). As the audience is leaving the space, the deafening noise comes to an end, and all that remains is the sound of Abu Ali's weeping.

> This *Pieta* image invites the spectators to acknowledge the victimhood of the Palestinians as well as that of the survivor, whose repression in Israeli culture derives from his or her epitomizing the ultimate icon of the diasporic Jew, rejected by the Zionist ideology of the negation of exile. Thus, as Raz-Krakowtzkin observes, the memory of the victim becomes a focus for Jewish identity, which paradoxically enables the opening up of the memory of the Palestinian past. Yet no memory, neither Jewish nor Palestinian, can fully retrieve the past. The common memory of victimhood, which this last scene so powerfully establishes, can only create the conditions for a change of the consciousness about the boundaries of dicourse on, and of, memory. This opens the possibility of acknowledgement and discussion of previously-taboo issues: for example, that not only Jews were victims of the Nazis, that the Jews victimize the Palestinians, and that being a victim does not entitle the Jewish collective to victimize others.
>
> (Loshitzky, forthcoming: 16)[202]

The last scene of *Arbeit macht Frei vom Toitland Europa* depicts a violent moment of compulsive 'acting-out' of trauma. It is portrayed as an obviously cathartic act of purgation. In her discussion of catharsis in twentieth-century theatre, Elin Diamond has pointed out that for Aristotle, 'catharsis involves a disturbing oscillation between seeing and feeling. [...L]et me offer a conventional reading of the catharsis clause in Section 6 of the *Poetics*: my perception of the objects in tragedy causes me to experience the unpleasant emotions of pity and terror, which are somehow expelled or quelled, purged or purified, in my recognition of the object's meaning and truth.' [...] Catharsis described [...] the "clearing up of the vision of the soul by the removal of [bodily] obstacles.' (Diamond 1993: 153–4) According to Diamond, catharsis 'situates the subject at a dangerous border' (Diamond 1993: 154) of rational vision and the shuddering body,

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202 Loshitzky herself has also questioned the association of mutual victimhood in the performance: 'Haled's role constituted part of a play that was written by Jews, mostly for Jews, and that deals with Jewish consciousness. The actor may present "his" (Palestinian) perspective, but what is actually being represented by this is the consciousness of the Jew from the point of the Other. The distinction here is not between a "particularistic" versus "universal" memory, but between two patterns of memory which the language of Israeli culture creates. The Palestinian actor makes two essential points: that it is the fate of the Palestinian that the Holocaust occupies a more significant role in their collective consciousness than is the case for any other nation bar only the Jew, the Germans, and the Poles; and that this is so because the memory of the Holocaust is "forced" upon them in order to justify not only Jewish settlement in Palestine, but also the Palestinians' expulsion and the negation of their right to freedom and self-determination.' (Loshitzky forthcoming: 17).

marking 'a sentient convergence of body and meaning, when the material body, in all its otherness, makes itself felt to consciousness even as it enters discursive categories that make it mean; when it becomes not the body but the visible form and social incarnation of body: that is, an embodiment.' (Diamond 1993: 154). *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* revolves around these two aspects of the audience's perception in theatre: seeing and feeling are both tested in their ability to constitute identification at the point of convergence between the individual's body and its social inscription in the embodiment of trauma. Yaaron invites the audience to see the impossibility of seeing, the *Muselmann*, invisible absence of the victim, the Holocaust in its goneness. At the same time she encourages them to share its pain, that, as Elaine Scarry asserts (Scarry 1985; see above), which is the unsharable. Patraka has discussed the implications of staging a body in pain for a representation of the historical pain of the Holocaust[203], claiming 'the resistance to representation of this imposition of pain and terror on bodies', and outlining 'a complex intersection in genocide between a collective experience and a highly private, subjective one. This raises the question: how can we portray genocide, the mass noun, and signify the individual if fragmented subjectivities subjected to these terrible events?' (Patraka 1999: 97) Patraka herself gives an answer in her analysis of a performance by Deb Margolin: 'What has been enacted on her body and psyche – the unmaking, in pain, of Jews – is located and refracted through a performance of making, of creating her body and its relation to the world in the present.' (Patraka 1999: 103) The enactment of the unmaking of the real witnesses of the Holocaust by making manifest the creation of her body as a witnessing body is also at the heart of Yaaron's performance. Her depiction comes close to what Patraka has termed the Holocaust 'performative' – a struggle between the compulsion to reiterate the loss and its impossibility. Yet, *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* not only reiterates the loss by 'announcing itself as performative' (Patraka 1999: 6) and foregrounding its own construction; it also theatricalizes the performativity of Holocaust commemoration and foregrounds their constructedness.

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[203] Patraka refers to Scarry and Lyotard's insistence on the historical erasure of pain (Lyotard 1988).

There is a second element to catharsis, apart from its activation of seeing and feeling, or of the gaze and energy as theatre's two main communicative forces. Lehmann (Lehmann 1999: 355-356)[204] has argued that Aristotle's model of catharsis relies on the creation of a temporal unity. Only when the action and time depicted in performance possess inner coherence and continuity, and when the time performed is sufficiently distinct from the time of its performance can a secure separation between theatrical performance and reality be established. Such a separation is for Aristotle the condition of successful representation. It is also the basis for a successful catharsis, as it relies on an identification with the other whilst maintaining its distance from it, so that feelings of fear and pity can be released – a total mimetic transformation of the self into the other must be avoided for this release to be successful. *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* produces a multi-leveled and polyvalent play with the temporal conditions of seeing, feeling and catharsis. While the first part of the work takes place in 'real' time, the second part presents a multitude of fictional time frames, jumping back and forth between present and past, 'real' time actions and symbolic time. The performance does not uphold a coherent fictional time frame, but neither does it fully separate the time performed from that of its performance in a Brechtian attempt to break with the cathartic mode and make the spectators aware of their own time of perception. It rather creates a complex overlay of different 'times' to unsettle the audience's identification with the proceedings, whilst at the same time re-establishing it in order for a transference to take plays. *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* tests the limits of identification, the problematic implication of the individual in the collective history of trauma, and at the same time reasserts the necessity of identification to ensure the continuation of its memory.

In its articulation of both the necessity and the limitations of identification the performance also offered a different perspective on the afore-mentioned dilemma of the

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204 The German original says: 'Ein Aspekt des Konzepts der Zeit-Einheit, die bei Aristoteles nur implizit bleibt, ist diese: In dem Maß, in dem Zeit und Handlung interne Kohärenz, fugenlose Kontinuität und ein Ganzes der Überschaubarkeit erreichen, zieht solche Einheit zugleich eine scharfeGrenze zwischen Drama und Außenwelt. Sie sichert die Abgeschlossenheit der Tragödie.' (Lehmann 1999: 355)

memory culture in Germany, which raises the ethical question of whether an identification with the victims may actually divert from identifying with the guilt of the perpetrators. Huyssen has given an account of the consequences this dilemma has presented to German attempts at representing the Holocaust in theatre. Responding to the powerful impact that the American TV series 'Holocaust'[205] achieved when broadcast in 1978 in West Germany, Huyssen states: 'In post-war German drama, the socio-psychological need for identification with the Jews as victims[206] clashed to varying degrees with the dramaturgic and narrative strategies of avant-garde and/or documentary theater.[207] The historic evolution of dramatic form and the canon of political educators emphasizing document, rational explanation, and social theory had bypassed the specific needs of spectators'. (Huyssen 1980: 135). He follows his point with the conclusion that 'avant-garde aesthetics and politics' reflect the spirit of an earlier period which 'has become historical, if not obsolete, in its claim to universality and rationality.' (Huyssen 1980" 136) *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* made evident that 'avant-garde aesthetics' do not exclude the possibility of identification and collective catharsis, whilst still articulating its limitations.[208]

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[205] *Holocaust* (1978), TV-Mini-Series, directed by Marvin J. Chomsky, 475 min, colour, English, USA: NBC.

[206] *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* present a complex treatment of the question of victimization and guilt by showing the guilt of the victims.

[207] Huyssen refers in particular to post-Brecht attempts at epic documentary theatre forms in the Holocaust-dramas of Frisch, Hochhuth, and Weiss. Young also criticized the treatment of the Holocaust in documentary theatre for the effacing of the form's own constructedness, see Young 1990.

[208] The German performances of *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa* also met with reservations on the part of some Israeli commentators, who feared that the cathartic effect which the performance offered would enable German audiences to salve their conscience by allowing an identification with their victims, see, for example, Herzberg 1992.

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSION

PARTICIPANT, VOYEUR, WITNESS – IDENTIFYING SPECTATORSHIP IN PERFORMANCE

> Identity. Identification. Sharing the Latin root *idem*, for 'same', few terms in contemporary theory are so mutually vexing. [...] Indeed, all identity claims are propped on the hierarchical structure of classical mimesis: identity is imagined to be the truthful origin or model that grounds the subject, shapes the subject, and endows her with a continuous sense of self-sameness or being. [...] '[I]dentity' becomes a believable and mobilizing fiction capable of binding each individual into a collective empowering 'our' which is felt to be unique, unified, and consistent. Identification, on the other hand, is a passionate mimesis, a fantasy assimilation not locatable in time or responsive to political ethics. Identifications can only be 'recognized' or narrated from a temporal distance [...]. Drawing another into oneself, projecting oneself onto another, identification *creates* sameness not with the self but another: you are (like) me, I am (like) you. Aggressivity, rivalry, and alienation are braided into identification. [...] Whereas identity operates through a logic of exclusion – my being or consciousness affirms its self-sameness by *not being* you – identification is trespass, denying the other's difference by assimilating her behavior, taking her place, killing her off.
>
> (Diamond 1997: 106–7)

This study has presented three exemplary ways in which contemporary live performance affirms, challenges or constructs collective models of cultural identity by addressing the performative relationship through which identity is joined to the process of identification.

Identity acts as both the basis for and the outcome of identification. It is through identifying with others that identity – as a sense of self-recognition and belonging with others – is achieved, and it is through being identified by others that this identity is confirmed and fixed. Identity, on the other hand, delimits the possibilities of identification. The process of identifying with and through an other at the same time as producing identity also destabilizes it: identification creates an unsettling presence of alterity within the very heart of identity[1]. Thus identifications can never be fully and finally made – they require their reassurance in an ongoing process of reiteration. Identity too can therefore never be unified or stable – it establishes the fiction of its

[1] Cf. Butler 1993.

stability and unity only through a phantasmatic act of foreclosure, which denies the otherness within, or a violent act of exclusion, which denies it without. '[I]dentification violates identity, even as, paradoxically, identifications produce the identity we come to recognize' (Diamond 1992: 104). As a result, the relationship between identification and identity, rather than being fixed and transparent, reveals itself to be highly unstable and contingent.

Chapter One has outlined recent theoretical debates on cultural identity and its relationship with identification. The issue has emerged as the point of intersection of a multitude of theoretical discussions and political movements, which have produced multiple, sometimes overlapping, often contradictory definitions of what constitutes identity and identification. Yet a number of binary concepts could be identified that have dominated the discussion: any theory of cultural identity revolves around the conceptualization of the dualisms of, essence and non-essence; identity and difference; and individuality and community. These dualisms can be interpreted as different versions of the same problematized relation: that between identity and identification. The difference between an essentialist and a non-essentialist notion of identity formation can be rephrased as the distinction between a model which defines identification as the unproblematized recognition of a common origin or shared structure of experience, and a model for which the process of identification is unstable and ever-changing, a construct which creates identity through establishing connections in-between or in excess of a multiplicity of overlapping or competing positions. Similarly, a consideration of the negotiation of difference in the constitution of identity raises the issue of identification: Bhabha has spoken in this context of identification as 'a process of identifying with and through [...] an object of otherness' (Bhabha 1990a: 211). The third binary, the one between individual and community, is most overtly linked to the problem of identification: Butler argues that 'identifications [...] are phantasmatic efforts of alignment [...], the sedimentation of the 'we' in the constitution of any I' (Butler 1993: 105). As a result, the question of the formation of identity, its continuing affirmation and the question of political agency is more appropriately addressed by a concept of

'identification': 'Thus, rather than speaking of identities as a finished thing, we should speak of identification, and see it as an ongoing process.' (Hall 1990: 122)

How does the process of identification produce cultural identity? This question has been addressed here by looking at the ways in which types of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced in performance. Chapter One has focused on anthropological and ethnographic approaches to performative practices in the constitution of cultural identification and identity formation. Their genealogy has been summarized as the movement from an understanding of performance as *mimesis*, to one of *poiesis*, and finally to one of *kinesis*[2], or as the distinction between performance as imitation, construction and dynamism. A *mimetic* view defines performance as a means of stabilizing and strengthening a culture's identity and a community's identification with it. Culture is seen to express itself in performances, which in turn reiterate its values and reaffirm its community. A model of performance as *poiesis* emphasizes the culture-creating capacities of performance. Victor Turner's work on social drama, liminality and communitas has presented a pivotal point in the development of cultural theory towards *a poietic* model. It is above all Turner's *poietic* focus on the emotional and expressive aspects of identification in his concept of communitas, defined as an affectual state of togetherness, and on the ritual performances through which these identifications are constituted that have influenced theories of identity formation. Yet, in his emphasis on the affirmative, rather than subversive, potential of liminal activity Turner continued a mimetic view of performance as a culturally conservative activity that primarily reproduces or renews accepted forms of cultural identity. A more recent emphasis on the *kinetic* forces of performance have focused on its capacity as an agent of movement, struggle and disruption. Kinetic performances of identity are improvised rather than structured, syncretic rather than authentic, and inventive rather than simply reflective. Anthropologist James Clifford has proposed that cultural models of identity are constructed reflexively through performance, without assuming the existence of an identity outside such practices. What

[2] cf. Conquergood forthcoming.

has crystallized as an underlying concern in all of these theories is the proposition of a fundamental shift in the conceptualization of culture from a visual and textual mode to a participatory mode. The first is frequently associated with theatricality, the second with performance: within culture as theatre, identification is believed to constituted through a (mediated and distanced) form of spectacular and specular participation, whilst in performance identification is acquired directly through (corporeal) participation in the act itself.

The theatre and performance artists examined in the previous chapters all address problems of identity by reworking such cultural performances and their concomitant modes of identification. I have attempted to show how such reworking is achieved as a form of theatricalization: using techniques of reiteration, reframing, decontextualization, emphasis, or exaggeration, these artists have defamiliarized established patterns of cultural performance in order both to affirm or question the way in which these performances attach us to a collective identity. They have thereby utilized forms of a corporeal, affectual involvement and those of a distanced, scopic reflection, in-between which the spectators have had to negotiate their responses, interacting and counter-acting the processes of 'seeing' and 'feeling' in the identification of and with others. By thus emphasizing the mechanisms by which individuals identify (or do not identify) with the 'positions' that cultural discourses summon them to, these artists have focused the attention on a less determinist model of the relation between identity and identification. They explore how individuals 'perform' these positions, and how some are negotiating and resisting the normative or regulative rules with which those discourses coerce certain identifications and excludes others.[3] Chapter One has looked at sociological and philosophical approaches to performative practices in the constitution of identity between individual acts and cultural conventions. The debate in both fields has been structured around similar motifs to that in cultural anthropology: performance as representational practice, social practice and political intervention; affirmation versus subversion; distanced participation versus corporeal involvement; singularity versus

[3] Cf. Hall 1994.

citationality; performance or performativity versus theatre or theatricality. Early sociological and social-psychological contributions maintained a close link to theatricality as a metaphor for social behaviour, applying a social-mimetic model of role-play to social behaviour in general, and social identity formation in particular. The problematic relationship between a mimetic iteration of social norms and their possible transformation that has emerged in these theories has become the central concern for the recent philosophical debate on 'performativity'. Building on J.L.Austin and Derrida, Judith Butler has developed her widely-discussed model of performativity by focusing on the citationality of cultural norms and the prohibitive operations that regulate them. In her understanding performativity cannot be reduced to the 'theatricality' of performance as an individual act: 'for it is always a reiteration of a norm or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition.[...]' (Butler 1993: 12). According to Butler, reiteration constitutes gender, sex, and even the body itself in its materiality. All identities operate through discursive exclusion, erasure, foreclosure, which makes one identity possible, while preventing another. This for Butler puts the question of identification on the agenda, 'and with it the discursive means by which the heterosexual imperative enables certain sexed identifications and forecloses and/or disavows other identification' (Butler 1993: 3). Butler herself has approached a concept of identification through drawing together a Foucauldian perspective on the discursive construction of subjectivity with a psychoanalytical approach to its psychic aspects, thus linking the regulation of identificatory practices through discursive norms with the process of '"assuming" a sex' (Butler 1993: 3). Similarly, Stuart Hall attempts to 'suture' the psychic and the discursive in the constitution of identification (Hall 1996b). Building on Althusser and Lacan, Foucault and Freud, he considers both the construction of subject positions within discourse, and the question of why certain individuals occupy some subject positions rather than others. He thus attempts to rethink the identificatory relation of a subject to the discursive formations that determine its subjectivity as form of performative 'articulation' (Hall 1996b: 14).

But how is such an articulation constituted when performativity becomes actual in the spatial, corporeal and temporal act of live performance? Elin Diamond has clarified performance's ambivalent relationship to performativity: 'The point is, as soon as performativity comes to rest on *a* performance, questions of embodiment, of social relations, of ideological interpellations, of emotional and political effects, all become discussable.' (Diamond 1996b: 5) Chapter Two has scrutinized three analytical models for a study of a specific theatrical actualization of identity: Erika Fischer-Lichte's study of European drama, which is based on the social psychological concept of identity as social role play that possesses a structural affinity with theatre; Catherine Belsey's study of Renaissance drama, which refers to a model of the subject as positioned within discourse; and Hans-Thies Lehmann's study of Greek tragedy, which extends this model beyond a consideration of dramatic writing toward a discussion of theatricality as a discourse in its own right. Despite their methodological differences, these models have all concentrated mainly on a certain kind of spectatorial participation in theatre, based on a scopic form of identification in *seeing*. Both Fischer-Lichte and Belsey argue that theatre functions as a kind of physical materialization of the Lacanian 'mirror-stage', within which identity is constituted as an imaginary identification with the image of themselves as an other. More importantly, these theories allow to draw a link between a specific mode of identification in theatre and the workings of the theatrical-representational apparatus. Whether identified as the product of the post-Renaissance theatre of Classic realism (Belsey), or the dramatic discourse that developed after the demise of Ancient Greek tragedy (Lehmann), the particular Western theatrical *dispositif* is described as reliant upon a clear separation between representation and the real. The represented is presented as spatially separate and temporally coherent, and the performing bodies on stage disappear behind the bodies performed. Houston has described the correlation of representation and identification on which such a theatrical model is based: '[R]epresentation not only "identifies" reality as a phenomenological object, but also "identifies" its thinker as its stable and authoritative Subject. For the modern "individualist", *alterity*, as [...] the affectivity of the material substance of the

object, is met with a rationality which belies a contemptuous distance.' (Houston 1998: 266) The theatrical-representational apparatus creates the phantasm of a stable and transparent performative relationship through which identity can be constituted safely in the process of scopic and specular identification.

The three artistic practices analysed here have all attempted to destabilize the relationship between identity and identification by questioning the work of theatrical representation. They have transferred cultural performances into the apparatus of theatre, and thereby changed the apparatus in return. And with their occasional failures they have also demonstrated the persistence of the audience's identification with that apparatus.

Welsh theatre company Brith Gof have worked primarily with the spatial configurations of theatre to create a space of communality and stimulate a communication of energy, which could potentially be transformed into political energy. They have developed their work from an initial address to the space of the nation as the given affective space of 'home' to the creation of the nation as the potentiality of a communal space of the 'people'. Their work has always been aimed at exploring the possibilities of affirming a marginalized identity in performance, but the evolutionary stages that the work has undergone reflect an increasingly self-reflective problematization of this possibility. The affirmation of cultural identity requires the reiteration of its established performances, and Brith Gof have made frequent use of such performances in their work. However, reiteration also introduces the possibility of deviation. The company has become increasingly interested in such instances of deviance, identifying them not as points at which an 'original' identity is damaged and endangered, but as moments in which communal energy can be created.

Mexican-American performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña and his collaborator Coco Fusco have focused on exploring how the body of the stereotyped 'Other' is created as a body-given-to-be-seen, reduced to the visual aspects of its racialized identity. Through strategies of hyperbolic exaggeration, dissonance or confusion, they have attempted to separate the body of the performer from the performed body and its

performance, creating an excess, a dissonance or confusion in the process of the spectators' identification that would trouble *in looking* the fixity of the body-given-to-be-seen. Their work is characterized by an increasing theatricalisation, working primarily with the scopic aspects of theatrical representation in an attempt to upset the passive-objectifying gaze on which this representation is based. But this increasing theatricalization also reflects their growing interest in the theatrical structure of colonialism's cultural performances, and the implication of theatre itself in the staging of the colonial 'other'.

While Brith Gof have explored the importance of identification for a politics of identity, and Gómez-Peña and Fusco have focused on its negativity as a force of exclusion and violation, the Israeli Acco Theater Center have investigated both the necessity and the limitations of identification, using strategies of energy-creation and techniques of problematising the possibility of seeing similar to those used in Brith Gof's and Gómez-Peña's and Fusco's work respectively. The issue of identification is central to any identity that is build in reference to a shared communal history, particularly a traumatic history: historical memory continues through identificatory acts of transference between primary and secondary witnesses. Yet, transference also raises the ethical question of the limits of identifying with the traumatic experiences of others. Transference implies a form of mimetic fantasy assimilation, and the danger of denying the other's difference and the differences of their experience by taking her place. A second limit of identification emerges when the transference of the experience of victimhood leads to the victimization of others. The Acco Theater Center has explored both these limits, whilst at the same time creating the possibility of identification and collective catharsis. They have utilized established cultural performances of commemoration to problematize the way in which these performances link individuals to the traumatic historical narrative of its collective. By theatricalizing the performativity of Holocaust commemorations the Theater Center have foregrounded their constructedness. This theatricalization has been established primarily through an address to the usual temporal template of theatrical representation. By creating a

complex overlay of different 'times' the company has challenged the temporal conditions of the audience's identification with the performance, simultaneously encouraging and discouraging forms of involvement.

The concept of identification in theatre has had a problematic and controversial history. The link between the process of identification and the symbolic affirmation of identity has featured prominently in theories about audience reception since the days of Plato and Aristotle[4]. Identification in theatre has traditionally been regarded as a two-sided mimetic structure between performer and spectator via their joint identification with the character. Bruce Wilshire has described this as a process by which spectators and audience explore the mimetic structure of human relations in general: 'Through the actor's deliberate identifications with and standings in we discover our largely undeliberate identifications-with and standings-in.' (Wilshire 1982: 14) Since Brecht's critique of 'aristotelian' empathy, however, the debate has often revolved around the poles of emotional involvement[5] versus reflective distance, equating identification with a passive-narcissistic fantasy assimilation to the phantasm of a universalized 'we'. Chapter Two has examined how an inversion of this dualism structures the recent debates about the status of theatre in relation to performance, and theatricality in relation to performativity, in which the relationship is often rephrased as one of scopic-specular reflection versus corporeal identification, passive reception versus active participation, affirmation versus subversion.

The three case studies discussed here demonstrate how performativity and theatricality can interact in a polyvalent, self-conscious artistic practice. This practice confronts moments of scopic-specular reflection with those of corporeal involvement, interacting and counter-acting seeing and feeling in performance. It is within the different articulations of the co-presence of these two experiences that the artists create the potential for a different kind of implication of the spectators in the event of

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[4] For a discussion of Plato's and Aristotle's' differing theories about the process of identification through mimesis in theatre see Diamond 1992.

[5] Brecht himself, interestingly, did not equate emotions with empathy: 'The rejection of empathy is not the result of a rejection of the emotions, nor does it lead to such.' (Brecht 1978: 145).

performance: an implication that is *performative* as it is constituted by the *work* of the spectators themselves. These practices are profoundly *political*, in that they address the problematic establishment of solidarity and alliance in a (however provisional and temporary) communality on which all political practice is based; and profoundly *ethical*, in that they demonstrate an integrity toward alterity in the constitution of identity. And by questioning the terms and conditions by which theatrical representation is constructed they show a regard for its 'alterity', the 'affectivity of the material substance' of the represented object, its 'materiality and historical density' (Diamond 1996a: 5).

In her re-evalution of dramatic realism's identificatory strategies, Diamond points to the double nature of identification: 'identification seems to promote the annihilation of difference – and thus violence to the other' (Diamond 1992: 390), yet it 'may also suggest the problematizing of models that support such violence' (Diamond 1992: 390–1). She makes a demand for a new politics of identification 'that dismantles the phenomenological universals of transcendent subjects and objects, [and] that places identity in an unstable and contingent relation to identification [...]' (Diamond 1992: 397). This study has introduced three exemplary ways in which live performance addresses the unstable and contingent relationship through which identity is joined to the process of identification.

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