

Performance Insights

*Site-specific theatre and performance with special reference to
Deborah Warner, Peter Brook and Ariane Mnouchkine*

William Joseph McEvoy

Ph.D.

University College London

September 2003

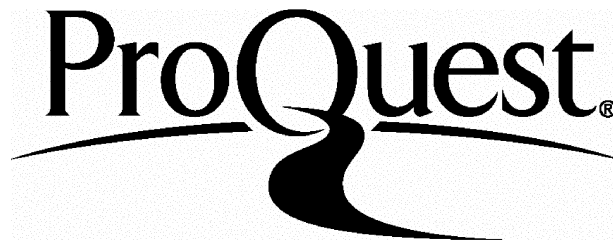
ProQuest Number: U642828

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest U642828

Published by ProQuest LLC(2016). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

Abstract

This thesis aims to develop a critical vocabulary for dealing with site-specific performances. It focuses on their association with dereliction and decay and assesses the implications of this. A central claim is that these performance modes are best understood in terms of their critical reception. I argue that site-specific performances redefine the language of criticism while profoundly questioning theatre's cultural location. Even in the cases of site-specific performances that flagrantly negate traditional theatre forms, the theatre text and critical frameworks, these return in said performances as fragmented, spectral or unconscious.

The thesis divides into two parts. Part 1 deals with the emergence of site-specific performance at the intersection of trends in art and theatre in the 1960s. It outlines the role of decay and the 'found' object/space in creating a genealogy for site-specific performances, while showing how critical writing changed to map this new terrain (Chapter 1). Furthermore, it argues that site-specific performances are characterized by distinctive modes of critical writing, in which the critic is self-reflexive and creative (Chapter 2). Arguing that critics are deeply implicated in the production of site-specific performances, Part 1 ends with a critical and creative reconstruction of Deborah Warner's use of abandoned sites for performances in London in the 1990s (Chapter 3).

Part 2 of the thesis re-reads the creation of Peter Brook's Bouffes du Nord and Ariane Mnouchkine's Cartoucherie de Vincennes as site-specific events which were subsequently reinscribed as the defining moment in each theatre's history. I show how site-specificity changed from being a counter-cultural gesture into a constantly redeployed marker of cultural identification.

Chapter 4 examines narratives of the discovery of the two theatre venues by their directors and critics, showing how site-specificity is produced at the intersection of individual, cultural and aesthetic discourses. Analysis of the Bouffes du Nord in Chapter 5 charts the critical uses of the theatre's decay, while Chapter 6 views the Cartoucherie as the culmination of the Théâtre du Soleil's quest for group identity through identification with workers.

Contents	Page
Acknowledgments	6
<u>Introduction</u>	8
<i>Scarpetta and Kantor: theatre, theatre-effects and the critic</i>	
<i>Site-specific theatre and performance: circulating negation</i>	
<i>How site-specific theatre and performance emerged</i>	
<i>Environmental Theatre</i>	
<i>Theatre theory and theatrical space</i>	
<i>What site-specific theatre and performance rejected</i>	
<i>The production of hybridity: site-specific art</i>	
<i>Work/site relations: language, dialogue and missing plinths</i>	
<i>Discursive sites, disoriented viewers</i>	
<i>Consolidating the genres of site-specific theatre and performance</i>	
<i>Site-specific theatre and performance locations</i>	
<i>The critical function of site-specific theatre and performance</i>	
<i>Remodelling critical metaphors: decay and waste</i>	
<i>Refiguring critical practice</i>	
<i>Constructing site-specificity, reconstructing its afterlife</i>	
<u>PART 1</u>	
Chapter 1	40
<i>Conceptualizing site-specific theatre and performance: found objects, found spaces</i>	
<i>Allan Kaprow and the class of art objects</i>	
<i>The implications of Kaprow's analysis</i>	
<i>Tadeusz Kantor: the abject and sublime object of/as theatre</i>	
<i>Kantor and the object</i>	
<i>Language and object</i>	
<i>Object and function</i>	
<i>The object's negation</i>	
<i>The Object-Space</i>	
<i>Schechner and The (Tulane) Drama Review</i>	
<i>The disoriented audience of site-specific performance</i>	
<i>Conclusion</i>	
Chapter 2	71
<i>Site-specific theatre and performance: critics, texts and the hidden scene of writing</i>	
<i>Site-specific theatre/performance: the implications of metaphor</i>	
<i>'Anything but literary': Theatre and the Scene of Writing</i>	
<i>'Even if only secretly'</i>	

Theatre, site and writing
Frisch's critico-creative text
Site-specific performance and/as archaeology
Site-specific metaphors: the scene of the crime (implications)
Writing, trauma and the document
Site-specificity: body (and) writing
Entering sites, entering texts
Exposure and secrecy

Chapter 3 99
***Deborah Warner's site-specific theatre and performance:
 objects, reading and (inter)textuality***

Whose Waste Land? Eliot's, Warner's or the spectator's?
Building as text
The Waste Land, or, does John Gross wear glasses?
American Ruins/London ruins: Reading The Tower Project in/through Camilo José Vergara's American Ruins
Vergara's ruins: the consequences of solitude
Reading into Performance
Sites of Reading
Haunted sites, haunting texts
Conclusion

PART 2

Chapter 4 126
***Finding the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie de Vincennes:
 reconstructing the site-specific moment and critical disorientation***

Exposing borders
Discovering the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie de Vincennes: excavation and evasion
Private Journeys into Theatre
Critical indecency
Fantasies and productions of marginality
Finding the theatre site, inscribing its significance
The Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie: decay and work
Brook and Mnouchkine: locating the other
Theatre sites and ethics
Conclusion

Chapter 5 148
***Peter Brook and the Bouffes du Nord and decay:
 staging critical desires***

The Bouffes du Nord and site-specific performance in Paris

The Bouffes du Nord: heterotopia and decay
The Bouffes du Nord: early criticism
Theorizing decay: writing and the body
Decay and the other
Recent critics of the Bouffes du Nord: site, decay and the body
Critical exposure and fire
Decay and life-cycles
Decay: archaeology, layering and waste
Decay and critical subjectivity
The chic translations of the Bouffes's du Nord's decay
Conclusion

Chapter 6

172

Theatre Out of Place:

Ariane Mnouchkine and work in process at the Cartoucherie de Vincennes, Paris

Collective creation: from identification with work to recognition of the other
Work, building, aesthetics
Theatre: 'pas un métier du tout'
Arnold Wesker's La Cuisine: the universality of work
Wesker as worker
Le songe d'une nuit d'été: 'des hommes travaillent à une oeuvre importante, à une fête'
Different working methods: children and utopias
The Théâtre du Soleil and les Halles
Recycling work at the Cartoucherie
Production, creation: producing creation at the Cartoucherie
Converting (audiences at) the Cartoucherie
From work, via creativity, to affect
Coda: the work of memory and the memory of work
Conclusion

Conclusion

208

BIBLIOGRAPHY

217

I dedicate this thesis to 93 Hanley Road, 113 Liverpool Street, 17 Naish Court, 5
Thorpe House, and 4 Hunter Street

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Professor Michael Worton, my supervisor at University College, London, for the critical flair and intellectual acumen with which he has responded to this project. His constant support and encouragement have been invaluable. I have benefited greatly from his ability to instil confidence and to approach ideas from fresh and exciting perspectives.

Professor Timothy Mathews has made important contributions to this thesis at various stages, and I extend my thanks to him, especially for his support at my first major conference in Leiden. I am grateful to other members of the French Department at UCL, in particular Roland-François Lack and Nicholas Harrison, who have offered advice and ideas at key moments.

This thesis was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board and the UCL Graduate School, and I express my warmest gratitude to them. I was able to undertake a two month research trip to Paris thanks to the UCL Graduate School and a Phyllis Palmer Travel Fund. The UCL French Department gave me the great opportunity to spend a year at the Université de Paris 3, Sorbonne-Nouvelle, as a lecteur.

Dimitris Papanikolaou has accompanied this thesis every step of the way and my debt to him is incalculable. His passionate involvement and probing intelligence have exerted a major influence over my life and work.

A great number of people have supported and encouraged me in personal and professional capacities, foremost among them, Tom Andrews, Denis Anscomb, Ben Dowell, Patrick Watt, Tessa Roynon, Caroline Johnson, Julie Huntington, Mitzi Angel, Karim Mekhtoub, Richard Gooder, Ian Patterson, Deborah Philips, Theo Hermans, Anne-Marie Duffy, Eleni Syminelaki-Nanou, Konstantina Nanou, Timothy Wade, Billy McEvoy. I would like particularly like to mention my CAPES students at Paris 3 for our great classes and Gareth Lewis-Jones for his unstinting support and good humour as I was finishing this thesis.

My mother, brother and sisters know how much their love has meant for me, especially at the difficult period of the death of my father, Patrick McEvoy, whose wise words and life-long encouragement have been sorely missed since.

Introduction

This thesis is an examination of site-specific theatre and performance. It outlines the factors which contribute to the identification of a distinct performance practice, and offers a re-reading of how site-specificity's impact extends beyond individual performances to create an aesthetics and ethics of theatre. The observation that started this thesis is that site-specific theatre and performance change the way critics write, and consequently the role of critics and critical writing in constructing the meaning of site-specific performances is a central concern.¹

I do not claim, however, to have a comprehensive theory of site-specific theatre and performance; moreover, all the evidence suggests that such a theory is not possible and would contradict the purpose of much site-specific work in the first place. Although site-specific theatre and performance were consolidated as performance modes in the 1960s, they have only recently been given sustained critical attention. This suggests that one of the characteristics of site-specific theatre and performance is their resistance to theoretical synthesis. Indeed, it is possible to argue that every site-specific performance tries to incorporate its own framework for critical analysis into the performance itself. In the course of this thesis, I develop the argument that site-specific theatre and performance are self-critical and self-analytical performance modes which consistently raise questions about the legitimacy and validity of their interventions in the spaces they use.

I start with the term 'site-specific', as used in recent theatre criticism, but my purpose throughout this thesis is to problematize the clear-cut definition of this term. In their effort to give a definition of site-specific performance, Pearson and Shanks understand it as follows:

Site-specific performances are conceived for, mounted within and conditioned by the particulars of found spaces, existing social situations or locations, both used and disused: sites of work, play and worship: cattle-market, chapel, factory, cathedral, railway station. They rely, for their conception and their interpretation, upon the complex coexistence, superimposition and interpenetration of a number of narratives and architectures, historical and contemporary, of two basic orders: that which is of the site, its fixtures and

¹ Throughout this thesis, I use 'site-specific theatre and performance' as a generic term and 'site-specific performance(s)' to refer to productions.

fittings, and that which is brought to the site, the performance and its scenography: of that which pre-exists [sic] the work and that which is of the work: of the past and of the present. They are inseparable from their sites, the only contexts within which they are intelligible. Performance recontextualises such sites: it is the latest occupation of a location at which other occupations – their material traces and histories – are still apparent: site is not just an interesting, and disinterested, backdrop. Such performance, in its themes and means of exposition, is not of necessity congruent with its site as when a sixth-century battle is enacted in a car factory. Interpenetrating narratives jostle to create meanings. The multiple meanings and readings of performance and site intermingle, amending and compromising one another. (Pearson and Shanks 2001: 23)

The quotation comes from the most important book on site-specific theatre and performance published recently, *Theatre/Archaeology* (2001) - discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2. This book has opened new perspectives on site-specific performances by developing a form of criticism which is hybrid, interdisciplinary and experimental. Pearson and Shanks's work has played a key role in my own critical trajectory and has been an inspiration because of the authors' passionate and creative engagement in their critical project. Indeed, the notion that criticism can be a creative force, or stage creative desires, dominates this thesis and has been crucial for my analysis.

In *Mourning Sex*, Peggy Phelan advocates a mode of performative writing which '[a]lternately bold and coy, manipulative and unconscious, [...] points both to itself and to the "scenes" that motivate it' (Phelan 1997: 12). For the reasons I shall outline, site-specific theatre and performance are particularly suited to performative critical writing and this thesis will be concerned throughout with their other 'scenes'. I make the claim that site-specific theatre and performance have to be understood in relation to their critical restagings. I show how site-specific performances implicate the critic in the production of a performance's meaning, leading to a questioning of the frameworks and parameters which criticism applies. Site-specific performances are an exploration of criticality, of the premises, exclusions and misunderstandings which produce criticism. They change criticism from a metatextual function into a creative reinscription.

My primary focus on written criticism rather than on performances themselves may be seen as a negative approach. Surely criticism is already at one remove from performances, while viewing site-specific theatre and performance in relation to forms of writing is a negation of the way performances operate. Both these observations are valid, but I argue that criticism and the concept of writing provide exciting ways to enter into an analysis of site-specific theatre and performance precisely because they run the risk of negating them. These performance modes actively embrace negation and the negative from a number of perspectives. Consequently, a large part of this thesis deals with what I call the 'negative poetics' of site-specific theatre and performance. Decay, waste, mourning, melancholy, nostalgia, the destruction of metaphor, the narcissism of critics, all combine to form a potentially pessimistic analysis, since what is being described is what has been lost. On the other hand, as Peggy Phelan has suggested, the 're-marking of the negative term by figurative and imagistic means' (Phelan 1993: 5), with its focus on the 'unmarked term of the binary opposite' (ibid), has powerful critical scope. I therefore examine site-specific theatre and performance from the perspective of negation as a strategy for encouraging alternative ways of thinking about how they operate, highlighting and validating our mishearings, misunderstandings and misreadings of them.

Critical texts can be understood as the negative of site-specific performances by comparison with the way a photograph negative relates to the scene imprinted on its surface. They are the indistinct trace from which we have to extrapolate the other 'scene' of the performance, and demand a mental process which reconstructs what is missing or obscure. At the same time, critical texts are in danger of negating the site-specific performance, revealing its secrets, exposing or over-exposing what it tries to keep latent. The risk that critical texts run is the impulse to record a performance which advances its unrecordability, turning the fluid space of cognitive and embodied memory which a site-specific performance creates into a textual effect which displaces memory. I argue that the antagonistic and anxious relation which critical

texts have with site-specific performances leads to a self-critical mode of writing propelled by creative desires.

Throughout this thesis, I have made extensive use of theatre reviews and critical assessments of site-specific and site-influenced performances. At the same time, I have been drawn to texts which, although not explicitly dealing with site-specific theatre and performance, seemed to contain fundamental insights into how site-specificity operated. As part of a critical methodology, this approach has its risks, since one is entitled to question the relevance of texts by authors such as Georges Perec and W.G. Sebald to the subject of the thesis. On the other hand, I argue throughout that site-specific theatre and performance rely on spectators and critics coming to performances with a body of texts (and memories) in mind, especially if there is no written text involved. At site-specific performances, critics and spectators function as the keepers of memory-texts which construct the performance's meaning. Performances evoke associations, memories and intertexts in critics and spectators and in their frequent negation of the written text, interpellate the critic or spectator as intertextual. I show this in my discussion of Deborah Warner's site-specific performances in Chapter 3 where the director's reference to texts such as Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and to fragments of other texts, (as well as the archetypal *text as fragments* in the form of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*), encourage the intertextual input of the spectator.

In a similar move, I will now introduce site-specific theatre and performance through the critical texts of the literary and performance theorist Guy Scarpetta. In 2000, Scarpetta published a collection of essays and interviews involving the Polish director Tadeusz Kantor, a figure whom I argue in Chapter 1 had a major role in creating the conceptual space of site-specific theatre and performance. Scarpetta's texts are haunted by the figure of Kantor, the failure of memory and the effects of theatre and theatricality. While they do not depict site-specific performances, they have all the hallmarks of site-specific performance criticism. I use Scarpetta's texts to demonstrate what I perceive to be the effects of site-specific performances, but also to

underline those performances' powerful negation of the distinction between the real and the performed, which is played out in the scene of (critical) writing.

Scarpetta and Kantor: theatre, theatre-effects and the critic

Guy Scarpetta's *Kantor au Présent* (2000) is subtitled 'une longue conversation'. The collection is as much a staging of the critical self as it is the encounter with the other. In the book, the author relates his own biographical encounters, or missed encounters, first with Tadeusz Kantor's work, and then with Kantor himself.

Through Scarpetta's meetings with Kantor in texts, the theatre and the flesh, the negative, in terms of decay, the failure to remember and the compulsion to work through emotions which have no clear focus, dominates. He begins with a confession:

[...] j'avoue être incapable aujourd'hui d'isoler avec netteté l'impression ressentie lors du premier spectacle de lui auquel j'ai été confronté. Tout ce qui s'y est superposé par la suite [...] a définitivement surchargé et brouillé cette sensation initiale. (Scarpetta 2000: 20)

Scarpetta's text is haunted by a sense of decline, taking evident pleasure in lingering on the aspects of decay and waste so central to Kantor's imagination. The performance he tries to recollect has lost its definition and cannot be reconstructed, apart from in blurred form, more like an emotion than an event to be analyzed. The absence of a distinct memory clears the way for a charged critical writing, exposing the writer as a subject-in-process, remembering, forgetting, reinscribing a theatre experience as more powerful because it has faded from memory.

The negative takes a number of forms in Scarpetta's texts. When Scarpetta reflects on Cracow in the light of his relationship with Kantor, he says of the city: '[j]'entraîs dans son univers, Cracovie, cette ville superbe et désolée – avec ses splendeurs gothiques, baroques, ses églises, sa vieille université, et quelque chose, pourtant, d'obscurément dévasté' (ibid: 76). Entering the city represents a threshold moment, a crossing-over into the world of Kantor's imagination, and Cracow incarnates not merely an aesthetic, but a built actuality of decay fundamental to an understanding of Kantor's work. As Scarpetta visits Cracow for the first time,

Kantor's theatre and theory shape a response to the city, providing a map for finding one's way around not only its streets, but also its meanings. Yet the city also withholds its meanings, and the 'quelque chose' which remains left over and obscure is what stays unthought, the part of Scarpetta's experience of Cracow which waits to be summoned up later not as a memory, but as an emotion. Such cities weave themselves into the memory-text of the self as moments of hesitation, as Georges Perec suggested in relation to the cities of Edinburgh, Sarajevo and Belgrade:

On garde souvent de ces villes à peine effleurées le souvenir d'un charme indéfinissable: le souvenir même de notre indécision, de nos pas hésitants, de notre regard qui ne savait vers quoi se tourner et presque rien suffisait à émouvoir [...] (Perec 1974: 88)

Connected to this pervasive sense of decay, Scarpetta characterizes Kantor's theatre work as 'ce que l'on pourrait nommer une écriture scénique de la *corruption généralisée*' (ibid: 80). Corruption is not merely a trope in Kantor's work, according to Scarpetta, but a tentative ontology. It is a way of engaging with the disintegration or decay of the logic of the trope as it tries to construct meaning. Any form of 'écriture scénique' would also be subject to the effect of generalized corruption which it endeavoured to stage. Memory falls prey to this corruption, but what is the role of writing, of Scarpetta's own critical writing, in this generalized corruption? His critical writing about the *negation* of memory reconstructs the work of memory as bound up with its own erasure, enacted in and through the writing process.

In his collection, Scarpetta reports Kantor's own mercurial negations of the work of art. At one point, Kantor tells Scarpetta about an intimate part of his life: '[j]'ai, chez moi, beaucoup d'objets qui viennent de mes pièces: ce ne sont pas seulement des accessoires, ça pourrait aussi être considéré comme des oeuvres d'art' (ibid: 32). Kantor's words test the boundary between private self/space and art/aesthetic public space. The objects in question cross the border between home and performance, circulating between domestic space and public performance space. Those objects are in counterpoint with themselves, gesturing towards the other spaces in which they might equally feel *at home*.

Finally, firmly entrenched in Kantor's world, Scarpetta recounts a journey with him to 'l'orée de la forêt' (ibid:108). The journey is the prelude to a strange meeting with one of Kantor's neighbours. The neighbour's house, full of 'meubles anciens, précieux, sur le point de s'écrouler' (ibid: 109), indeed the whole atmosphere of decay, throw Scarpetta into a state of doubt:

Je titube un peu, je ne sais plus très bien, soudain, où je me trouve. *Dans un spectacle de Kantor, peut-être*. Ou dans un de ses tableaux. Comme si la réalité, soudain, avait rejoint son univers, l'avait parasité, télescopé...' (ibid: 110; my italics)

The sudden disorientation, the instability of the writer's senses and of the borders of things, lead him to a point at which the aesthetic (at least memories of it) and the real interpenetrate. No one incident triggers the sense of vertigo which prompts him to imagine he might be '*[d]ans un spectacle de Kantor, peut-être*'. Instead, it is attributable to a gradual process or initiation, accompanied by the entry into the tangled space of the wood and the sense that appearances cannot be trusted.

Crucially and uncannily, the photographic evidence, the potential proof that all the experiences (and emotions) have not merely been an effect of the imagination, fails to materialize, further confirming the writer in his bewilderment:

D'ailleurs, toutes les photos que nous avons prises, ce jour-là, ont été ratées. Une erreur de pellicule... On n'aperçoit que de vagues silhouettes, floues, évanescentes – comme si tout cela devait rester occulté, enfoui, dérobé, en deçà ou au-delà de toute figuration' (ibid: 110).

In a vertiginous moment, the negative returns at the level of the signifier, as the photographic 'négatif' is itself negated.

The failure of the evidence to attest to what has been witnessed, the lack of a permanent record, are explained both by a simple accident (film not working) and a complex desire to remain in a fluid space of doubt and scepticism. In this case, the reliability of the photograph as the apparatus which fixes a moment in time is replaced by the alternative, diachronic economy of memory and reconstruction. The

experience is haunted by its own unrecordability, an intensity of emotion leaving only vestigial traces in the mind.

Scarpetta's encounters with Kantor embody many of the issues that will be raised in this thesis in connection with site-specific performances. They show the critic haunted by the *memory* of theatre and performance which translates itself into his critical writing. Theatre pervades his text as an effect, troubling the distinction between the real, which he hoped the photographs would replicate, and the performed or theatricalized. Negatives haunt the text, challenging the boundaries of the self. The failure of the images represents a projection of critical paranoia and the pleasure of replacing them with a creative writing of the negative. Scarpetta's writing reconstructs the scene of his disorientation by focusing on decaying objects, accumulating them as evidence, but is haunted by an other scene, a ghostly trace of the aesthetic which makes the tangible incorporeal, turning the evidence of the senses into a ghostly world of signs.

Site-specific theatre and performance: circulating negation

In this thesis, I argue that site-specific theatre and performance are closely linked with notions of decay and waste. I analyze decay and waste as mobile topoi in which issues about the body and death, language, social practices and ideology intersect. Site-specific productions use decaying sites and waste materials to bring spectators and critics into contact with forgotten parts of cities, and in the process ask us to question why these sites have been sidelined and what role they play in our sense of the city's geography. Decay and waste embody the negative, but they also suggest the instability of borders and the density and historical chronology of things. I argue that site-specific performances put decay and waste to complex uses, circulating and recycling them as metaphors and models. These performances draw on decay and waste for their critique value as well as for their emotional resonance.

This thesis outlines how site-specific theatre and performance question the concept of the proper, particularly as it shapes our understanding of the work of art. We have seen Kantor's props making their way into his home. They are

simultaneously real objects, theatrical props and works of art. In theatre terminology they may be called 'props' or 'properties', but Kantor questions what exactly these properties are. Both accessories and works of art, theatre objects and household knick-knacks, they have no *proper* place. They show the constructedness of our belief that art is more suited to one type of place rather than another. I use Kantor's own theories, coupled with the work of Allan Kaprow, to show the role the object plays in making site-specific theatre and performance improper forms of art (Part 1, chapter 1).

Scarpetta's uncanny journey takes us to a further point about site-specific performances. I argue that site-specific theatre and performance place spectators in a position of scepticism and doubt about a whole host of issues normally taken for granted when encountering a work of art or performance. They blur the borders between where the performance starts and ends, leading us to question the extent to which our recognition of aesthetic effects is self-generated. They make 'negative' emotions such as paranoia part of the performance's meaning. The experience of being solitary and having a private, potentially incommunicable response to a performance are crucial to site-specific aesthetics. The spectator feels lost and disoriented in these modes of performance, experiencing vertiginous moments in which reality and art interpenetrate.

Scarpetta's reaction to this estranging incident is symptomatic of claims this thesis makes about site-specific theatre and performance's connection with subjectivity. Site-specific performance questions the idea that there is a positive body of evidence that we can adduce to our sense impressions and private emotions which will prove their validity and legitimacy. Our reactions to site-specific performance are bound up with secrecy. Yet at the same time, like the photograph negative, they are haunted by the effects of (over-)exposure.

However, we need to bear in mind that Scarpetta has, in fact, produced a version of events which corresponds to his experience, in his capacity as a *critic*. His critical text both analyzes his emotions and restages them for the reader. The

autobiographical and critical self coincide in the text, producing a hybrid critic-creator who turns the (failed) negative into a scene of writing.

The critical self-consciousness which marks site-specific theatre and performance feeds into my wider argument that they question the legitimacy and validity of their interventions into spaces. To substantiate this claim, in the first part of this thesis I explore how site-specific theatre and performance produce self-critical and exposed critics, and in the second, examine how theatre/performance sites are themselves produced and re-used in critical discourse as a focus for staging critical identity and the aesthetics and ethics of theatre and performance. Part 1 of this thesis, which culminates in an analysis of the British director Deborah Warner's site-specific work in London in the 1990s, theorizes the construction of the effects of site-specific performances, while Part 2, dealing with the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie de Vincennes in Paris, shows how such effects, which I term the 'site-specific moment', continually return in critical writing as a source of obsession, identification and ethical positioning. Two main aims therefore govern this thesis: to propose an analysis of site-specific theatre and performance which outlines critical uses of and responses to decay, waste, and the proper place of the aesthetic, and to examine the afterlife of site-specificity in the hybrid critical responses it generates.

How site-specific theatre and performance emerged

Environmental Theatre

Site-specific theatre and performance emerged at the intersection of a number of different artistic and theatrical practices, as a reaction to some of them and a development of others. Let us survey some of these practices. For site-specific artist Daniel Buren, 1967 was a turning point in art and theatre aesthetics at which the autonomy of the work of art was challenged by the emphasis on its site (Buren 1998: 72). Richard Schechner's production of Ionesco's *Victims of Duty* in 1967 was the first American environmental theatre production, while 1968 saw the publication of Schechner's 'Six Axioms for Environmental Theatre' outlining his principles for new types of multi-focus theatre scenography instead of frontal modes of theatre and the use of the proscenium arch. In the same year, Meredith Monk's work *Vessel* was performed at three different sites in New York, including Monk's living room and a carpark. In Paris, Peter Brook was using the Mobilier National, a former furniture factory, for workshop performances in early 1968 while Ariane Mnouchkine's performances with the Théâtre du Soleil were taking place in a circus venue, the Cirque Medrano, in Montmartre.

Environmental theatre is the most obvious artistic predecessor to site-specific theatre and performance. Brooks McNamara (1975) argued that it developed out of the experimental work of Grotowski, Julian Beck and Judith Malina, Ronconi and Brook, as well as being influenced by Happenings and Earthworks. Its origins could be traced back to Appia and Meyerhold, and it drew on the theatre theories of Copeau and Artaud.

Jerry Rojo outlined some of environmental theatre's concepts, all of which would later be crucial for site-specific theatre and performance. The first was its anti-mimetic aesthetic: 'All aesthetic problems are solved in terms of actual time, space, and material with little consideration given to solutions that suggest illusion, pretense, or imitation' (McNamara 1975: 14). Second, environmental theatre flouted the logical use of spaces and objects:

Most theatrical use of props, space, costume, and light derives from historical or common usage sources. That is, there is a matrix of common information of how something is used. A chair historically is designed to be occupied in a certain logical manner. The non-matrixed use of a chair may find it turned into, say, a costume and thus may be worn instead of sat in. This non-matrixed or alogical use of a prop does not try to imitate the use of a prop as seen in society, but represents an attempt to use props as agents for discovery through accident, chance and intuition. (ibid: 19)

Finally, environmental theatre conceptualized objects and materials outside the framework of their role in performances, and encouraged actors and audiences to generate private associations with them: 'This practical approach to materials suggests that materials have their own psychic energy which exists by itself and not only for the production as is the tradition' (ibid: 20).

The genre of environmental theatre is most closely associated with director and performance theorist Richard Schechner, whose work I analyze in greater detail in Chapter 1. His contribution to these assessments in an essay entitled 'Environmentalists Now' was to situate environmental theatre in the wider social context of the US civil rights, feminism and gay movements and to see it as a response to the rise of interculturalism in performance and the increasing prevalence of new media. His essay looked to the future of environmental theatre as a genuinely site-specific form. Citing Grotowski's *The Fire on the Mountain* and The Living Theatre's *Six Public Acts* from 1975, Schechner says:

These recent performances are [...] non-mediated experiences that bring people out 'into the field,' where direct contact is made with the environment; and where person-to-person interaction is facilitated [...] Previously the audience watched such actions - the subject of theatre was the presentation of intimate acts in public and professionals were hired to perform these acts. Now often enough the audience is invited to originate or share in these acts. It is not participation in the drama (as in the 60's) but participation in the act of making the theatrical event - a literal 'come along and do it with us' that characterizes the most recent work of Brook, the Living, and Grotowski. (ibid: 34)

This evolution of environmental theatre left the theatre building behind rather than simply refitting it. It also brought about a change in the audience's participatory

paradigm which would go on to characterize site-specific theatre and performance. Spectators were no longer asked to watch a performance, but to help originate it.

Theatre theory and theatrical space

Environmental theatre, as it became more recognizably site-specific in form, decisively left the theatre building behind, but theory based on traditional theatre practice continued to play a major role in the development of site-specific theatre and performance. The study of theatre scenography, the sociological study of theatre's connection with the city, and research into the complexity of theatrical (stage) space, all left their mark on site-specific theatre and performance.

Arnold Aronson's *Environmental Scenography* (1981), was concerned to show that theatre outside purpose-built venues was not just a product of 1950s and 1960s radicalism, but had a long historical lineage. He claims that:

[...] the use of found environments is not new; indeed it is probably the original form of theatre. From what little information survives, it is possible to picture the Greeks seeking out an appropriate space at the foot of a hillside, with a view of the sea framed in the background. There the spectators would come and sit from dawn to dusk over a period of several days. (Aronson 1981: 183)

Aronson incorporates such cultural phenomena as mummers, fairgrounds and amusement parks into his discussion, even viewing Voltaire's burial as a form of site-specific performance. An 1880 production of *Romeo and Juliet* in a rectory garden in France is considered an early example of site-specific performance and the founding of the people's theatre by Maurice Pottecher used outdoor environments for its productions (see *ibid*: 30-31). Highlights of site-specific theatre in the early 20th century for Aronson included Eisenstein's 1924 production of Tretyakov's play *Gas Masks*, held in a Moscow gasworks, and Max Reinhardt's *The Merchant of Venice* for the Venice Biennale which took place in the city's Campo San Trovaso.²

² These productions mark an early stage in site-specific theatre in which theatre texts were performed in the places in which they were set. This correspondence between text and site has developed into

Critics ranging from Jean Duvignaud to Marvin Carlson elaborated on the conceptual overlap between theatre and the city. Duvignaud's sociological analysis of theatre argued that the imposition of fixed walls around the city in the Greek and early Christian eras produced the distinctive systems of ethics and metaphysics which we identify with those societies. The theatre became a projection of the city's privileging of the visual: 'dans la ville émerge la représentation imaginaire [...] En grec, 'theatron' veut dire: donné à voir. La règle du voyeur commence' (Duvignaud 1977: 43). Carlson (1989) placed current experiments in theatre and performance in the context of their historical links with urban space. The mobility of theatre events in the medieval period, when their setting in cathedrals, monasteries and shrines helped to make the city itself a performance space, lost momentum in the Renaissance when theatres were annexed to the private palaces of princes. Theatres functioned as symbols of power since they were built around one-point perspectives which focused the gaze on the spatially-expressed power dynamics of the prince's physical/social position. In Elizabethan London, theatres were associated with marginality because they were located near areas known for bear-baiting and high levels of prostitution, while in 19th century Paris, Hausmann's theatricalization of the city was accompanied by the construction of performing arts venues like the Paris Opera at its heart. Site-specific theatre and performance were the latest stage in a trend linking theatre to the city and aimed at bringing external social and cultural factors into the theatre experience.

Research into theatre space, begun in the wake of French structuralism with works like Anne Ubersfeld's *Lire le théâtre* (1977), and leading most recently to Gay McAuley's *Space in Performance* (1999), endeavoured to disengage and systematize the varying spatialities operating in theatre texts and performance. It used models such as Goffman's 'frame analysis' and 'keying' (Goffman 1975; McAuley 1999), Peircian semiotics (Ubersfeld 1977), phenomenology (States 1985), as well as psychoanalytical concepts such as denegation (Ubersfeld 1996). Theories of theatrical space demonstrated that the border between theatre and non-theatre space is

numerous other paradigms of the site/performance relation which highlight the site's *dissonance* with a

permeable. McAuley (1999), for example, analyzes the impact of theatre lobbies or the shape of rehearsal spaces on ensuing productions. This branch of theatre theory drew attention to the function of spaces in constituting the experience of theatre, and showed how external spaces left their imprint on the modes of signification and spectator's reception of performances. In making the plurality of theatre spaces crucial to an understanding of theatre as an art form, this branch of criticism turned space and place into objects of interest in their own right. While site-specific theatre and performance radicalized and capitalized on such work, an equally strong argument could be made for giving early site-specific performances a leading role in encouraging the re-evaluation of traditional theatre space.

What site-specific theatre and performance rejected

On the one hand, environmental theatre and theories of theatrical space are an important strand in the critical genealogy of site-specific theatre and performance. On the other, they risk overemphasizing the extent to which site-specific modes of performance were a continuation of traditional theatre practices. It is equally crucial to recognize how site-specific theatre and performance were conceived as a *critique* of theatre, both in terms of its location, and as a viable cultural form.

In a general sense, site-specific theatre and performance aimed to escape from two binding connotations of theatre, that is, its association with literature and the potential for the term 'theatre' to be used metaphorically. By 1969, Richard Schechner had already sought to provide heuristic distinctions between literature and theatre based on the questionable assertion that literature was a language event which could only be written about metaphorically, while theatre involved real things happening (see Schechner 1969). He argued that theatre should follow the trend in cinema by going 'on location'. In order to become more of an art, theatre, he claimed had to become less self-consciously aesthetic, by which he meant, less self-consciously *literary*. Paradoxically, theatre would need to become a hybrid form, borrowing techniques from newer media like cinema, in order to cleanse it of its

literariness and reveal its essential *difference* from literature. These trends in cinema presented:

An acted set of events [...] situated within a 'real' environment. The aesthetic consequences of this seemingly simple activity are widespread. Why should film directors insist on lugging quantities of equipment halfway around the world? Why do *auteurs* like working with non-actors as performers? In what ways does working with 'real stuff' offer film-makers 'better' material? (ibid: 184)

Site-specific theatre and performance were part of this search for 'real stuff', even if Schechner's claims about cinema's authenticity are undercut by his use of the word '*auteur*', confirming the difficulty of shaking off the literary paradigm. Another aspect of the search for 'real stuff' was the rejection of theatricality. Recent theatre theorists, whether discussing site-specific performances or not, have returned to this issue as a key concern for theatre practice in all forms. Gay McAuley has noted the tendency to use the term 'theatre' metaphorically, particularly in the context of postmodern theory, where it stands as an all-purpose word to refer to any event in the real subject to the editing or framing processes which mediate reality for public reception (see McAuley 1996). One of the commonest postmodern critical terms, whether referring to fiction, poetry, cinema or psychoanalysis, is the metaphor of 'staging'. We now think of this term as indispensable for analyzing how works of art introduce self-reflexive elements into their meaning processes, but McAuley is right in arguing that the appropriation of theatre as metaphor elides the particularities and material conditions of actual theatre practices. The prevalence of the 'theatre as metaphor' idea leaks into audiences' reception of theatre, encouraging them to think of it as the art of the symbolic.

The term 'theatricality' causes acute problems and is a concept site-specific theatre and performance were keen to escape. A comparison of the terms literature/literarity and theatre/theatricality confirms Anne Larue's point, notwithstanding the cultural variations between languages, that '[l]e mot théâtralité appelle le glissement métaphorique, le mot littérarité, au contraire, le refuse tout net'

(Larue 1996: 4). We easily refer to the theatricality of a film, for example, but it makes no sense to talk of its literarity, although of course a film can have literary qualities. Literarity refers to literature, theatricality to a (largely negative) quality a whole host of art forms may possess. Alan Read argues that there is little critical capital to be gained in pointing out the term's misuse: 'The problem of thinking theatre [...] is that it has already become common linguistic currency describing so many things it is not. It is a truism to say theatre is used as metaphor so wide is its influence as a vocabulary of pretence' (Read 1993: 16). Site-specific theatre and performance were crucial factors in theatre's dissociation from literature and theatricality, and a central way of making this break was to turn to site-specific art in order to construct a non-textual and hybrid genealogy.

The production of hybridity: site-specific art

Site-specific *art* (e.g. sculptures and installations) has been annexed by current theories of site-specific theatre and performance as a way of marking their difference from traditional theatre. By confirming its place in their critical genealogy, site-specific theatre and performance placed emphasis on their generic hybridity. This alliance meant that the vexed text/performance binary which underpinned theatre theory gave way to a focus on relations between the work of art and its site instead. It highlighted the possibilities of new forms of viewing and alternative audience formations (e.g. from collective to solitary) and produced critiques of the institutionalization and commodification of art. Site-specific art disoriented viewers, forcing them to think about art's meaning outside the frameworks of canonicity, genre and standards of beauty. It asked viewers to criticize how they have been taught to react critically, and gave the art work's criticality and power to negate existing conceptions of the aesthetic a central role in their meaning. Site-specific theatre and performance were not only reconceived as hybrid through their association with site-specific art, but they became critical and discursive modes in the process. I outline factors in the emergence and theorization of site-specific art such as its critique value, the validation of the non-beautiful, the flexibility of its theoretical models, and its

effects on the viewer because these have all helped shape the genres of site-specific theatre and performance.

Early site-specific art launched a powerful critique of the art gallery and museum. Richard Serra's *Splashing* (1968), an installation at the Castelli Warehouse in New York, is a milestone in the genre. The work was created by pouring and dripping molten lead along the juncture of a wall and floor. This was site-specificity at its purest, since to remove the work to a museum, or anywhere else, would inevitably destroy it. In this case, the work of art was literally melded to its warehouse site (and the fact that a warehouse was used is significant) in defiant negation of the absorptive ideology of the museum.

According to Daniel Buren, the museum defines whatever it displays as beautiful. It serves as the guarantor of its definition by refusing to assimilate what it cannot co-opt in these terms (Buren 1998: 50-52). Buren makes an explicit distinction between the museum and the street, which confronts us with beauty's opposite, ugliness, 'la laideur' (ibid: 64). Museums eradicate 'les parasites visuels' (ibid: 69), while the space of the street is unavoidably contaminated by 'pollueurs visuels' (ibid: 70). In short, the museum's purpose is to *cleanse* the work of art. The ideological motivation of the museum, as Douglas Crimp has shown, was to sequester art in a secluded space, 'where [it] was made to appear autonomous, alienated, something apart, referring only to its internal history and dynamics' (Crimp 1993: 13). This produced the modern epistemology of art wherein the museum acted as a utopia, the space of art itself as a transhistorical location. Buren sums up the museum/non-museum opposition by suggesting that '[d]ans le meilleur des cas, le musée promeut le chef-d'oeuvre de beauté pure. Dans le meilleur des cas, la plus belle oeuvre d'art dans la rue, sur une place, ne peut être qu'un chef-d'oeuvre métisse' (Buren 1998: 74). Site-specific art, or l'art *in situ*, rejected such autonomy by establishing a *tension* between work and site (see ibid: 79-80).

The literal and notional melding of Serra's *Splashing* to its site became paradigmatic of site-specific art as an anti-museological form. At the same time, it challenged the logic of the art market, typical of early site-specific art's 'self-

conscious desire to resist the forces of the capitalist market economy, which circulates art works as transportable and exchangeable commodity goods' (Kwon 1997: 86).

Splashing raised a further doubt about whether it could be considered as a work of art at all. Site-specific art in Serra's wake changed from being an anti-museum form to a way of questioning the very distinction between art and non-art. As site-specific art stopped being defined by its exit from the museum, the link between the work of art and its site became the focus of critical attention.

Work/site relations: language, dialogue and missing plinths

Site-specific art theory has proposed numerous ways to conceptualize the relations between a work of art and its site, ranging from linguistic models to notions of exchange and mediation. Michel Gauthier compares site-specific art to shifters, 'les mots dont le sens varie avec la situation comme, par exemple, le mot 'ici'. De tels mots, tout en s'ajustant à n'importe quel contexte d'énonciation, ne se comprennent qu'à être indexés sur de précises coordonnées' (Gauthier 1987: 24). The comparison is insightful in its stress on meaning as context-dependent, and provides a useful conceptual model even if its analytical force is rather narrow.

François Barré links work and site through a series of terms which point to power dynamics or economic factors:

Il n'y a pas de sites neutres. Dans chaque contexte on trouve une structure et des implications idéologiques... Mais il y a des sites où il est évident que l'oeuvre d'art est: surordonnée à / accommodée à/ adaptée à/ asservie à/ nécessaire à/ utile à' (Barré 2002: 10).

Barré gives the impression that almost any relational term could be used. From Gauthier to Barré, there is a move from a structuralist to a post-structuralist view of the relation between work and site. The first takes language as a theoretical model, the second advances the provisionality of terms to show the unsuitability of a particular language model, and perhaps of models per se. The concept of reciprocity has also been theorized as a model for linking works of art and sites, with work and site engaging in a process of (mutual) witnessing, or in a dialogue: 'l'oeuvre *in situ*

est hors d'elle-même. C'est le dialogue jamais achevé avec un lieu qui lui donne sa personnalité' (Gaillard 2002: 92).

Theorists like Thierry de Duve and Jean-Marc Poinot focus on the elements which mediate between work and site, such as the body, memory, the imaginary museum, or photographs and archives. Duve argues that site-specific sculpture attempts to reconstitute the notion of site even as it recognizes its disappearance. Vermeiren's famous plinths without their statues produced:

[...] ni l'espace social lui-même, ni l'espace culturel du musée comme institution, mais la dialectique de deux lieux [...] par où se reconstitue un espace [qui] n'est repérable que par la médiation d'un troisième espace, culturel et déterritorialisé, qui est celui du musée imaginaire, de la photographie. (Duve 2002: 86)

For Duve, the site-specific work of art negates the museum, only to allow it to resurface in altered, fragmented form, displaced and deterritorialized, like a personal or cultural memory. Site-specific art exists simultaneously in a real and imaginary space:

C'est à la fois l'espace réel mais délocalisé et portatif du musée imaginaire - celui des revues d'art, des catalogues, de toutes les traces sans lesquelles, comme chacun sait, les oeuvres *in situ* sombrerait vite dans l'oubli et l'espace imaginaire, c'est-à-dire mental et mémorial, du musée réel, celui qui est peuplé de statues absentes et comme désaffecté. (ibid)

Poinot (1999) shows that the site-specific work of art must be understood in relation to its paratextual framework. He examines the ways in which it is documented, photographed, described, juxtaposed or certified. In other words, the site-specific work of art has no intrinsic quality or characteristic but is the product of its verbal and visual mediations. Poinot calls these mediations 'récits autorisés': the para-textual apparatus, the art work's 'péri-oeuvre'.

Discursive sites, disoriented viewers

Following these observations, it is clear that site-specificity has become a discursive site in itself, 'delineated as a field of knowledge, intellectual exchange, or cultural debate' (Kwon 1997: 92). Rather than being a reflection on sites, site-specific art, 'structured (inter)textually rather than spatially' (ibid: 95), presents a conceptual space in which the discursive organization of sites is explored. This meant that the art viewer was no longer able to orient his/her analysis of the work of art according to agreed and fixed standards, as Buren explains:

Le respect de[s] canons par l'artiste permettait au regardeur de juger, de manière presque objective, de son talent à s'y conformer. S'en écarter permettait également de juger de la justesse de l'écart ou de son congruité. À notre époque, rien de semblable. Et le regardeur est perdu. Il doit juger de ce qu'il regarde non plus à l'aune d'une règle commune plus ou moins bien définie et suivie, mais à celle de son rapport direct et unique entre lui-même, sa conscience, sa notion du beau, sa culture, ses connaissances et celui qui peint, qui produit l'oeuvre, sa démarche, ses qualités propres, sa place dans le temps. Aucune règle explicite ne peut l'aider. (Buren 1998: 49)

The site-specific work of art brings notions of culture, aesthetics and epistemology together. The viewer's subjectivity and cultural repertoire constitute the work of art's meaning, but such a derogation of canons and standards leaves the viewer disoriented, a point Duve agrees with: '[c]'est bien de cela qu'il s'agit dans l'art *in situ*: d'une situation où l'on se trouve abandonné parce que, justement, la notion de site est perdue' (Duve 2002: 88).

Site-specific art, as this brief survey suggests, went from being a critique of the museum to an exploration of discursivity. Since it was not a text-based form, as site-specific theatre and performance were, it showed all the more powerfully how notions of art are intertextually mediated and discursively organized. By annexing site-specific art and art theory to its critical genealogy, site-specific theatre and performance pronounced the death of theatre as text, and the birth of site-specific theatre and performance as intertextual.

Consolidating the genres of site-specific theatre and performance

The analysis of site-specific theatre and performance is immediately confronted with the issue of what to call these types of performance. This is especially evident in the comparison of terms in English and French. Alongside variations on 'site-specific' such as 'site-exclusive', 'site-sympathetic' and 'site-generic', Fiona Wilkie notes a number of alternatives: '[c]ontext-sensitive; environmental art; outdoor performance; interactive; landscape theatre; installation; season-specific; public; promenade; contextually reactive; street theatre; place-oriented work; made specially for' (Wilkie 2002: 151). Each term gives weight to a different feature of performances. Judging from this list, site-specific theatre and performance are constantly reinventing themselves, as if each production called for a new generic description. The resistance to naming the genre is part of a desire to preserve the names of places and sites, to retain their specificity and sedimentation in the individual or collective imaginary.³

In French, the commonest term for site-specific art is 'l'art in situ',⁴ although this has not been adapted for theatre and performance. Variations include 'l'oeuvre *extra-muros*' (eg Buren 1998: 15); 'l'art hors musées' (eg Buren 1998: 17); 'l'art dans la rue' (eg Charbonneaux 2002: 7); 'l'art du lieu commun' (eg Cauquelin 1999); 'l'art contextuel' (eg Ardenne: 2002). In a theatre or performance context, critics often refer to 'théâtre hors le murs',⁵ a phrase which was used in France to describe the decentralization of theatre from Paris to the provinces dating from the early decades of the 20th century.

³ Ariane Mnouchkine refused to affix the name of her theatre company, the Théâtre du Soleil, at the site of the Cartoucherie de Vincennes in Paris, for some years after it had been used for theatre. Perhaps this reluctance to name the venue was an attempt to keep alive the Cartoucherie's former function as a cartridge factory and military installation (see Bergère and Sapin 2000).

⁴ According to Poinot (1999: 84), Daniel Buren is the first to have used 'oeuvre *in situ*' to describe a site-specific work of art. Françoise Gaillard explains that the term was borrowed from archaeology: '[p]our les archéologues à qui elle a été empruntée, elle désigne tout à la fois l'inscription d'un objet dans le lieu même de son usage, et sa présentation en situation dans l'endroit où il fut découvert. On retrouve cette double acception dans l'utilisation que les artistes font de ce terme, et elle en explique l'adoption (Gaillard 2002: 91).

⁵ Philippe Madral's book, *Le Théâtre hors le murs* (Madral 1969), written while he was a journalist working for *L'Humanité*, contains interviews with directors of newly established theatres outside Paris. Theatre decentralization in France is analyzed most fully in Gontard 1973.

Online biographical notes for André Engel, well-known for his site-specific productions, offer paraphrases. The Théâtre de l'Odéon says that '[Engel] déplace le terrain du spectacle *hors des théâtres dans des lieux insolites*: hangar, haras, hôtel, mine de fer - par exemple Dell'Inferno, spectacle donné tout d'abord dans une usine désaffectée de la Plaine Saint-Denis'⁶ (my italics) while the entry on the Centre Dramatique National de Savoie website reads: ' [il] cherche à proposer une situation inédite pour chacune de ses créations, qu'il travaille dans *des 'lieux' non dédiés au théâtre* comme il l'a fait longtemps, ou qu'il travaille dans les théâtres [...] '(my italics).⁷ Poinsot, however, objects to the term 'site-specificity' because it gives too much emphasis to 'site', is too closely associated with a critique of the museum and 'évacue de manière idéaliste les véritables modalités d'existence et de mise en vue de l'oeuvre' (Poinsot 1999: 95).

The adoption of the term 'site-specificity' in English has definite ramifications. 'Site', with its homonyms of 'sight' and 'cite', is tied up with key concerns of post-structuralist theory. The word's punning capacity is undoubtedly one of its attractions for theorists, since puns themselves turn words into hybrid and unstable sites of meaning and often operate through *accidental* homophonies.⁸ As a result of this semantic coincidence, analysis of site-specific theatre and performance can seem unduly weighted in the direction of vision and citationality, as a consequence of the very term chosen for generic identification. Site-specific theatre and performance's reluctance about naming should therefore be viewed as a mode of resistance to the potential of language to turn sites into a play of signifiers.

Site-specific theatre and performance locations

According to Mike Pearson and Clifford McLucas, site-specific performances 'are conceived for, and conditioned by, the particulars of **found** spaces, (former) **sites** of work, play and worship' (Kaye 1996: 211; emphasis in original). Spaces can be

⁶ At www.theatre-odeon.fr/public/document/biograph/engel.htm

⁷ At www.cdn-savoie.fr/biographies/engel.php

⁸ See Ulmer 1988 for a discussion of the pun in post-structuralist theory. The accidental meanings which site-specific performances produce are a central part of their aesthetics.

‘found’ in two senses, either because they have been abandoned and a director or company rediscovers them, or because they were not an obvious choice for performance and are shown to have unexpected potential and resonances (I discuss the metaphor of ‘finding’ theatre and performance spaces in Chapters 1 and 2). A site-specific performance will often use sites which have had a *former* use or association. This makes it an act of remembering. Such performances look back at the past of a site and reflect on the relation between different times, then and now. This goes hand in hand with a reflection on the risks of aestheticizing or poeticizing the act of remembering and its possible misunderstanding and misrecognition of sites. Site-specific theatre and performance are haunted by the implications of representation and the stories they cannot, or do not want, to tell, as Scarpetta’s critical texts of interpretive and photographic failure suggest.

Wilkie observes that site-specific performances take place in playgrounds, work buildings and work-sites, churches, galleries, theatre buildings and their locality, museums, beaches, tunnels, shopping centres, hospitals and castles (Wilkie 2002).⁹ Only two of these spaces, ‘tunnels’ and ‘shopping centres’, correspond to what Marc Augé has called ‘non-spaces’, the impersonal transit zones of ‘surmodernité’ (Augé 1992). This implies that site-specific theatre and performance are more attracted to spaces which embody the personal lives and dramas of individuals than those generating wider critiques about social practices and organization. Mention of galleries, museums and theatre buildings underlines the continued wish to tackle previous modes of cultural representation, an issue I address in Part 2, Chapters 4 and 5, in relation to the Bouffes du Nord in Paris.

On the other hand, Alan Read’s description of site-specific theatre and performance emphasizes the use of places and buildings associated with the industrial era: ‘[c]urrently there is renewed experiment internationally with “non-theatre” spaces, significantly the architecture of the industrial period, reconditioned for a “new

⁹ Miwon Kwon’s list of site-specific *art’s* locations is more heterogeneous: ‘contemporary site-oriented works occupy hotels, city streets, housing projects, prisons, schools, hospitals, churches, zoos, supermarkets etc., and infiltrate media spaces such as radio, newspapers, television, and the Internet’ (Kwon 1997: 92).

theatre to meet a new public” (Read 1993: 4-5). By finding and performing in the derelict spaces of a post-industrial society, the creators of this kind of site-specific performance inevitably ask whether they are faithful to the experience of work, labour and production, an issue on which I focus in Chapter 6 dealing with the Cartoucherie de Vincennes. Theatre and performance in such sites are in danger of being out of place; based on aesthetic pleasure and the availability of leisure time, they can be seen as barred from accessing the experiences which resonate through these former work, labour or production sites.

One of the ironies of site-specific performances which focus on waste, decay and dereliction is their potential for an uncritical romanticism which draws on familiar literary tropes like the romance of the ruin or the beauty of decay.¹⁰ Yet site-specific theatre and performance, I maintain, confront and stage the risks of aestheticizing phenomena which remain eyesores outside the redemptive arena of performance, symbolic of failing communities, ghettos and social problems.

The spaces Wilkie mentions show site-specific performances’ potential for human-based, affective narratives while Read indicates their wider socio-historical agenda. Pearson and McLucas aim at a comprehensive summary of site-specific performance locations:

A host site might offer a number of things

- a a particular and unavoidable history
- b a particular use (a cinema, a slaughterhouse)
- c a particular formality (shape, proportion, height, disposition of architectural elements etc.)
- d a particular political, cultural or social context
- e a particular kind of ‘halfway house’ for event and audience to meet (a workplace, meeting place, a street, a church) (Quoted in Kaye 1996: 213)

¹⁰ See Pearson and Shanks 2001: 131-3 for a discussion of the tendency to aestheticize derelict buildings and decay in general.

What these host sites¹¹ present is an ‘other scene’ or version of events, a counter or complementary narrative which suggests that there are (hi)stories which are in the process of *not being told*. While a slaughterhouse raises ethical questions about the intervention of performance, a cinema makes us conscious of multiple aesthetic modes and different ways of telling. A particular formality unsettles the dominant role of language in both our conceptualization of the world and our aesthetic response to it, while particular political, cultural or social contexts show how the aesthetic is one (particularly seductive or pervasive) discourse among many.

The critical function of site-specific theatre and performance

This thesis sets out to show that site-specific theatre and performance bring the questions of validity and legitimacy to the forefront of their aesthetics, using the decay and waste of their sites as powerful figurative forces to inscribe contingency and mutability in the cultural experiences they offer. They are modes of performance which are profoundly marked by criticism and self-criticism, both at the level of the individual spectator’s processes of subjectivity and in relation to wider socio-cultural and aesthetic formations. I argue that site-specific performances turn the production of a critical mindset in the spectator into a creative process and that this constitutes their particular critical force and critique value.

A reclaiming of abandoned or derelict spaces is, on one level, a practical critique of consumer society and its cultural amnesia. Michel de Certeau claimed that pedestrians resisted Foucauldian topographies of disciplinary power through strategies and tactics which turned spaces into subjective mappings (see de Certeau 1990). Site-specific theatre and performance often take critics and spectators into precisely those spaces excluded from our spatial norms. By reclaiming sites, site-specific theatre and performance issue a critique of instrumentalized social practices which treat buildings and places as dispensable.

This thesis focuses principally on the aesthetics and criticism of site-specific theatre and performance, and deals with their impact on subjectivity. It therefore

¹¹ The phrase ‘host site’ brings to mind the vocabulary of diseases, so that the site ‘hosts’ the

makes no claims to be an empirical analysis of how these performance modes influence urban planning, play a role in urban regeneration, or even make us into better pedestrians in de Certeau's sense. However, I suggest that the practice of reclaiming derelict, abandoned spaces by means of theatre and performance, bringing spectators into environments they would normally avoid, evade, or associate with crime and abjection, and recirculating those spaces in the cultural imaginary as counter-cultural 'lieux de mémoire', embodies a critique of progressivist urban policies which wipe away any traces of an industrial past. They also block the parallel movement which turns certain parts of cities into virtual museums, where ageing buildings and romantically crumbling stonework become discursively reorganized as the sanctioned space of the city's history, an artificial, sanitized and controlled 'lieu' where only the right (often with its political overtones) 'mémoires' are allowed to surface.

Remodelling critical metaphors: decay and waste

The sites used in site-specific performances go beyond a critique of social practice and policy, turning spectators into critical agents. I develop the argument that the presence of waste and decay in site-specific theatre and performance provides us with a different model for critical practice. At the same time, decay and waste advance the provisionality of the models we use in critical writing and the fact that criticism need not impose a critical distance in search of objectivity, but may be implicated in the theatre/performance event.

Kantor argued that concepts such as 'expression' and 'metaphor' were no longer valid when one accepted that an object simply existed. In Kantor's theory, objects are decaying and approaching the condition of waste. I join Kantor's insight to Pearson and Shanks's suggestion that site-specific performances can be interpreted in relation to decay and waste. The metaphors by which we structure our aesthetic and epistemological categories, in particular in relation to reactions to a performance, can be viewed in terms of the effects of decay, which deprive an object of its instrumental

performance which becomes its 'para-site'.

value and identifiable function. Criticism is therefore no longer seen as the instrumental and functional framing of theatre or performance. While site-specific performances re-use sites as part of a counter-cultural critique of social practice, they also encourage spectators to re-use the performance experience in a critical and creative re-writing.

Refiguring critical practice

Site-specific theatre and performance produce creative critics and spectators, a claim I make especially in relation to the way we (re-)write our experience of these events. I argue that criticism of site-specificity is a creative practice, supplementing the act of theatre or performance, sometimes supplanting it. Yet in the process of turning us into creative critics, site-specificity makes us into auto-critics investigating the way our own modes of sense-making are shaped by desire and rendered impure by intertextual interference. In particular, I examine the ways in which site-specific theatre and performance lead us to conceptualize our critical procedures.

Site-specificity makes its own critical processes precarious, subjecting them to profound scepticism. One of the most stimulating characteristics of this performance genre is its capacity to generate figurations of the act of criticism and different morphologies of critical practice. I analyze how site-specificity makes going from one place into another, the spectator's or critic's displacement, a structural part of the performance experience, a crossing of borders which is also a meditation on them. Site-specific performances lead us to reflect on the implications of entering and leaving, to ask how our physical presence and disfiguring intertextualities and embodied memories have an impact on what we find. In other words, entering a site-specific performance is already a critical procedure.

Site-specific theatre and performance's reclaiming of dereliction, its rehabilitation of decay, its journeys into other spaces, are an act of social critique, a negative poetics, and a reinscription of the scene of writing, all of which bring about a profound implication of the critical process in the construction and production of the phenomenon it criticizes.

Constructing site-specificity, reconstructing its afterlife

Alongside its expository and theoretical arguments, this thesis examines five principal sites, three used for site-specific performances in London in the 1990s, and two which came to prominence in 1970s Paris. Deborah Warner's site-specific theatre in London took place in a derelict hotel, an abandoned music hall venue and a disused office block. Peter Brook's Bouffes du Nord was a derelict theatre and Ariane Mnouchkine's Cartoucherie de Vincennes was a former munitions factory and military installation.

I adopt this reverse chronology in order to show that the site-specificity of the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie can only be constructed retrospectively in the light of bodies of work like Deborah Warner's. Warner's work, in its use of transitional, industrial and former cultural spaces, reveals the extent of site-specificity's critique value and emotional resonance, permitting a re-reading of the implications of critical discourse around the sites of these two famous Parisian venues.

This thesis divides into two parts. The first deals with the ways in which site-specific theatre and performance are constructed in relation to the negative and the act of (critical) writing. The second part explores the arguments of Part 1 by developing the notion of a 'site-specific moment' which is used to analyze case studies of Peter Brook's Bouffes du Nord and Ariane Mnouchkine's Cartoucherie de Vincennes in Paris.

In Part 1, Chapter 1, I argue that site-specific theatre and performance emerged as a negation of the purity of the work of art, the proper space of performance, and the traditional role, constitution and behaviour of the audience. Based on the theoretical work of three critic-practitioners, Chapter 1 outlines Allan Kaprow's analysis of how the use of waste objects made art aesthetically impure and generically hybrid. The importance of the object persists in Tadeusz Kantor's work, whose focus on decay, the power of the negative and the non-expressivity of art, are central concepts in the evolution of site-specific theatre and performance. Richard

Schechner's theories of environmental theatre accentuate negative emotions, individual subject positions and 'found' spaces, all of which are crucial facets of site-specific performances.

In Chapter 2, I argue that site-specific theatre and performance produce writing caught between the desire for secrecy and the pleasure of exposure. They posit the spectator as the secret producer of their effects who is always haunted by the dangers of over-exposure. Site-specific performances arose as a critique of theatricality, but they also sought for greater critical engagement in a performance's production of meaning.

In Chapter 3, I embark on a case study of the site-specific theatre and performance of Deborah Warner, focusing on three London productions between 1995-9. These exemplify how negation, generic hybridity and writing-effects blur the boundaries between the self which experiences the work of art and the self which creates it. Warner's work confirms my analysis in the preceding chapters of the role of the object, the fragmentation of the audience, and the uses of decay and its impact on writing and the critical self. I read Warner's site-specific theatre production, the *Tower Project*, through the texts of another writer, Camilo José Vergara, in order to investigate site-specific performance's engagement with the notions of textuality and intertextuality.

Part 2 explores the afterlife of site-specificity in critical discourse and identity formations. It examines how the site-specific moments of the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie de Vincennes were re-used to characterize the ethics and aesthetics of Brook's and Mnouchkine's theatre practice. Part 2 begins by showing how the site-specificity of these two venues was produced, and then reinscribed, in critical writing (chapter 4). Narratives of the journeys into and moments of discovery of the two venues, by Brook, Mnouchkine and critics alike, show how site-specificity became powerful discourses in each theatre's historiography. I go on to outline how critical writing mapped the cultural topographies of these theatres using notions such as the centre and the margin, and the associations of sites before the theatres reached them.

Chapter 5 examines the Bouffes du Nord in relation to decay and establishes how the theatre's physical condition became part of critical discourse. I argue that the theatre's decay became a constantly morphing signifier of its site-specific moment. My analysis shows how critics re-figured decay in a staging of the critical self and the desires for a more painful and self-critical aesthetics of performance. The latter part of the chapter suggests how the Bouffes du Nord's site-specific moment led to the neutralization of the critical force of decay and its resurfacing as the empty sign of citational cultural chic.

In chapter 6, I develop the link between site-specific theatre and performance and post-industrial sites by analyzing how the Cartoucherie de Vincennes furnished the Théâtre du Soleil and theatre critics with a testing ground for a new ethical practice in theatre based on identification with work and the working other. I claim that the Cartoucherie was both the embodiment of the group's identification with and through work and a source of fascination for critics searching for new modes of theatre and performance. The chapter stresses how the Cartoucherie became a potent symbol of the Théâtre du Soleil's performance ethics and how this paradigm, once the culmination of the company's powerful cultural politics of identification, led to its own demise when identification with work and workers could no longer be sustained.

By engaging with site-specific performances from the perspective of critical reception, this thesis aims to reconstruct their 'other scenes'. Site-specific theatre and performance produce distinctive reactions in spectators, creative forms of critical writing and a constant questioning of the legitimacy of their interventions into sites. Through its focus on the subjective responses and wider social issues which site-specific performances raise, this thesis further shows how these elements intersect to disrupt any straightforward notion of the meaning and value of site-specific performance practices.

Chapter 1

Conceptualizing site-specific theatre and performance: found objects, found spaces

Before embarking on an analysis of site-specific theatre and performance in relation to critical writing, it is important to examine how theories of the art object helped shape these performance modes and the performative critical writing which deals with them. In the introduction, I outlined some of the main trends in art and theatre theory which contributed to the rise of site-specific theatre and performance. This chapter focuses on three figures whose art, theatre and theoretical writing mapped what I will call the conceptual space of site-specific theatre and performance. One crucial link between the theorists under discussion, Allan Kaprow, Tadeusz Kantor and Richard Schechner, is their interest in the 'found' object or space, that is, objects or spaces which have not been especially created as works of art or theatre/performance locations, but which have been adapted to these ends. Site-specific theatre and performance place great importance on 'found' objects and spaces, and the theoretical value of this can be traced back to the work of Kaprow, Kantor and Schechner.

Artistic theories of the object are examined to show that the changing status of the object *in* art also brought a changed perception of what the object *of* art should be. These theorists conceived of the objects as being eloquent, or having a cultural biography.¹² Objects could be used to critique the aesthetics and ideology of the work of art; they could function as texts, poetic or confessional, or as signs of absence or negation. They facilitated a critical vocabulary crucial for site-specific theatre and performance in which space could be thought of as an object, and thus found, re-used and refunctioned.¹³

One of the ways they achieved this was in highlighting the fabric and density of their own texts, as we shall see especially in the case of Kaprow and Kantor. Therefore, as well as further developing a critical genealogy for site-specific theatre and performance from these diverse sources, this chapter also charts the accompanying move towards a performative critical writing. Kaprow emphasizes the

¹² For Igor Kopytoff's notion of the 'cultural biography' of objects, see Appadurai 1986. For its application to theories of the theatre object, see McAuley 1999, esp. 181ff.

¹³ Jean Baudrillard in *Le système des objets* suggests how the object can stand in for space by referring to childhood houses: 'Ce qui fait la profondeur des maisons d'enfance, leur prégnance dans le souvenir, est évidemment cette structure complexe d'intériorité où les objets dépeignent à nos yeux les bornes d'une configuration symbolique appelée demeure' (Baudrillard 1968: 22).

objecthood of the book, Kantor experimented with textual layout and formatting to give readers access to the other side of critical writing, its silence and performative modality, while Schechner's editorship of the *The (Tulane) Drama Review* showed how theatre criticism had to provide space for multiple approaches to keep track of the changing object of theatre and performance. I bring these theorists together in order to show how artistic hybridity, the indeterminate limits of the aesthetic, the plurality of the object, and the positioning of the spectator, intersected to create a field which made site-specific theatre and performance possible, and more importantly, writable.

The American artist and art-historian Allan Kaprow sought to explain the shift from canvas painting to environmental art by foregrounding the anti-representationalism of the 'found' object. A keen advocate of aesthetic hybridity, he showed that the border between sculpture and theatre was permeable. Transplanting items from the real into the literal and conceptual space of the work of art made them clues or references to spaces and types of experience normally excluded from art. These site-specific *objects* polluted the autonomous space of art, staging site-specificity as a disruptive otherness. Kantor added his own philosophy of the object to a pervasive aesthetics of decay whose radical aim was to bring about the decay of aesthetics. He posited an art object which would no longer be seen as *artistic*. His objects were part of 'raw reality' and 'reality of the lowest rank', provoking emotions such as nostalgia, pity and melancholy. Their connotativity and poetic associations were subsumed into their ontology. They functioned as a *state* which could be acquired by actors, and by the space of the work of art itself (previously deemed to surround or contain). Kantor guided the focus of site-specific theatre and performance towards decay and waste, a passion for the real, and aesthetic indeterminacy (objects and spaces were both part of an art work and references to its negation, quotations of the lives of objects outside the compass of the work of art). In the 1960s, both figures were involved in Happenings, the often unscripted performance events which took place outside conventional theatre spaces and relied on the creative contribution of participants.

Objects lost and found in the work of Kaprow and Kantor anticipated the lost and found spaces of Schechner's environmental theatre, which asked audience members to find their own viewing positions, and to become cognizant of how such positions were linked to variations in knowledge, power and political agency. His distinctive contribution to site-specific theatre and performance stemmed from the analysis of the spectator/audience relation in his 1968 'Six Axioms for Environmental Theatre'. Schechner's performance spaces removed the division between spectator and audience, leading to alternative forms of critical and spectatorial subjectivity which welcomed incomplete and negative responses. By validating the embodied, reactive and disoriented spectator rather than the ideal *reader* of theatre, Schechner would create a paradigm for site-specific performances which situated their aesthetics in a negative poetics of gaps, leakages, misunderstandings and misapprehensions.

Allan Kaprow and the class of art objects

From the late 1950s, the trend in art theory had been to assess the interactions between different artistic media and, in a further step, the relation of art to the real. In two articles published in 1958, Kaprow predicted that the young artists destined to make their mark on the 1960s would turn to the everyday real, the experience of their bodies and senses, to question how art operated. Their work would not endeavour to create something extraordinary, but to seek out the reality of the ordinary.¹⁴

Kaprow's *Assemblage, Environments and Happenings* (Kaprow 1966) analyzes the key transitional period in which different art forms converged. The book is both a theoretical work of art historiography and an attempt to document new movements in contemporary art. It is clear, however, that the book's format and visual presentation were just as important as its critical insights. Its material presence is crucial to the criticism it makes. I focus on Kaprow's book because its treatment of generic hybridity and the work of art's hazardous borrowings from the real are crucial links to the aesthetics of site-specific performances. At the same time, it anticipates the new critical strategies which site-specific performances produce by becoming a

creative object, an art object, in itself. Part of its function is to emulate and cite the objects it presents, to challenge the critical frameworks (the documentary process, the ideology of the book, the role of photography) imposed on its subject matter.

Assemblage, Environments and Happenings opens with a series of black and white photographs of works by a wide range of artists (including Claes Oldenburg, Robert Whitman, Clarence Schmidt, Jim Dine, and Kaprow himself), most of whose work uses waste and debris such as gutters, garbage cans, tyres, bedsprings, industrial pipes and plastics. The images are collected into subgroups with headings such as 'Specters from refuse', 'Out of Gutters and Garbage Cans', 'Fragile Geometries' or 'Fictions'.

The photographs are positioned in various ways to highlight the fact that they mediate and manipulate the works of art they present. Some fill entire pages, others have side margins, or are framed by the page. Occasional pages, including double spreads, are left entirely black, while others are white except for a dot two or so centimetres in diameter at their centre. This textual strategy reminds us that the document has its blindspots and opacities, that the photograph negates as much as it clarifies.

In a complex gesture, the photographs often depict the artists next to their work, turning their presence into the equivalent of a signature. The artist's body serves the purpose usually given over to a written sign, further disrupting the ideology of transparency associated with the photograph by invoking its intertextual relationship with painting. It exposes the practice in books and catalogues of removing artworks from their locational context by making photograph and painting/sculpture isomorphic, giving the impression that the image is an unmediated and totalizing version of the work of art.¹⁴ The figure of the artist introduces diachrony into the image, giving it a temporality, *dating* it, in several senses of the word (who usually thinks of the date of a *photograph* of a work of art?). The artist's

¹⁴ See 'The Heritage of Pollock' (Kelley 1993) and 'Notes on the Creation of a Total Art' (Kelley 1993)

¹⁵ Barbara Savedoff discusses the implications of reproducing the image of a painting so that it is flush with the paper on which it is printed, suggesting that this can 'seriously distort the effect of the painting' (Savedoff 1999: 353).

body is the displaced mark of writing and a disruptive critical presence, a blocking of the timelessness of the camera lens; the body as blindspot in the photograph's ideology of transparency.

Kaprow establishes his book's generic hybridity from the outset by promoting a form of reading which is closer to viewing.¹⁶ He invites us to 'STEP', and then, on turning the page, 'RIGHT IN' (Kaprow 1966: 1-2; emphasis in original), to embark on an imaginary tour around the book-museum. Kaprow explains that the art works' decay and disappearance are neutralized in these photographs. The photographs 'refer to their models, but strangely, as would a movie taken of a dream, stopped at unexpected intervals' (ibid: 21), like a single frame out of the work of art's history.

Kaprow designed *Assemblage, Environments and Happenings* so that the book's physical appearance would replicate the art it features and question its own documentary process. Its cover is made of rough, closely woven brown fabric which looks like sack-cloth and has the words of the title stamped into it in badly aligned capital letters.¹⁷ These appear in smaller format diagonally along its spine, bringing to mind the industrial intertext of the printing found on cargo crates. The cover encourages tactility as part of its ironic comment on the modern tendency of books to erase their own materiality, alerting us to the fact that as well as works of art, the book contains images of what are still recognizably industrial products and household waste.

Kaprow's critical essay comes half way through, distinguished by brown, recycled paper which smells of wood and looks grainy. In contrast to the high quality, gloss finish of the photograph pages, which show art made out of waste, these pages give the author's *words* an aura and odour of decay and fragility. Such exchanges between words, waste, and art are central to Kaprow's arguments about hybridity and my own arguments about the translation of art's decay and waste onto conceptual

¹⁶ Site-specific artist Robert Smithson described this transcoding of reading and seeing in the title of a gallery press release dating from June 1967 called 'Language to be looked at and/or Things to be read' (Holt 1979: 104).

¹⁷ The sack is one of Kantor's privileged 'emballages' or wrappings. See Kobiak (1993: 53) and below.

categories, which would prove fundamental for the aesthetics of site-specific theatre and performance.

The author early on makes his claim about the convergence of the arts:

[o]n the one hand, looking broadly at the whole of recent modern art, the differences which were once so clear between graphic art and painting have practically been eliminated; similarly, the distinctions between painting and collage, between collage and construction, between construction and sculpture, and between some large constructions and a quasi architecture. Even the late work of Le Corbusier has been called habitable sculpture. (ibid: 151)

In analyzing the shift from flat to round in the history of 'picture making' (ibid: 155), Kaprow moves from cave painting, bound to its environment, to the point at which the image was *separated* from its physical setting. With this move towards representation, '[p]ainting had become symbol rather than power, i.e., something which *stood for* experience rather than *acting directly upon it*' (ibid: 156).

Artistic schools feature if they changed the conception of how a painting functions as a representational system. Impressionism was exemplary in its depiction of the ephemeral and transient even though it created art works meant to last. In contrast, contemporary works *embody* the ephemeral through their limited life-span, foregrounding of decay and gradual transformation into waste. Such works challenge the division between representation and its object by making the art work *actualize* what it represents.

The crucial moment in this critical narrative was the addition of real objects which broke the planar surface of paintings. This characteristic was found in paintings as long ago as the Middle Ages in which '[a]ngels' and madonnas' heads were often surrounded by raised, gilded-stucco halos [...] as though to render that most intangible of phenomena - a radiance - more factual' (ibid: 157). However, the addition of actual objects to the flat canvas changed the painting from being the representation of a thing (itself absent as a prerequisite of representation) to the foregrounding of the painting as material object: '[t]o alter this [flat surface] by making it organic and irregular would be, as many current experimenters have found

out, to discover that the painting became a single painted thing rather than a reference to objects in space' (ibid).

The essay reports the sorts of objects artists went on to use and the places they took them from:

These things may include clothing, baby carriages, machine parts, masks, photographs, printed words, and so forth, which have a high degree of associational meaning; however, they may just as often be more generalized, like plastic film, cloth, raffia, mirrors, electric lights, cardboard, or wood - somewhat less specific in meaning, restricted to the substances themselves, their uses and modes of transformation. (ibid: 161-2)

Some of the objects evoke personal narratives and memories, while others signify modes of production and consumption. The first set of objects draws us into associations with subjectivity and emotions, the second refers us outwards, to wider social processes. Kaprow elaborates on the rationale behind the choice of objects in his analysis of the material used in environments:

[t]hey are not, however, indifferently chosen, but represent a current class of things: memoirs, objects of everyday use, industrial waste and so forth. These firstly represent a further enlargement of the domain of art's subject matter, for in many cases these materials *are* the subject matter as well as the media; unlike the more neutral substance of paint, they refer directly to specific aspects of our lives. Coming from factories, the street, the household, the hardware store, dump, or garbage can, they force into focus once again the eternal problems of what may be (or become) art and what may not. (ibid: 166)

Assemblages and environments used objects which had been categorized as waste. Once they had served their purpose, they were deemed useless and left to decay, losing their names in collective categories such as 'scrap' or 'garbage'. Assemblages and environments took up the degraded objects of everyday life to signify the creation of *human* objects and the objectification of human memories, of disposable non-subjects, by consumer capitalism. As Kaprow says, these objects *refer directly to specific aspects of our lives*. Such works of art took a disused object and gave it the lowest form of dignity, the capacity to be differentiated.

The choice of objects and the importance of their social/class origins¹⁸ contributed to the capacity of these art works to critique the institutional and ideological foundations of art. Objects reclaimed from the status of waste attacked the idea of the permanence of art by continuing to decay, highlighting the diachronic difference of the work from any one moment of viewing or evaluation. This very threat to art's permanence turned out to be the most difficult aspect of these movements to accept:

In an increasing number of instances the work is intended to last only a short time and is destroyed immediately after exhibition. In nearly all, if their obsolescence is not deliberately planned, it is expected. And it is over this point that the greatest fear and hostility are voiced. Here is the central expression of this art's difference from the past. Why, people ask, if it is claimed to be art, will it not last? (ibid: 167)

The factory, the street, the household and the hardware store contaminated the ideological space of the work of art, symbolizing a critique of its location in a museum and its privileged cultural position. By resisting incorporation into the representational system of the art work, such objects remained out of place, objectionable presences. They *referred* outside the work of art to everyday industrial and work spaces, to waste and dereliction, showing that art could not easily absorb these areas of experience. The objects in assemblages and environments were in a state of becoming:¹⁹ becoming art, becoming the waste to which they had been consigned, with no strict causality or division between the two. The emphasis on the work of art's evolution in the artist's absence brought about its dissociation from human intention. Now, weathering, or other accidental factors outside the artist's control, could help shape works of art (see ibid: 172).²⁰

¹⁸ There is the trace of a pun in Kaprow's claim that re-used art objects represent 'a current *class* of things' since they are arguably objects with *working-class* associations and from working-class contexts, a fact not incidental in their capacity to change perceptions of the work of art.

¹⁹ Kaprow makes a distinction between 'being' and 'becoming' when he refers to the 'eternal problems' of art in the quotation above.

The implications of Kaprow's analysis

The work of art's gradual destruction has to be seen as a response to the aporias of the historical avant-garde. Gianni Vattimo has argued that the historical avant-garde aimed to bring about the death of art, which in the neo or post avant-garde periods, turned into an exploration of its *decline* (Vattimo 1988). According to Vattimo, art from the historical avant-garde challenged the traditional places, such as the theatre, the museum and the book, where aesthetic value was located, as well as offering alternative objects which could be used in art. By substituting 'ready-made' objects for traditional ones, the historical avant-garde put technology at the heart of artistic production, creating a rupture in art history, and an internal split in art itself. Subsequent art could only express its authenticity through silence. The influence of technology led to recycling, recirculation and kitsch: art which searched for authenticity could only do so through its own negation.

The idea of art being haunted by self-negation is one of the characteristics of site-specific theatre and performance. Similarly apparent in site-specific theatre and performance are the role of technology, recycling, waste and dereliction. The use of waste objects created by industrial processes anticipated site-specific theatre and performance's ongoing use of the discarded spaces of an increasingly post-industrial Western society. The practice of 'finding' objects to constitute art would be vigorously adopted in site-specific theatre and performance as a powerful way of redefining theatre in relation to contingency and unpredictability.

By focusing attention on their decline and disappearance, these objects were in fact *repeating*, as if in slow motion, the processes of decay to which they were consigned by society, citing their own casual categorization as waste. Objects which had coalesced in the cultural imaginary as the excluded waste of the late 20th century's post-industrial consumer technologies were reinvested with their links to human emotions, bodies and memories. The object was not quite inside the representational frame and not quite outside it. It was a transitional object, in

²⁰ Kaprow calls the accidental, 'a trigger of the unconscious and, occasionally, of real freedom' (Kaprow 1966: 174).

Winnicott's sense (Winnicott 1980), on the threshold of becoming symbolic, or more precisely, both symbolic and non-symbolic at the same time.

Tadeusz Kantor: the abject and sublime object of/as theatre

The Polish theatre director and writer Tadeusz Kantor was at the forefront of experimental movements in European art and theatre/performance for nearly fifty years. His work included painting, sculpture, Informel art, emballages, Happenings, theatre and performance, as well as critical and theoretical writing on aesthetics, philosophy and theatre/performance. This section will concentrate on his critical writing and his theories of the object.

Like Kaprow, Kantor's analysis and creation of art privileged decaying, abject objects because of their material excess (they are not bounded, but reveal gaps, fissures, holes, i.e. *depth*) and plural temporality (decay refers to old times, the object's past lives). Kantor theorized objects as eliciting emotions. The Kantorian object was not an entity, but an *event*.

Any sense of Kantor's theatre writings as expository critical statements is disrupted by the attention they attract to their own textuality. Reading Kantor writing is akin to reading Kantor thinking and creating; it is the encounter with a voice and an embodied self. His texts perform their search for adequate modes of expression through experiments with layout and typography. He uses language not as a medium of communication which simply conveys a message, but as the *object* of play, pleasure, manipulation and degradation. In his writings, the theoretical and poetic intersect, undoing the binary opposition between them.

Kantor links the object, the human being, and space through a process of transference or transcoding.²¹ A dynamic and fluid exchange of characteristics between the three categories suspends pre-conceptions such as actor equals human, object equals non-human or unemotional and space equals abstract and amorphous. The object, the body, and space are part of a signifying chain but the links between

²¹ I take the concept of 'transcoding' from Stallybrass and White who describe it as the flow of metaphor and symbolic substitution between body, topography and social formation (see Stallybrass and White 1986).

them are disarticulated. Differences and similarities are perceived as effects or forces, energy, not essences. In Kantor's performance theory, space and the actor are able to be treated as objects, and can be abject, discarded, manipulated, cherished or caressed.

The increasing presence of autobiographical elements in Kantor's theatre productions is symptomatic of the tendency towards 'autobiocriticism' found in response to site-specific theatre and performance. Kantor allowed private and subjective memories to shape his theatre productions and criticism, conscious of the need for evolution in the face of theatre which '[I]acks/any ambition of/being **'different'**;/ the desire to/ discover its definition and shape/in the analysis of the generations to come./ This theatre is sentenced to be erased from the memory' (Kobialka 1993: 45).²²

Kantor and the Object

Kantor's thinking on the art object involves questioning its self-identity. His object transgresses boundaries (between the animate and the inanimate, the structured and the destructured, the concrete and the abstract, the verbal and the non-verbal). Kantor rejects the idea that an object's meaning comes about in reference to its function and purpose. It operates instead as a space on to which the imagination can be projected. The object 'form[s] an imagination 'H O L E' (ibid: 30), a void space at which associations, connotations, language and the non-verbal, memories and anticipation converge.

Kantor's object exists on the cusp, on the verge of becoming other (of being otherwise), in a continual state of potentiality. It embodies risk, movement in stasis and multiple temporalities. To characterize its indeterminacy, Kantor refers to 'AN OBJECT SUSPENDED "BETWEEN GARBAGE AND ETERNITY"' (ibid: 19). The word 'suspended' captures its oscillation, while 'garbage' contrasts with the abstract, metaphysical 'eternity' in a way which creates a third, impure term. To put it

Language and object

Kantor says that '[t]he object simply exists. This statement has irrevocably depreciated the notions of expression, interpretation, metaphor, and similar devices' (ibid: 85). But is criticism viable without expression, interpretation and metaphor? How can we use language which does not betray the simple existence, and more importantly, the resistance, of the object? Site-specific theatre and performance stage precisely this resistance of sites and objects to the tropes of criticism such as expression and reflection, actively staging their excess and resistance to the language and metaphors which try to embody them.

Writing about the aesthetics of Informel art, Kantor makes an explicit link between the raw reality of decaying objects, 'MATERIALS AND OBJECTS AT THE THRESHOLD OF BECOMING MATTER' (ibid: 56), e.g. rags, sackcloths, junk, musty books and mouldered planks, and those parts of language which he calls 'THE RAW MATTER OF SPEECH'. These include:

INARTICULATE SOUNDS
 MURMUR
 STUTTER
 DRAWL
 WHISPER
 CROAK
 WHINING
 SOBBING
 SCREAMING
 SPITTING
 PHONEMES
 OBSCENE LANGUAGE
 SYNTAX-FREE LANGUAGE (ibid: 57-8)

These language acts are not *like* decaying objects, nor are they metaphors for them. In the context of Kantor's theory, language units and waste objects are put on the same plane, part of an interpenetrating, other language which does not signify through the similarities, resemblances and condensations that conventionally structure the relations between language and the world. It is a poetic mode, and one cannot

simply do away with those poetic or figurative structures which govern our thought. Yet what Kantor advocates are metaphors which unravel and come apart at the seams, manifesting their incoherence, obscenity and incomprehensibility. The ear strains to catch the murmur of Kantor's interpenetrating other language, the body is offended by and exposed to it, the mind seeks to allow its stuttering and croaking to signify differently, instead of being translated, interpreted or explained.

Emphasis on the decay and becoming-waste of the object and on forms of language which are 'the raw matter of speech' corresponds to Kantor's wish to synthesize language, body and space in theatre and performance. In Kantor's transferential, transcoded universe, the object stutters or sobs, language becomes junk, waste, frayed or smeared. As a result, criticism responds with disruptive textualities and poetic disfigurements, producing its own border crossings between autobiographical self, the space of the page, the modalities of genre and categories of discourse. Such poetic critical effects permeate the reactions to site-specific performance.

Object and function

Kantor's analysis of the art object also focused on its function, thereby providing site-specific theatre and performance with one of their key tensions between functional objects/spaces and the open-ended poetics of performance. In 'The Autonomous Theatre' (a form of theatre which is not a reproduction, but has its own reality), Kantor describes how the object changes when made part of his work of art/performance:

I created an object
whose utilitarian character
stands in opposition to the
new function that creates this
oppressive and brutal
reality.
I assigned to it
a movement and function
that are absurd when compared with its original ones.

Having done so, I elevated it
to the plane of
ambiguous meanings and
disinterested functions,
that is, the plane of
poetry. (ibid: 46)

The functional object has a purpose so clear that this dominates our view of it. It is almost fully identified with its purpose, which consequently relegates its temporality, connotations and associations to a very secondary status. In Kantor's theatre, the functional object is most suited to his purposes precisely because of its perceived monosemanticism. Theatre adds a plurality of functions to this object's singularity. In its new aesthetic context, the functional object seems absurd, displaced, made alien to itself by its surprising adaptability. Ill-suited to its new found plurality, it looks humorous, clumsy, curiously fluid or beautiful, evoking pity, laughter, even a sense of wonder in the observer.

Kantor suggests that such performative re-usings create '[a]n object that was bereft of a life function that would save it./An object that was stripped, functionless, - artistic!-/An object that would make one feel for it pity and affection' (ibid: 211). The re-functioned object does not disguise its unpoetic origins. It presents its own poverty even as it makes the transition to the poetic, which is shown to be both an act of hubris and a sublime imaginative leap. The functional object is not adequate to its task of representing, and requires the action of the human mind to fulfil its role. It needs us, which explains why we are drawn towards it emotionally. What it comes to represent is the failure of representation, representation's own inadequacy.

Among functional objects, Kantor was particularly fond of making the umbrella part of his art and theatre work. Fixed to a canvas, an umbrella might well be an art object, but it certainly was not an *artistic* object, since it did not revoke its *unlikeliness* as the focus of sustained attention. The umbrella as art object was *out of place*, maintaining its unassimilable ordinariness even when successfully written into art history.

The umbrella opened up into an epiphany for Kantor:

The first umbrella ever fastened to the canvas. The very choice of the object was, for me, a momentous discovery; the very decision of using such a utilitarian object and of substituting it for the sacred object of artistic practices was, for me, a day of liberation through blasphemy. It was more liberating than the day when the first newspapers, the first piece of string, or the first box was glued to a canvas. (ibid: 81).

The umbrella's utilitarian function was the source of its negative poetics for Kantor. Devised for a specific purpose, the umbrella's everydayness makes it something profoundly familiar and therefore susceptible to radical defamiliarization. Attaching it to a canvas does not convert it into an artistic object but into a *replacement* of the artistic object, putting it in a critical relationship with the conceptual space of the artwork (accordingly perceived as missing or negated). Kantor's umbrella does not stand (in) for something else. Instead, it asserts its difference from art as well as its difference from itself.

Newspapers, string and boxes also had a liberating effect on art aesthetics, as Allan Kaprow agreed (Kaprow 1966: 168), so the question arises why the umbrella should be the source of such a 'momentous discovery'? Its annexing of the human body and its prosthetic function humanized it, while its shifting shape made it metamorphic and monstrous. Its structure was elegantly adapted to its function and ugly, clumsy and absurd outside that role. With the umbrella, a complex object had a simple aim. In everyday life, it would be inconceivable to ask 'what is an umbrella for?' or 'what does an umbrella mean'?²³

This made it the ideal art object. The umbrella fastened to the canvas operated as a relational field mapping a space of potentiality between the poetic and the non-poetic.²⁴

²³ Guy Scarpetta refers to Kantor's umbrellas in gothic terms: 'ces parapluies écrasés sur les toiles qui finissent par évoquer des formes fantastiques, menaçantes, des sortes de chauves-souris aux ailes déployées et clouées' (Scarpetta 2000: 114).

²⁴ From his experiments with umbrellas, Kantor developed the notion of 'umbrellic space', a term to which Ariane Mnouchkine was attracted when asked to describe the space of the Cartoucherie (see chapter 4).

The object's negation

As well as being functional, the umbrella also cropped up in Kantor's object theory as an 'emballage' or wrapping:

An umbrella is itself a particularly metaphoric Emballage; it is a 'wrapping' over many human affairs; it shelters poetry, uselessness, helplessness, defencelessness, disinterestedness, hope, ridiculousness. Its diverse 'content' had always been defined by commentaries provided by first, 'Informel' and then, figurative art. (Kobialka 1993: 82)

Kantor's work made extensive use of emballages to explore the effects of the object's provisional negation. Theories of the emballage are crucial for conceptualizing site-specific performances and developing a critical vocabulary of the supplementary and the hidden. The emballage embodies the hidden poetics of the negative and discarded, the unresolved dialectic of secrecy and exposure which I discuss in the following chapter. Just as the emballage hides and exposes the object, site-specific theatre and performance hide and reveal crucial aspects about the concept of theatre.

In the 1964 'Emballage Manifesto' (ibid: 77-81), Kantor analyzed the emballage's status as a denigrated supplement to the primary object. This text is the poetic transgression of a prose genre (the manifesto) in which theory intersects with a poetics, forcing the meta-language of criticism to fold in on itself. In the text, signifiers pile up in a sustained attempt to construct the meaning of the emballage, yet the text is haunted by echoes and repetitions, words displaced from sites of fixed meaning as they form residues of optical and aural memory for the reader.

Kantor's language is both a scientific analysis and a performance of the limits of codification. The word 'emballage' recurs in the text, alone, repeated, elongated or capitalized, undergoing visual mutations and shifts in meaning. Attempts to *classify* what an emballage is lead to 'misunderstanding and contradictions' (ibid: 79). The emballage does not have an essence. One cannot say what it *is*, but only what it *does*: it folds, ties up and seals, stores, isolates and hides, evoking hope, temptation and the unknown.

At the end of the text, the concept of the emballage seems to be coming unwrapped as language disintegrates into a flux of adjectives and infinitives, until a triple repetition of 'emballage' folds the meaning back up and returns its plural secrets to it:

Emballage-
 when we want to send
 something important,
 something significant,
 and something private.
 Emballage-
 when we want to shelter
 and protect,
 to preserve,
 to escape the passage of time.
 Emballage-
 when we want to
 hide something
 deeply.
 EMBALLAGE-
 must be isolated,
 protected from trespassing,
 ignorance,
 and vulgarity.
 Emballage.
 Emballage.
 Emballage. (ibid: 81)

The emballage moulds itself to the object's contours. It highlights limits while temporarily negating the object's provision of vision-based knowledge. Instead of positivism, our interaction with the object comes from emotions, desires and expectations. By emphasizing the emballage itself, Kantor's theory and art question the idea that the meaning of the object is confined to our visual perception of it. In the brevity of its functional role in hiding the object (its *suitability*), its inexorable drift towards rejection and waste, its future displacement (being cast aside) and abasement (being ripped up, thrown away, reduced to the merely superfluous in relation to what it wrapped), Kantor finds in the emballage a sublime poetics of the negative. The triple, end-stopped repetition of the word 'emballage' at the end of the manifesto

represents the limits of theoretical analysis and the return of the object. The word is opened on to its own negation, producing an imagination hole for the object to occupy.

Kantor's used the emballage to question the priority of inside over outside and our perception of the object's borders. It reinvested what had been designated as negation and waste with the desire and human emotions so easily forgotten and cast aside with the unwanted wrapping. By evaluating the emballage's duality as metaphysical essence and throwaway adjunct, Kantor was launching a poetic retrieval of the secondary. Such a revaluation of the negative and its emotional associations, especially in terms of how to capture them in language, are central components of site-specific theatre and performance.

The Object-Space

Kantor's retrieval of the supplement extended to a wish for theatre to use abandoned or transitional spaces for performances. It had already become clear by 1943 that 'theatre (a building, a stage, and an auditorium), a site of centuries-old practices, indifferent and anaesthetized, is the least suitable place for the materialization of drama...' (ibid: 75). As Kantor explains: 'THERE IS NO ARTISTIC SPACE/ (such as the museum or the theatre). THERE IS ONLY REAL SPACE' (ibid: 259). Kantor's suggestions for alternatives to theatres included '[r]ooms destroyed by war,/ abandoned railway stations,/ laundry rooms,/ cloakrooms,/ waiting rooms,/ storerooms' (ibid: 76).

How should one characterize the 'species of spaces' Kantor recommends?²⁵ Rooms destroyed by war are symbols of durability but also suggest the absent bodies whose ability to survive cannot match that of bricks and mortar. The railway station is a transitional zone of movement and technology, prompting greetings and farewells, at once an intimate or anonymous place where biographies lie in wait and countless lives and stories converge. Laundry rooms and cloakrooms are the functional spaces where people leave and reclaim their body's emballages. Waiting rooms fill the time

before an event and are associated with transport and health, but their usually inhospitable appearance makes people glad to leave them. Finally, storerooms are spaces in which matter accumulates in piles of heterogeneous objects, often summoning up memories from the past, especially the arena of childhood.

What all these spaces have in common is their secondary status. Like the ancillary status of the wrapping next to what it wraps, and the decayed object next to the functional version of itself, the cloakroom, storeroom and waiting room are all places *before* the principal space one wants to enter. The cloakroom is the stopping-off point before going into the museum or theatre, the storeroom is where the object is placed until a *proper* space is found for it, the waiting room fills the (temporal and spatial) gap between two other spaces.

Kantor outlines the value of the utilitarian space:

The place for
‘artistic creativity’
is taken by
a utilitarian space,
by a -CLOAKROOM-,
a real cloakroom.
In the theatre, a cloakroom
is a place and an institution
of the lowest rank;
it is usually an obstacle
one would like to avoid.
If one were to think about it,
a cloakroom is shameless
in its invasion of one’s privacy:
we are forced to leave there
an intimate part of us. (ibid: 104)

What Kantor’s secondary theatre spaces offer is an absence of preordained (artistic) structure and preconceptions. On the bottom rung of theatre’s spatial hierarchy, they are an inversion or negation of the usual site of theatre and performance. The cloakroom is not the censoring site of the work of art which frames

²⁵ The phrase is the famous title, *Espèce d’espaces* (Perec 1974), of Georges Perec’s examination of different types of space ranging from the bed and bedroom to the city.

the spectator in a structure of competencies and cultural repertoires, but a place which eloquently manifests its own exclusion from such framing processes.

Kantor's art and performance theories focus on the negative (the decayed object, language acts which signify without words, the wrapping, the secondary space) and on the unravelling borders between human, object, language and space. They advocate site-specific performance locations as sites in which the negative circulates, transgressing boundaries and opening language on to its objecthood. Kantor's critical language aspires to the condition of its object, while objects form a syntax and language of their own.

The theatre locations Kantor recommends act as the negative of the theatre space, embodying our anticipation of theatre and our desire for it to be revealed. They negate theatre, but reveal its contours, hiding it in order to reconstruct our emotional attachment to it, just as the emballage negates and hides the longed-for object of desire (the gift, the letter, the body). While site-specific theatre and performance are structured by the shape of theatre and our wish to unwrap its secrets, they reveal the power which hiddenness and secrecy have to construct theatre as an object of desire. These site-specific theatre locations capture the double bind of our desire to expose theatre and keep its secrets.

Kantor's work operates a poetics of the negative which reshapes the way he writes about art, theatre and performance. He proposes a conceptual space in which art and theatre interact with their negatives to allow the structuring and destructuring of emotions and desire to take the place of the definable aesthetic categories of 'art', 'theatre' and 'performance'.

I have so far suggested that Allan Kaprow's work provides site-specific theatre and performance with an art-aesthetic genealogy and the vocabulary for a sociological critique of the work of art through the 'site-specific object'. I have also shown how Kantor deals with the object's decay, a poetics of the negative and the value of transcoding.

I turn to the work of director and theorist Richard Schechner and the rise of environmental theatre to close this analysis of how site-specific theatre and

performance were conceptualized, focusing on the development of different audience formations and the validation of negative emotions in reaction to performances.

*Schechner and The (Tulane) Drama Review*²⁶

A 1968 issue²⁷ of the theatre journal *The Drama Review* (henceforth referred to as *TDR*) contained an article by Richard Schechner called 'Six Axioms for Environmental Theatre', later reprinted in Schechner's *Environmental Theater* (1973). In a 1994 update of this book, Schechner noted that 'among the art-conscious, [environmental theatre has] earned a new name: "site-specific" performances' (1994: ix).

The original article appeared only a year after the journal moved to New York and about five years after Schechner had taken over as editor. The New York art and performance scenes at this time were in a state of ferment. Figures like Bob Wilson, Meredith Monk and Richard Foreman were all active (see Scarpetta 1985). Undoubtedly, the periodical's shift to New York added impetus to Schechner's theories, as well as prompting his editorial shake-up of the journal.

Before Schechner's arrival, *TDR* was dominated by textual readings of works which, if not yet classics, showed all the signs of becoming so. The authors featured were by and large male, canonical figures in the Western tradition, and only a few isolated texts focused on the implications of the theatre/performance medium itself. Schechner used his role as editor to propose that '[n]o subject relating to the theatre will be out of bounds' (Winter 1962: 8). This remark was part of a section he introduced, still in existence today, called '*TDR* Comment', which was intended as a sounding board for personal opinions and more free-ranging critical observations than those found in traditional academic essays. By publishing direct commentary from a subjective voice and interviews with directors and practitioners, Schechner pushed the journal away from the objective study of literary and canonical texts to a closer

²⁶ *The Tulane Drama Review* changed its name to *The Drama Review* in 1967.

²⁷ *The Drama Review*, 12, 3 (T39), Spring 1968, 41-64. In the following survey of *The Drama Review*, I refer to issues by the season and year of the relevant edition and give fuller references for issues which receive extended analysis.

engagement with theatre in/as performance. Articles focused increasingly on theatre *as a medium* by comparing it to other art forms. Writers suggested that theatre had suffered from not being more self-reflexive, failing to reach the point at which, as Martin Esslin described it, '*the stage acknowledges that it is a stage rather than pretending to be reality itself*' (Summer 1963: 47).

In autumn 1963, *TDR* featured reviews of live performances for the first time, and in the following issue, published its framework of commitment to readers. The framework codified the journal's attitudes, among them its promotion of the open stage 'because it offers the most appropriate spatial metaphor for the public and aesthetic questions of our day' (Winter 1963: 10-11). The statement of commitment also supported the site-specific approaches of 'those designers who do not feel deprived of their identity outside of the opera houses and auditoriums that have stultified our production techniques' (*ibid.*).

In the following issues, articles on the use of variant performance spaces were increasingly common. An essay on Grotowski's *Akropolis* by Barba and Grotowski's collaborator at Opole, Ludwik Flaszen, is particularly noteworthy. Barba begins a separate essay on the Theatre Laboratory with a complaint that theatres are still 'antiquated buildings where classical and contemporary texts are recited in a routine and conventional way' (Spring 1965: 153). Grotowski's aim was to 'build a new aesthetic for the theatre and thus to purify the art' (*ibid.*: 154).

Barba and Flaszen call *Akropolis* 'a poetic paraphrase of an extermination camp' (*ibid.*: 176). Over the course of the production, a pile of metal junk in the centre of the stage was turned into 'an absurd civilization' of gas chambers. Its poetic efficacy relied on the metonymical link between stovepipe and gas chamber. The authors suggest that as a result of this transformation 'one passes from fact to metaphor' (*ibid.*: 177). Here, the object is rendered hybrid and impure as part of a wider project to *purify* theatre's aesthetics. In Barba and Flaszen's words: 'Each object has multiple uses. The bathtub is a very pedestrian bathtub; on the other hand it is a symbolical bathtub: it represents all the bathtubs in which human bodies were processed for the making of soap and leather' (*ibid.*: 181).

The objects in *Akropolis* transformed the space of the stage itself. They were both symbolic and pedestrian, to take the authors' terms, or alternatively, constituted an intermediate space in which the figurative quality of the object was in constant tension with its evident material function. The function of the object became what one could risk calling the conscience of the metaphor.

An issue on Happenings at the end of 1965 and the announcement of a change in size and format in 1966 marked a watershed in *TDR*'s move from a literary view of theatre to a more visual, space-conscious one. In this issue's *TDR* Comment (Fall 1966), Schechner argued that theatre 'is expanding' (21) but that 'Theatre criticism – the intelligent reading of texts – remains in crisis; substantially it is an undiscovered art' (ibid: 23). An essay by Susan Sontag, however, exemplified the new theatre criticism, concerned to redefine theatre in relation to other art forms, discriminating of theatre's specificities, going from ontology to epistemology and examining the power of theatre's presiding metaphors, while constantly looking to the future in an open-ended way: 'Is cinema the successor, the rival, or the revivifier of the theatre?' (ibid: 33)

In the summer 1967 issue, *TDR* informed readers of its move to New York and its new name, *The Drama Review*. The importance of place was combined with the increasing analysis of space in the 1968 issue on Architecture containing Schechner's 'Six Axioms'. The Autumn 1968 issue²⁸ was indeed more self-reflexive, featuring an interview with Grotowski, Arrabal interviewing himself, and a highly politicized attack on aesthetics in art in the context of Paris, May 1968, by Jean-Jacques Lebel.

The issue on Naturalism²⁹ in winter 1968 showed *TDR*'s attempt to build a critical genealogy for experimental theatre practice. Brooks McNamara charted developments in scene design from Ibsen to Strindberg, beginning with the obviously painted backdrops in *Peer Gynt* in Norway via glimpses into other rooms and 'an abundance of little objects' in Antoine, to Strindberg's critique of Zola for his obsession with enumeration.

²⁸ *The Drama Review*, 13, 1 (T41), Fall 1968

The disoriented audience of site-specific performance

TDR's development during Schechner's editorship showed how theatre writing had to establish new critical strategies in order to map quickly changing modes of performance. With the introduction of photographs, live reviews, interviews with practitioners and opinion pieces, the implied critic was no longer an academic steeped in the canon and treating performance as a degraded form of writing, but a spectator with partial knowledge, significant limitations and strong, subjective opinions. Going to the theatre was no longer a distorted form of reading, but an encounter with bodies and/in spaces.

In *Environmental Theater*, Schechner argues that ' [a] performance is a 'position' in the political sense, a 'body of knowledge' in the scholarly sense, a 'real place' in the theatrical sense' (Schechner 1994: x). Environmental theatre made audiences aware of the way different physical positionings affected the competence of individuals to act and comment on what they saw. The performance was a 'body of knowledge' which could be manipulated and framed in many different ways, and it was a 'real place' because it could not be assimilated and absorbed by a performance's aesthetics.

Schechner's six axioms can be seen as the founding principles of site-specific theatre and performance. The OED defines 'axiom' as 'a proposition that commends itself to general acceptance; a well-established or universally-conceded principle; a maxim, rule, law' (entry 1). Schechner's axioms reflect just such a hesitation between what ought to be the case and what is by combining 'is', 'can' and 'may' statements. The six axioms are:

1: THE THEATRICAL EVENT IS A SET OF RELATED TRANSACTIONS

(ibid: xiv)

2: ALL THE SPACE IS USED FOR THE PERFORMANCE (ibid: xxviii)

²⁹ Brooks McNamara, 'Scene Design: 1876-1965', *The Drama Review* 13, 2 (T42) Winter 1968, 77-91

- 3: THE THEATRICAL EVENT CAN TAKE PLACE EITHER IN A TOTALLY TRANSFORMED SPACE OR IN 'FOUND SPACE' (ibid: xxx);
- 4: FOCUS IS FLEXIBLE AND VARIED (ibid: xxxvi)
- 5: ALL PRODUCTION ELEMENTS SPEAK THEIR OWN LANGUAGE (ibid: xl)
- 6: THE TEXT NEED BE NEITHER THE STARTING POINT NOR THE GOAL OF A PRODUCTION. THERE MAY BE NO VERBAL TEXT AT ALL (ibid: xli).

Schechner continues to move from description to prescription in later observations such as 'There is no such thing as a standard environmental design. A standard design mocks the basic principle [...] Having said that, I offer a 'standard environmental design' (ibid: 29). While explaining his axioms, Schechner focuses on the responses of the audience to environmental performances. An environmental design elicits unsettling, disruptive emotions, not necessarily generated by reactions to the performance itself, but rather by disorientation produced in consequence of *assimilated sets of norms* telling spectators how they *should* react. Schechner reports a cross-section of views on the subject:

Many people, trained in the rigid reaction program of orthodox theater, are embarrassed by what they feel at environmental theater [...] People come up to me and say, 'I couldn't keep my attention focused on the play.' Or, 'I was moved by some of it, but I kept thinking my own thoughts. Sometimes I lost track of what was going on.' Or, 'Sometimes I felt good, but at other times I felt threatened.' Or, 'You know, I watched the audience so much I lost part of the play.' Or even, 'I fell asleep.' I think all of these responses are splendid. (ibid: 19)

The concept of the ideal spectator, focused and alert, an interpreting machine ready to decipher theatrical signs, here gives way to the actual spectator who is distracted, confused, or otherwise implicated subjectively in the performance, both as an aesthetic experience, 'I lost track of what was going on', and as a socio-cultural one, 'at other times I felt threatened'. Even falling asleep is, perhaps ironically, legitimated as a statement of the new spectator's critical agency.

Embarrassment or a sense of threat are manifestations of behavioural norms imported from outside to the context of the play, preventing the theatre from being a safe site. Entering the environmental theatre site becomes a risk to the fragile socialized self, and particularly to a version of the self shaped by the repeated viewings of 'orthodox theatre' productions. Watching other audience members suggests the extent to which one searches for c(l)ues about how to behave in this new environment. Spectators' performances of (adherence to, deviation from) accepted norms of behaviour, as framed by previous theatre experiences, are an integral part of the event.

Outlining how these emotions³⁰ might be elicited by specific spatial configurations, Schechner explains the way theatre environments ought to be organized:

A theater ought to offer to each spectator the chance to find his own place. There ought to be *jumping off* places where spectators can physically enter the performance; there ought to be *regular places* where spectators can arrange themselves more or less as they would in an orthodox theater - this helps relieve the anxieties some people feel when entering an environmental theater; there ought to be *vantage points* where people can get out of the way of the main action and look at it with detachment; there ought to be *pinnacles, dens* and *hutches*: extreme places far up, far back, and deep down where spectators can dangle or burrow or vanish. At most levels there ought to be places where people can be alone, be together with one or two others, or be with a fairly large group [...] Spaces ought to be open to each other so that spectators can see each other and move from one place to another. The overall feel of the theater ought to be of a place where choices can be made. (ibid: 29)

There is a clear degree of idealism in Schechner's vision of a multi-spatial environment in which the spectator is offered numerous subject positions in a range of different spaces. His standard environmental design seems to offer a great array of

³⁰ These emotions could be called 'negative'. Michel Kobialka describes the actors in Kantor's theatre productions coping with such emotions: '[r]ather than presenting the emotions demanded by the text, the actors presented "that 'something' that exists at the opposite pole" - that is, emotions such as apathy, melancholy, exhaustion, dissociation, neurosis, depression, frustration, and boredom that described the actors' fight against the machine, their desire not to be annihilated by it' (Kobialka 1993: 290).

spaces for the temporary investment of the ego while the spectators resemble children in an adventure playground, exploring recesses and dangling in guileless innocence.

Yet if Schechner's idealism avoids a whole series of questions about social norms and standards, in particular in relation to group dynamics, issues of cultural capital and the demands of aesthetic competence, it might then be better characterized as a form of utopianism which envisages the environmental stage, in Schechner's terms, as a '*global space*, a microcosm' (ibid).

Schechner's description correlates the open performance space with forms of political agency based on the observation and acceptance of multiple different subject positions alongside the free *choice* of one's own. Interestingly, Schechner's environmental theatre does not radicalize all its spectators, making room instead for those too anxious to be subjected to its liberating effect, as well as those who want to remain detached from it.

The reluctance of certain spectators³¹ to embrace environmental theatre is not the only problem. Schechner's notes that performers resist the idea of what is called 'local focus' (see axiom 4). Local focus involves giving only a part of the audience access to certain pieces of information in order to encourage spectators to assemble their own versions of events, as well as putting them in danger of losing track of the action (as we have seen, for Schechner, a 'splendid' result). Since performers are 'hooked on projecting to everyone in the theater even the most intimate situations and language' (ibid: xxxviii), it takes them time to learn that 'privacy (of a kind) is possible and proper in the theater' (ibid). The audience, too, is equally hooked on the collective, culturally sanctioned experience of gaining access to the intimate.

The intended effect of local focus is to validate private experience in the face of culturally constructed sets of normative responses (to the aesthetic performance, to events in the world outside). To render the private public is to be exposed and potentially subject to guilt and shame. In the context of environmental theatre, privacy (of one's responses and choices) is a structural principle of the performance.

³¹ This raises a significant critique of site-specific theatre and performance, namely that in erasing one set of required competencies, it replaces them with another, perhaps more demanding and exclusive one.

Schechner notes that environmental theatre is generally limited to habitual theatre spaces, but he devotes some analysis to what he calls 'found space'. Theatre in found spaces is distinguished from environmental theatre because the site is not transformed: it is 'explored and used, not disguised' (ibid: xxiv). Found spaces correspond to the found objects of Kaprow's art theory and the decaying objects of Kantor's 'reality of the lowest rank' since they are annexed to theatre even though they are not necessarily predisposed to it. While environmental theatre highlighted the fragmentation of the audience and the role of individual subjectivities in producing the theatre event, found spaces could lead to the reconception of theatre itself as something 'found' in these locations. Environmental theatre in scenographically re-designed venues could lead spectators to explore subjectivity and allow negative emotions to become part of a performance's meaning, whereas the use of 'found spaces' made theatre's aesthetics and associations the source of contamination.

Conclusion

This chapter has approached site-specific theatre and performance from the outside, aligning the work of three figures whose theories map the conceptual space of these performance modes. At the same time, it has demonstrated the impact of their theories on their critical writing. Read in tandem, the work of Kaprow, Kantor and Schechner outlines the characteristics of site-specific theatre and performance as a *métissage* of art forms, a hybrid performance mode which uses its background in the plastic arts to escape from the binding associations of theatre with text. Both Kaprow and Kantor focus on decay and waste as a way of resignifying the functional object, Kaprow from a more socio-political perspective, Kantor as part of a poetics which contaminates the field of writing.

Thus Kaprow makes his book *Assemblage, Environments and Happenings* a hybrid object in itself, a reading experience which he asks us to walk into, a tactile object whose documentation of art foregrounds its necessary omissions and blindspots, while Kantor's texts create their own generic plurality. Schechner's analysis of environmental theatre's fragmented audiences and production of negative

emotions was accompanied by his involvement in changing *TDR's* critical practice. Critical writing had to be opinionated and self-reflexive to correspond to theatre's move towards experimental scenography and site-specificity. Theatre productions could not be thought of as versions of texts which the critic assessed within a framework of required cultural competence and objectivity. Theatre was about being there, witnessing the moment, transcribing one's impressions, even, or perhaps especially, the negative ones. Writing about theatre often became an exhibition of writing's inadequacy, and photographs or textual and formal experimentation were needed to reveal this faultline.

The following chapter will examine further the way in which site-specific theatre and performance relate to the notion of writing, in particular critical writing. I suggest the ways in which writing is both the subject of negation in site-specific theatre and performance, and returns to haunt them. I explore Kantor's argument that the object and its decay towards 'reality of the lowest rank' have depreciated notions such as 'expression', 'interpretation' and 'metaphor' and I outline how site-specific theatre and performance reconceive the act of criticism as a creatively self-critical process.

Chapter 2

Site-specific theatre and performance: critics, texts and the hidden scene of writing

I have so far focused on three figures whose work maps the conceptual space of site-specific performances as generically hybrid (connected to non-theatre forms), structured through a poetics of the negative (which foregrounds the decay of the object and its transcoded relation to other fields of experience) and open to non-traditional audience formations and responses (by privileging local focus, subjectivity/privacy and negative emotions). In outlining their theoretical investigations in chapter 1, I showed how Kaprow, Kantor and Schechner were conscious, in different ways, that arguments for new perceptions of art and theatre would have to be accompanied by a re-evaluation of the way criticism interacted with its subject.

The present chapter proposes to elaborate on these conceptual formations of site-specific theatre and performance by tackling the input of the notion of text and the function of the critic in giving site-specific theatre and performance a discernible aesthetics and mode of signification. These performance modes, I argue, turn spectators into active producers of hybrid texts which simultaneously have a critical and creative function.

Site-specific performances do a number of things with texts. They are open to existing theatre texts, even canonical ones, to different types of literary text, to newspaper reports, historical or other archive material, to specially created texts for particular sites and, as Schechner's six axioms suggested, to 'no verbal text at all'. Site-specific performances highlight a text's generic category differentially (the genre of a theatre text is more in evidence because the text is *not in a theatre*, other types of text draw attention to their genre because they are *not theatre texts*) while also disrupting those categories (most genres of text are performatively displaced through their use). The possibility of no verbal text at all haunts site-specific performances, raising questions about the text's possible suitability or superfluity. Texts in site-specific performances are confronted by their own non-necessity, intrusiveness and disappearance because their status is not guaranteed. In employing texts ranging from the canonical theatre text to no text at all, site-specific theatre and performance make the notion of text itself a porous one. The unstable borders of the text and the

circulation of its signs are the subject of closer analysis in Chapter 3, when I review the site-specific work of Deborah Warner.

One way of looking at the site of a site-specific production is as the text's 'other scene', the component of a performance which most powerfully challenges the dominance of the theatre/performance text in creating meaning. The site presents that which is waiting-to-be-textualized, read or written (the slippage in the interpretive trope is itself significant) and situates a text in a particular network of historical, social or cultural relations which confirm, intensify, contradict or contaminate it. Sites have the effect of deforming texts, holding a mirror up to them which magnifies certain parts or diminishes others. The modality of a site can amplify what seems peripheral in one text, or suppress the dominant theme of another. Sites change texts into their apparent opposites: the celebratory text in a derelict site may be turned upside down to become elegiac, mournful or ironic, while a tragic text may be recompensed by its location in a site associated with fun, pleasure, or play. Site-specific theatre and performance make us radically suspicious of the text, and send us looking for what it omits or excludes. Sites bring texts into contact with their potential negation; they disorder texts, leaving it up to the critical subject to reconstruct them in a critical/creative, hybrid text of his/her own.

Sites, to change the metaphor, *interfere* with texts. This interference circulates the signs of the text, opening them to assimilation into a broader notion such as intertextuality, or more generally still, asserting the partial and contingent nature of the text's contribution to the cultural noise of the site-specific production.

Thierry de Duve advanced the concept of the 'imaginary museum' to account for the ways in which site-specific art became a discursive space (see Introduction). I argue that site-specific theatre and performance map the space of the 'imaginary text', in which texts criss-cross and interweave to form a performance's meaning. In other words, texts in site-specific theatre and performance do not take place *in* a theatre, but interpenetrate to construct the place *of* theatre (as a space of desire, secrecy, self-exposure and memory, as I suggest below).

The figure of the critic and the production of critical writing have been constant concerns so far in this thesis. The present chapter argues that site-specific theatre and performance produce a critical function which is hybrid, creative, traumatic and *self-critical*. Site-specificity underlines the radical contingency and context-dependence of the text being performed. These performance modes are distinguished by a utopian drive to validate subjective reconstructions of a production's meaning and to challenge the belief that the *proper* response to a performance is the one which demonstrates the greatest degree of cultural competence. Indeed, site-specific performances challenge the notion of cultural competence by situating it within the wider framework of cultural noise, making it one of many competing intertexts, a possible exposure of critical hubris, or the critic's desire to deploy knowledge as symbolic capital.

In referring to the *critic*, I need to highlight an important point about the connection between critics and spectators in site-specific performances. Although theatre spectators and theatre critics have many things in common, the critic is of course a special, and not always loved, subsection of the former category. One could describe the critic's role in a number of ways, and opinions will differ on the subject. Common assumptions about the task of the critic include ideas about the critic's responsibility to react, judge, discriminate and bring contextual knowledge to bear on his/her analysis. He or she is required to be plausible, to explain and interpret, to detect a performance's aesthetic and influences, to know the text or a writer's previous work and to assess the validity of the performance. Josette Féral asks the following questions of the critic's role:

Must he/she comment, analyze, judge what he [sic] observes? Must he/she feel some empathy for the artist's work (or the sportsman's)? Must he/she, on the contrary, remain outside the undertaking, without trying to understand the various stages that led to this point? Must he/she be content with the analysis of the results, standing apart and above it all as an 'objective' onlooker, such as he/she claims to be? Or, taking the opposite stance, must he/she get involved and risk offering an opinion which is necessarily subjective? How much room must he/she give to detailed analysis and to passionate, biased criticism based on gut reaction? (Féral 2000: 308)

The central opposition in Féral's set of questions is between objectivity and subjectivity. She enquires whether the critical function relates to the critic's role as representative of wider, culturally verifiable standards, or whether the fact that the critic is inevitably subjective means that criticism should embrace its own partial, passionate perspective on the work of art. Féral concludes that the critic's task is to marshal 'critical competence' to inform the spectator of the work's historical and aesthetic context and importance. Thus the critic has a social responsibility and an aesthetic function, both of which are executed when the critic 'is able to elevate himself above the cultural field in order to analyze it from a distance' (ibid: 311). Critical competence is achieved when the critic shows that his/her reading of the performance is 'informed, analytical, and documented' (ibid). For Féral, criticism too often becomes a staging of the critic's own likes and dislikes and an exercise in power. She links this to the fact that criticism still largely 'remains an art which is first and foremost reliant on the art of writing' (ibid: 312).

Despite Féral's comment, I propose that the site-specific theatre/performance critic's role is unavoidably bound up with the need to *write*, and that these types of performance make use of critical desires to write and anxieties about the risks of writing as part of their performance meaning. This chapter underlines the way in which site-specific theatre and performance trouble the distinction between critics and spectators. Spectators of site-specific theatre and performance are called upon to write their own text of the production, a critical text which assesses the limitations and exclusions of its own act of criticism. Since site-specific modes situate the performance text (if there is one) within the plural discourses and texts generated through the interaction of performance and site, the spectator/critic is placed centre stage in this process, producing not only a form of *critical writing*, but also a creative text. This text is both the text of the production and a critical analysis at the same time.

In other words, site-specific theatre and performance produce texts of creative criticality, both performance texts and critical texts. Therefore, in referring to the

'critic' in site-specific theatre and performance, I have in mind a hybrid of the traditional spectator, author and critic, simultaneously experiencing, producing and criticizing the performance.

While reconfiguring critical writing as a creative process, site-specific theatre and performance also give the critic a number of figurative guises, such as archaeologist, forensics expert, or detective, among others. Site-specific critical writing is frequently performative, reconstructing, within the limitations of language, the nature of the site-specific performance experience. This leads to criticism which tries to mimic morphologically the experience of performance, its random acts of noticing and sudden moments of clarity or insight, instead of reaching after synthesis, the overview or thematic grouping which characterize typical critical modes.

To sum up the way in which site-specific performances lead to self-critical, creative critics, I would suggest that these productions provide the terms by which a metaphor for the critical process can be constructed, and then provide for the metaphor's contamination and corruption through the creative development of its constituent parts, so that it is no longer able to sustain its function as a figure. The writing produced by site-specific theatre and performance, profoundly conscious of its figurations of the critic and the critical process, is the focus of what follows.

Site-specific theatre/performance: the implications of metaphor

In the Introduction, I suggested that one of the reasons site-specific theatre and performance arose was to distance theatre from its association with literature and the literary text. This was linked to a desire to escape from theatre's theatricality and its widespread use as metaphor. Site-specific performances engage with the concept of metaphor in several ways as part of their critique of theatre, and the function of the figure, in particular the metaphor, are important constituents of their critical (and self-critical) processes. Jean-François Lyotard has argued that 'La figure-forme est la présence du non-langage dans le langage' (Lyotard 1978: 51). The figure is a dislocation or movement in language which operates as a force treating words like things. Site-specific performances urge us to linger on things, on objects and sites, to

analyze how they make the transition into the language of the texts we construct around them, as well as causing us to assess the role this has in producing theatre as an object of desire and the critic/spectator as a desiring subject.³²

The close investigation of the function of metaphor has been a constant feature of recent theory, and I survey below some of its characteristics and implications for site-specific performances. Theory has been concerned to dissociate metaphor from its literary connotations (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), to demonstrate that metaphors are not merely embellishments or ornaments to language (Derrida 1972), and that they do important epistemological work which is sometimes hidden or repressed (de Certeau 1990). Such theories, by examining the erasure of the material components of metaphor and its hidden power to shape our thinking, do for metaphor what site-specific productions do for theatre.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* begin with the premise that ‘we systematically conceptualize the nonphysical in terms of the physical’ (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 59). Metaphors, they argue, are constitutive of our experience, not incidental to it, and are derived from our sense-perceptions and orientation in space, making the experience of the mobile critic-spectator at site-specific performances a valuable encounter with the process by which metaphors are composed (and decomposed). Since ‘human purposes typically require us to impose artificial boundaries that make physical phenomena discrete’ (ibid: 25), they point out that spatialization metaphors govern most of our fundamental concepts, and that ‘our experiences with physical objects (especially our own bodies) provide the basis for an extraordinarily wide variety of ontological metaphors’ (ibid). Their key argument is that the metaphorical concepts that structure our thoughts and actions are *systematic*.

Lakoff and Johnson’s work alerts us to the importance of metaphors in our most basic and everyday concepts. It shows the way in which metaphors operate by becoming naturalized and, in addition, points out that metaphor is not merely a *literary* technique, a matter of ‘*mere* language [...] viewed by philosophers as “out-

³² According to Lyotard, by treating words as things, the figure gives words depth (‘épaisseur’) and both an exposed and hidden side. This hidden side produces the object in language as the object of desire, both libidinal and epistemological (see Lyotard 1978).

of-the-ordinary imaginative and poetic linguistic expressions” (ibid: 159).

Metaphors, the authors propose, structure and constitute our ways of thinking rather than ‘expressing’ or ‘reflecting’ them. They are formed through the experience of the body and the sense-perception of objects. The rejection of a literary theatre, an engagement with objects, and the mobilization of the body, turn site-specific theatre and performance into a quest for the metaphors we live by, those which have been buried or worn away through use, shaping our conceptual categories and epistemological procedures without our being conscious of it.

Post-structuralist theories have focused on the role of metaphor in philosophical texts, in particular on the way metaphors lose their figurative quality and are taken for proper meanings. Jacques Derrida argues in ‘la mythologie blanche’ that philosophical discourse conducts the suppression of sensory figures in a double effacement: first of the sensory constituents of the metaphor, and second of the figurativity of the metaphor itself (Derrida 1972). Underlying this effacement, or rather produced by it, is a set of binary opposites such as sensual/spiritual; sensible/intelligible and sensory/sense. Derrida shows that it is impossible to analyze the structure and function of metaphor without recourse to metaphorical thinking.

Derrida’s analysis of metaphor brings many insights to site-specific performances which I view as attempts to bring back the sensory or material side to the mimeticism of traditional theatre. In relation to the theatre/performance event, the site itself can be seen as a material supplement, a sensory excess, the resurfacing of what has been suppressed in traditional theatre.

Derrida recalls Du Marsais’s claim that the figure of a ‘demeure empruntée’ can signify the notion of metaphor itself.³³ Derrida elaborates: ‘elle est là pour signifier *la* métaphore; c’est une métaphore de la métaphore; expropriation, être-hors-de-chez-soi, mais encore dans une demeure’ (ibid: 302). It is possible to see theatres as ‘borrowed dwellings’ par excellence, which we occupy for a few hours in order for

³³ Derrida quotes Du Marsais: ‘La métaphore est donc une espèce de Trope; le mot dont on se sert dans la métaphore est pris dans un autre sens que dans le sens propre: *il est*, pour ainsi dire, *dans une demeure empruntée*, dit un ancien [...] (Derrida 1972: 302). The last phrase, in a performative gesture, indicates that Du Marsais’s definition is itself a borrowing.

words to be able to take up new semantic residences. Site-specific theatre and performance operate like the borrowed dwelling of Derrida's argument: not only are we, as spectators or critics, borrowing a space to watch a performance, but the performance is also borrowing its space, engaging us in critical reflection on *the act of borrowing* itself.

Applying the 'borrowed dwelling' metaphor to site-specific performances can be given an important socio-economic emphasis if we link it to Michel de Certeau's formulation 'locuteurs, locataires' (de Certeau 1990: 25). De Certeau uses the metaphor to describe the way in which ordinary individuals appropriate language, or more precisely, language as embodiment of the law and normative practices, to their own ends. Speaking subjects *re-appropriate* language and obtain agency through a thousand different tactics and ruses, furnishing it with their memories and spatial practices, their own minor and subtle deviations from productivist ideologies which interpellate them as passive *consumers* of language and social space.

Site-specific theatre and performance make us conscious that our presence at sites is a renting of temporary space in others' narratives. Our involvement there is provisional, reinforcing our understanding that we do not *own* these experiences. Indeed, the borrowing and re-use of others' narratives have economic implications too. Our disposable time, income and language are bound up with the economic system which creates abandoned, derelict or counter-cultural sites in the first place. As de Certeau's 'locataires, locataires' phrase reminds us, we are *buying* a reflective, emotional or aesthetic experience perhaps at the expense of those whose stories we inhabit. Our intensified experience of theatre and performance, its pleasurable self-questioning, are part of a pay-off. In the critical modality of site-specific performances, the sites we visit during these theatre/performance events are bought as cultural capital, even if we react in edifying ways to their dereliction and history.

The post-structuralist analysis of metaphor, as this brief survey shows, dissociates it from the literary, shows the motivated suppression of its sensory side and indicates the consequences of borrowing words, dwellings, sites and stories in realizing a self-critical performance mode. Borrowing metaphors and borrowing sites

implicate the critic in an ethical relation and expose the contingency of his/her interpretive strategies. We will bear these factors in mind as we examine the metaphors at work in site-specific theatre and performance, especially in relation to the concepts of criticism, criticality and writing.

'Anything but literary': Theatre and the Scene of Writing

I turn to what could be called a site-specific event in an actual theatre. The way in which this event makes the theatre a discursive space, reconstructed through theory and as a result of writing (and its unconscious processes) shows how the site-specific event is produced. In the extract from Max Frisch's diary analyzed below, Frisch shows himself to be the ideal critic for a site-specific performance.

In an entry in his 1957 *Tagebuch*,³⁴ Frisch describes a visit to the theatre which left a deep impression on him. Planning to attend a rehearsal, he arrives too early and decides to enter a private box. From his vantage point, he catches sight of two people on stage, a man in overalls and an actress with her coat and hat on, going about their daily business. Some words are spoken, and later the actress eats an apple. The event is 'devoid of magic', 'the speech which sounds from the stage is utterly conventional, anything but literary' (8).

Yet the incident preoccupies the writer and leads him to question his perceptions. Frisch's record of the scene follows the shift of his thought process from intuition to analysis. A note of understatement suits the insignificance of the event and captures his scepticism about the ability of language to convey its fragile beauty. The transition to theoretical reflection is also a moment of uncertainty about putting words to his emotions: 'There is something in this small event which seems significant to me' (8).

This minor scene paradoxically strikes Frisch as no less than an exposure of ontology, '[t]hese two people, just as they crossed the stage, had a being, a presence, a destiny, which naturally I know nothing of, nevertheless it was here, even if only secretly, it had a presence which filled all this large space' (8). At the same time, it is

nothing out of the ordinary, 'repeated a thousandfold on the street outside' (8). It calls to mind not the scripted scenes one might find in theatre performance, but the unscripted space of the street. Frisch's thinking is structured by opposites which no longer seem stable. He reacts to the incident by trying to discern what factors contributed to the force of its impact on him; in short, he assumes the role of the critic.

Turning to aesthetic theory for help, he begins with a focus on framing. One way of characterizing the aesthetic is by 'its self-sufficiency, its capacity to trap us within itself, to keep us from moving beyond it to further knowledge or to practical efforts' (Rudnytsky 1993: 40). The frame apparently offers this clear division. But why should Frisch refer to the frame, a device used in pictorial art, when he is assessing the effect of being in a *theatre*? The misapplication is symptomatic of the difficulty of theorizing the incident's meaning, of 'framing' theatre, as event and concept, without omissions or gaps.

Equally curious is Frisch's discussion of the *effect* of framing, which begins with an apparent, perhaps unconscious, *negation* of the work of art (just as the fascination for this powerful incident may be prompted by an unconscious negation of theatre). What happens, he asks, when you put a frame around an *ordinary piece of plaster* on a wall? The framed plaster is no different to the unframed wall around it, yet at the same time it is transformed. A picture frame gives lasting significance, showing 'not the flower that fades, but the likeness of all flowers, or as has already been said: the symbol' (9). What is inside the frame becomes representative, allowing one to 'see this individual who represents the millions and who alone is real' (9).

The frame offers Frisch a special form of viewing, allowing him to see what he 'would not otherwise see' (9). It permits the double move from looking to *seeing*, with its attendant philosophical metaphors of knowledge and understanding, and from blindness to insight. In 'this small event', with its minor details and simple exchanges, Frisch encounters the plural being of the other, 'even', as he crucially adds, 'if only secretly' (8).

³⁴ 'On the Nature of Theatre' tr. Carl Richard Mueller, *TDR*, 6.3, March 1962, 3-13. All quotations

A negation of art and the aesthetic pervades Frisch's text as soon as we hear that the words were 'anything but literary'. For Frisch, the literary is the sign of a desire to create the exemplary and beautiful, and the dangerous effect that would cancel out the beauty of what he has seen. The 'literary' is therefore the *space of a desire* for the beautiful, necessarily negated in order for that desire to find its object. As the event's structuring absence, the literary is rigorously excluded by the 'conventional' nature of the exchange, only to return as a powerful *effect* apprehended from the perspective of negation.

We quickly feel the subliminal undertow of personal memory and subjectivity in Frisch's art theory. The piece of framed wall is 'in a room in which we may have lived for a number of years: now, however, for the first time, we notice how the wall is really plastered' (8). Autobiography casts its shadow over Frisch's aesthetics and the first person plural cannot disguise the trace of the 'I' and the scene of a room once lived in.

Frisch appeals to reason, since 'reason tells us that the plaster which I have framed can be no different from that on the rest of the wall' (8). Yet the borders of reason are not reliable: the framed wall '*compels* us to look', 'becomes evident, it is there, it *speaks*' (8; my italics). Pictures removed from their frames 'are suddenly no longer secure [...] one has the feeling that they are *falling apart*, and one feels *disillusioned* in the fact' (8; my italics). The removal of the frame presages mental disintegration, insecurity and disenchantment. The frame gives the ordinary plaster some of the qualities of the work of art, while its removal from a painting makes the work of art volatile.³⁵ Frisch's heuristic mind experiment shows the aesthetic to be intermittent, a construction of the mind, a form of memory imprint. The frame contaminates the ordinary plaster with the structures of memory and cognition which

from Frisch are taken from this article, with page references given in parentheses.

³⁵ Cf Georges Perec's character in *Un homme qui dort* who mentally experiments with just such aesthetic exchanges: 'Tu apprends à regarder les tableaux exposés dans les galeries de peinture comme s'ils étaient des bouts de murs, de plafonds, et les murs, les plafonds, comme s'ils étaient des toiles dont tu suis sans fatigue les dizaines, les milliers des chemins toujours recommencés, labyrinthes inexorables, texte que nulle ne saurait déchiffrer, visages en décomposition' (Perec 1967: 64).

have been built through previous exposure to art, and in the process, exposes the critical self as the unconscious, desiring producer of art's effects.

'Even if only secretly'

However, Frisch's account of his experience involves an 'other scene'. His response to the end of the episode is close to a form of mourning, for which the text's poetics try to compensate: 'then everything is past, inexplicably, as if a human being had died, inexplicable that he ever existed, that he ever stood in front of us for us to see, that he spoke, conventionally and without consequence, but nevertheless stimulatingly-' (8). Words tumble forwards and hold back, hesitant or headstrong, as minor and major endings (the end of an everyday scene, the aftermath of death) coincide. In reaction to a sense of mortality, Frisch's words mimic the irregular syntax of consciousness.

We learn at the start of the account that the theatre box was 'dark as a confessional' (7), and indeed Frisch's text can be read as a form of confession, in spite of its aesthetic/epistemological topoi. Its 'other scene', I suggest, revolves around the (missing) figure of Frisch himself, shrouded in darkness and privacy, at once onlooker and observer, writer and theorist. He occupies a space of latent criminality and potential guilt, *overhearing* a moment of 'not-quite' theatre which he has accidentally discovered. It was not meant for his ears or, indeed, for anyone's. Simultaneously eavesdropper and voyeur, intruder and trespasser, witness and scribe, the writer is hidden, unseen, his presence is obscene.

He is a dangerous figure who brings the distortions of an aesthetic consciousness into the arena of the everyday. Frisch the writer becomes the episode's hidden determinant, its structural centre and the threat of its dispersal. His private, confessional box is the displaced scene of writing. The reader, given a model of writerly fascination, is fascinated in turn by Frisch's own (missing) self-presentation, and becomes implicated in a textual detective process.

The psychoanalyst and critic André Green thinks of theatre as the art of the misheard and misunderstood. The foregoing version of events fits Green's suggestion

in 'The Psycho-analytic Reading of Tragedy' that theatre is the embodiment of the scene of the unconscious (Green 1997: 136). Frisch's reconstruction of the episode stems from a misreading of his position as intruder in the theatre space, the figure who will turn his experience into writing, thereby recording and erasing it (converting it into writing will threaten its status as *memory*).

In theatre, according to Green, the text re-emerges even as we try to do without it: 'Even the destruction of the text still leaves a text. Even its abolition in a theater given over to action will refer us back to the notional text implied by the action' (ibid: 140). Bound up with his rejection of the literary, I suggest that Frisch's account recognizes that perception and its textual revision are simultaneous, that writing (or more precisely, the unconscious pleasure and narcissistic desire to write) unavoidably contaminates his experience. The focus on his *theatre* location is in fact an unconscious displacement of his primary concern about the contagious and contaminating act of *writing*.

In this text, which searches to give structure through theory and criticism to the sudden force of an unanticipated emotion, Frisch is mourning his own and human mortality, and equally, the lost idea of purity (perceptual, aesthetic) and the consequent permeability of the frame (already catachrestic when applied to theatre theory). Frisch's mourning is a recognition of intertextuality, a realization that even his momentary epiphany about ontology is tragically impure.

Theatre, site and writing

In Frisch's text, we witness the intersection of the self, the act of writing and the phenomenon of performance. The (writerly) self is both an agent and an elusive figure in the reconstruction of the minor incident, the author of critical reflections and the subject of repression, searching for elucidation (through theory or reason), but in fact located in a position of epistemological darkness. At first glance, the focus of Frisch's writing is the stage space, shown not to have intrinsic meaning, but in relation to the plural spaces which the incident evokes. However, the stage space turns out not to be the real site of interest at all. The reader's fascination with Frisch's encounter

occupies a third space, neither physical, nor imaginary, but the hybrid space of a negative poetics, of writing becoming unwritten, disguising its tracks.

In the extract, the relation of the stage action to the underlying concepts of theatre and performance is mediated through the act of (critical) writing. Writing is the text's other scene, figuratively marginalized and hidden. The repression of the structuring power of critical writing is a by-product of the attempt to posit theatre and performance as pure, to delineate them ontologically.

Frisch's critico-creative text

Frisch's hybrid role as witness, critic, writer and confessor and the text this produces are exemplified in critical responses to site-specific theatre and performance. Site-specificity leads to a reinscription of the scene of writing into other spaces, sending writing, to borrow the cinematic phrase, 'on location'. Site-specific performances change the act of criticism, as Max Frisch demonstrates, from a meta-textual framing of performance to a creative (and often unconscious) re-inscription of it.

Furthermore, site-specific theatre and performance implicate us, in several senses of the word,³⁶ in the act of criticism, giving the critic a greater sense of creative agency. Site-specificity posits critics and spectators as creators who experience the sense of exposure, the tendency to confession, and the impulse to narcissism associated with the genre of autobiography. They turn us into autobiographical critics, producing writing whose other scene is the staging of the secret self, a powerful, disfiguring force in our attempts, like Frisch's, to categorize experience according to aesthetic theory or epistemological frameworks.

It has been suggested that site-specific theatre and performance are prompted by a *fit* between the site and performance (see e.g. Wilkie 2002). I would adapt this to argue that they are often distinguished by a lack of fit, the lack of fitting response, on

³⁶ Alongside more neutral definitions of 'implicate', eg 'to intertwine' and 'to involve', the OED (2b) points to the use of the term to denote involvement in a crime. The links between criticism and criminality are explored below. Most often used transitively when referring to crime, 'to implicate someone', or in the passive, 'to be implicated', I conceive of site-specific theatre and performance criticism in relation to the verb's reflexive use, underlining the agency of 'implicating oneself' in the scene of the performance/crime.

the part of the critic or spectator. Critical responses to site-specific performance are frequently marked by indecency, the troubling inability to find the right vocabulary or the proper idiom to avoid betraying, or even, in some cases, ethically negating the performance.

Elin Diamond claims that theatre may be understood 'as a symptomatic cultural site that ruthlessly maps out normative spectatorial positions by occluding its own means of production' (Diamond 1997: iii). Site-specific theatre and performance are, on the contrary, crucially concerned with exposing their own means of production by turning spectators into critics of their own critical impulses (alerting us to the latent critic/theorist, the guilty producer of writing, the hidden Frisch, in all of us). In addition, the sites used in these performance modes are both the inaccessible supplement of/to language (especially sites of decay which expose their excess of materiality) and the endless generators and mobilizers of signs in the creative-critical act.

Site-specific performance and/as archaeology

In order to gauge the meaning of this event, structured by theatre but radically different to it, Frisch turned to another discipline (painting and theories of the frame) and to the ordinary piece of wall (looking for the degree zero of art, Frisch found that even the wall became aesthetically significant). His search for theoretical co-ordinates to map his experience turns into a creative text, whereby the unconscious, subjective self is shaped by its journey through critical processes and strategies. In Frisch's case, critical choices are creative acts.

In their recent book *Theatre/Archaeology* (2001), Michael Pearson and Mike Shanks bring together two different disciplines in order to produce a text of critical self-reflexivity, a creative text which explores critical issues relating to the practices of site-specific theatre/performance and archaeology. The book starts from the premise that the apparently distinct disciplines of theatre and archaeology can interpenetrate beyond the level of the figurative to form a third, hybrid discipline. To put it schematically, the authors suggest that we think of site-specific theatre and

performance as being not just *like* archaeology, where archaeology is used as a more or less textual trope, but actually *as* archaeology, a *performance* of archaeology. Archaeology, in turn, is no longer *like* site-specific theatre or performance, but is also a form of them. The site-specific theatre and performance critic is figured as the archaeologist at a site. Both functions combine in the critical/creative reinscription of site-specific performance or archaeology as writing.

In *Theatre/Archaeology*, the authors juxtapose performance and archaeology as follows:

The special practice that is performance operates in a liminal space or heterotopia. Archaeology too is at the edge and in the gaps, working on discard and decay, entropy and loss. Its topic is the material and ineffable immediacy of the past which has given it a special place in constructions of personal and cultural identity. (Pearson and Shanks 2001: 53-4)

Archaeology here functions not just as a model for site-specific performances, but more like Christopher Tilley's concept of the solid metaphor, a 'metaphor grounded in the solid domain of material culture' (Tilley 1999: 35). The juxtaposition of performance and archaeology is partly a question of developing a critical idiom, but also relates to a desire to break down the meta-textual control which critical metaphors exert over performance practices. To take the argument further, the authors call for the decay of the archaeological metaphor as it is *applied* to site-specific performance. The metaphor itself, Pearson and Shanks intimate, has to incorporate its own decay. If we understand archaeology as being 'intimately linked to processes of decay, ruin, putrefaction, of ageing, erosion, wearing – and what wears more quickly than memory?' (Pearson and Shanks 2001: 10), then an archaeological critical engagement with a site-specific performance would lead to a conceptual move from a performance's *production* of meaning to its recovery and retrieval by the archaeologist-critic; not only the meaning of memory, but meaning itself *as* memory.

Such critical meeting points between archaeology and performance form part of a wider project to move away from a phallogomorphic critical approach, based on frameworks and structures, to be replaced by what one might call an archaeomorphic

one, based on layering, leakages, gaps and faultlines. The hybrid form of 'theatre/archaeology' aims to operate both at the level of writing (critical and creative) and of the cultural and psychoanalytical imaginary.

From the perspective of my argument, the value of Pearson and Shanks's approach lies in the way the use of archaeology allows for critical analysis, while also furnishing the site-specific critic with the tools necessary for a creative text of his/her own. Epistemological metaphors for making sense of the site-specific production, which allow critical analysis to be compared to the ways archaeologists approach their work of uncovering and reconstructing the past, also become creative scripts of the performance event from the position of the critic-spectator, as well as revelatory exposures of the subjectivity of the critical self.

The connection of theatre and archaeology is Pearson and Shanks's way of exploring the logic of the metaphor. Site-specific theatre and performance produce what one could call 'embodied' or 'acted-out' metaphors. The critic-spectator of a site-specific performance thinks with the metaphors a particular performance evokes (be it archaeology or another trope) and acts out the metaphor through participation in a performance. The heterogeneity of the performance exceeds the signifying process of any one metaphor (in this case archaeology) thereby exposing the strategic application of the metaphors we use to interpret performances. The creative act resides in the *choice* of one particular metaphor over another. While Pearson and Shanks are engaged in producing a hybrid discipline of theatre and archaeology as a result of their personal critical and academic trajectories (Pearson is a performer and theatre academic, Shanks an archaeologist)³⁷, their work also demonstrates how metaphors create other metaphors, capable of branching off in unpredictable directions which defy the demands of critical coherence. The critic's attraction to the metaphor or series of metaphors which structure his/her critical analysis is a mode of autobiographical self-exposure, since such critical metaphors are motivated by subjectivity and creative desires.

³⁷ In the preface to *Theatre/Archaeology*, Pearson and Shanks note: 'Given the idiosyncratic and personal nature of two converging projects, it was inevitable that this volume should tend towards the (auto)biographical' (Pearson and Shanks 2001: xi-xii).

In *Theatre/Archaeology*, Pearson and Shanks attest to the partial nature of the power of the critical metaphor to shape our experiences of performance, and to our creative, desiring partiality for certain metaphors over others. I examine ideas of critical incoherence and economies of metaphor in relation to the Bouffes du Nord in Chapter 5, in which I suggest some of the functions of the metaphors used in criticism referring to the theatre site. In the case of the Bouffes du Nord, archaeology is one of the metaphors, but others contaminate or contradict it, leading to creative modes of response whose critical force derives from the very lack of metaphorical cohesion, producing the site as the generator of signs and as their unwritten, perhaps unwritable excess.

‘Theatre/Archaeology’ is one particularly powerful version of the hybrid disciplines which site-specific theatre and performance are capable of generating. In Pearson and Shanks’s text, though, other metaphors, other scenes, are everywhere to be found. Like the found objects used in Kaprow’s and Kantor’s art and theatre, and the found spaces of Schechner’s environmental theatre, site-specific theatre and performance propose that we *find* metaphors, adapting them to critical and creative ends, testing the flexibility of performance to different reinscriptions.

The metaphor of ‘finding’ is crucial to the theory and aesthetics of site-specific theatre and performance. Something which is ‘found’ may once have been possessed, and therefore recovered, or alternatively, may be discovered by accident, stumbled across unexpectedly, perhaps while looking for something else. The metaphors we find for interpreting site-specific theatre and performance may not be the metaphors we were looking for, and they may not tell us things we want to hear. Finding the metaphor to interpret a performance implies that we do not come to the performance already equipped with the right critical tools to understand it. ‘Finding’ introduces surprise, accident, discovery and unpredictability into our thinking processes about site-specific performances. One of the found metaphors which features in Pearson and Shank’s work is site-specific performance as the scene of a crime, to which I now turn.

Site-specific metaphors: the scene of the crime (implications)

Shanks's work as an archaeologist deals with 'the indeterminacy of events and how we deal with this, from memory to scientific reconstruction to legal adjudication to the interpretive practices of an *archaeological detective*' (Pearson and Shanks 2001: 10; italics added). Being part of a site-specific performance involves a search for clues in order to reconstruct a narrative. At the scene of a crime, there is 'both a surplus and a dearth of meaning' (Pearson/Shanks 2000: 59). Evidence proliferates, but unless we construct and narrativize it, it stays relatively meaningless. The crime metaphor *positions* the critic-spectator as a detective or forensic expert, conscious that, in framing the evidence to make it manageable, we may be involved in a frame-up.³⁸

This scientific and forensic analysis is accompanied by a creative process, in which:

The scene of the crime demands a poetics of absence. Archaeology is all about absences, about writing around what is obstinately not there - which is why archaeology should be poetic. Poetics here involves a labour of production/creation/transformation, but it also means attending to things in an intimate way in following the connections. (ibid: 60)

From site-specific performance, to archaeology, to crime, Pearson and Shanks's work finds a metaphor for interpretive processes and explores it through a poetics, 'a labour of production/creation/transformation'. This poetics reveals the critic's implication in the scene of the crime: the necessary confrontation with the pleasure, exposure and guilt which reconstruction involves. The scene of the crime element of site-specific theatre and performance does not necessarily function because a performance deals with an actual crime, or is even located near where a crime was committed. As Pearson and Shanks suggest, site-specific theatre and performance give 'a latent criminality to space' (ibid: 62). We will see the

³⁸ The forensic metaphor could be extended to figure the spectator/critic as a pathologist, performing an autopsy on the body of information presented. Elizabeth Klaver correlates the gaze of autopsy with the gaze of the camera eye of Beckett's *Whatwhere*, suggesting that it 'attempts to distinguish radically

implications of this in the next chapter on Deborah Warner, who said of the St Pancras hotel used for one of her site-specific projects that 'it makes one think of rather violent things'.³⁹ The sites used in site-specific theatre and performance are often abandoned or derelict and issues of crime, coercion and violence bubble away beneath the surface of the performances which take place there.

The scene of the crime and its aftermath become powerful tropes for performance modes which take the critic as trespasser and transgressor into spaces normally out of bounds. They put the critic in an ambiguous position, constructing his/her own complicity while reconstructing the scene of the performance. The 'scene of the crime' figures the critic as a detective in a trope which is common in postmodern and psychoanalytical theories of fiction and narratology.⁴⁰ As epistemological detectives, critics use a combination of scientific procedures and intuitive deductions, but site-specific performances, as I mentioned above, show the provisionality and strategic use of these epistemological tropes. The real crime of the scene of the crime trope would be thinking that this was the only valid way of understanding the body of evidence the site-specific production compiles.

Writing, trauma and the document

Michael Shanks observed recently that performance and archaeology are connected by the same question: 'What remains after the event? This is our archaeological question, foremost too for those who refuse to reduce performance to a prewritten text' (Shanks 2002: n.p.). This was the issue which haunted Frisch after his powerful theatre incident, and it is the abiding question of site-specific theatre and performance. In *Theatre/Archaeology*, Pearson and Shanks develop the notion of stratigraphy, a conception of writing as a series of layers, thereby evoking several sets

subject from object, and mutilates the object in the project of epistemological enquiry' (Klaver 2000: 325).

³⁹ See review of the *St Pancras Project* by Sarah Hemmings for the *Financial Times* (10 June 1995), in *Theatre Record* 2-15 July 1995, 883-4

⁴⁰ Shoshana Felman's reading of the critical reception of Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* shows how the critical debate about this text is a repetition of the scene dramatized in the text, a common, ghostly or haunting effect, often felt in site-specific theatre and performance. Felman notes that '[t]he

of metaphor such as palimpsest, skin, or archaeological deposit. The written document of the performance is composed of layers and gaps, of hidden depths and strange, inscrutable hieroglyphs, intimately associated with the body, equally in contact with historical memories and vestiges of the past.

The actualization of the document is the traumatic aftershock of archaeology or the site-specific performance, since both practices are torn by the conflicting desires to record the event and to acknowledge (or even to produce) its unrecordability. The 'scene of the crime' metaphor ties in with Shanks's idea about the trauma of the document. He tells us that '[a]t the heart of this archaeology is a trauma, a loss, entropy, transformation, degradation. What we have is not what was. And the trauma is one that is sometimes suppressed [...]' (ibid: n.p.)

I suggest that at the heart of site-specific theatre and performance is a double perception of trauma. Performance sites are discovered *as if* we were revisiting the scene of a traumatic event, a crime: we visit them as transgressors, trespassers, archaeologists and crime investigators, trying to expose their secrets, which are necessarily hidden so that the event can elicit the critic-spectator's desire to know and investigate. The 'something significant' we find there, as Frisch showed in his account, may ultimately remain inexplicable, the 'troumatique',⁴¹ the beyond of language.

At the same time, site-specific theatre and performance make us aware that we cannot escape our desire to *narrate* traumatic experiences. As with Frisch's theatre scene, we overhear our own aestheticizing of experience, simultaneously living and retelling what happens to us. In short, the traumatic aftershock which site-specific theatre and performance stage is the realization that we (sometimes) survive trauma (whether it comes in the form of inadvertent self-exposure, crime, or the death of others) to put it to creative uses, which may leave us guilty, with a sense of criminality or ethical wrongdoing. The document is the traumatic other scene of site-

reader of *The Turn of the Screw* is also the detective of a crime which in reality is his, and which "returns upon himself" (Felman 1977: 176).

⁴¹ Mary Jacobus describes the 'troumatique', a term coined by Lacan, as the 'idea that the negativity or absence inherent in both experience and figurative language constitutes a catastrophic hole in the real' (Jacobus 1999: 127)

specific theatre and performance, in the way it haunts the event at the moment of its occurrence, in the way it haunts the real as its own eventual re-inscription as fiction.

I have drawn on Pearson and Shanks's work to outline how site-specific theatre and performance can figure the critic-creator of the performance's meaning as archaeologist and criminal investigator. In both cases, these figures for the critical process are underwritten by a sense of trauma, both about the ability to document the experience of performance and the critic's implication in producing the body of signs to be interpreted. This sense of trauma, I suggest, is connected with the function of the aesthetic in site-specific performance modes: trying to gain access to a real which avoids the distortions of aesthetic frameworks, the site-specific critic finds traces of those distortions everywhere, bringing the threat of disintegration to the frameworks we use for critical analysis. Like Frisch, the site-specific critic is led to wonder whether he/she is in fact framing a piece of wall rather than a work of art. Site-specific theatre and performance put the critic in a quandary, leading him/her to wonder whether the effects and experiences one is undergoing are merely projections of the mind. As Frisch says at the end of his extended speculation, 'I see a stagehand, who scolds, and a young actress, who eats an apple and says good morning. I see what I would not otherwise see: two human beings' (9). The emotional, aesthetic and philosophical reflections, and staging of the secret self, all finally serve to return his experience to its starting point. In site-specific theatre and performance, critics experience the return of the same which, as a result of a performance, has become radically different. Hence the wish to expose the secret of the performance, and the painful, perhaps traumatic inability to do so.

Site-specificity: body (and) writing

Archaeology, crime and the trauma of the document all produce figurations of the critic at the scene of a site-specific performance. I suggested in chapter 1 that site-specific theatre and performance produce multiple transcodings between body, site and social formation and evoke plural intertexts which construct the space of theatre as a negative (a space of confession, narcissism and loss). In what follows, I outline

some of the commonly evoked metaphors and intertexts of site-specific productions, beginning with what I term the waste-aesthetics and ghost-aesthetics which often characterize them.

Waste and ghost are terms which circulate freely through site-specific productions. Waste, based on accumulation, and ghosts, the manifestation of the insubstantial, at first seem contradictory, but on closer inspection, they are bound up with one another and demonstrate the porous boundaries of site-specific metaphors and meanings. Waste is both a visual excess and an undifferentiated mass. It crosses borders, erodes categories, often defying explanation. Waste brings with it the notion of decay. While waste is seen as noxious and repulsive, decay is often romanticized. Waste is what the body rejects, decay is what the body learns to accept as an inevitable stage in growing older and confronting mortality. Decay, one could argue, is waste under the sign of representation.

Site-specific theatre and performance's ghost-aesthetics derives from the fact that performances are usually predicated on the absence of the site's human inhabitants, workers or users. Peggy Phelan argues that performance is intimately connected with the ephemeral, vanishing and fleshless: 'Performance is the art form which most fully understands the generative possibilities of disappearance' (Phelan 1993: 27). In Phelan's melancholy aesthetics, the disappearance of the performance rehearses the death of the subject, both of which are played out in the disappearance of sites, through their decaying or becoming waste, their dereliction, or the ways their social marginality negates them as objects of vision or cultural representation.

The waste and ghost aesthetics of site-specific performances represent both an excess of the real and a radical scepticism about its knowability. They figure the site's future incarnation as memory, the performance's afterlife as an 'insubstantial' pageant and its production of uncanny effects and mis-readings. At the same time, waste and ghost aesthetics combine to represent the haunting of the phenomenal world by the ghost of writing and the aesthetic, the textualization of the here and now by memories and cultural intertexts, reinscribed in the present as its other 'scenes'. The ghost, as the risky projection of the unconscious psyche, and waste, as the lowest

common denominator of matter, are both displaced through writing and into writing as *effects*. These two aesthetics are produced as critico-creative strategies for interpreting the site-specific production.

Both waste and ghost are intimately connected with the body and death, bearing out Stallybrass and White's claim that transcodings are often mapped across the human body (Stallybrass and White 1986). They are mobile topoi whose interaction produces the transitional space in which the body becomes insubstantial and memories and traces of the past become powerful presences. Waste and ghost-aesthetics circulate from the body to sites and to the eventual re-writing of a performance experience.

How do the critical reactions which respond to site-specific performance register the combined effects of the presence of waste and the haunting absence of the ghosts? In my analysis of Deborah Warner's site-specific work in the following chapter, I approach this question by examining how waste and ghost aesthetics furnish criticism with a thematics but also infiltrate criticism as part of an economy of writing. The waste aesthetics of Warner's performances translates into a critical search for details, a disorganization of the structure of the critical text through aberrant focus on the objects and material piling up and signifying through accretion. The ghost aesthetics of her site-specific work is conveyed through a circulation of words from text to building to space, the figuring of words as dead bodies to be resurrected through performance, and the permeability of the borders of discourse to verbal crossings-over, allowing words to move ghost-like between world and text. Site-specific performances allow words to migrate between the worlds of the living and the dead.

Entering sites, entering texts

In my discussion of Deborah Warner's site-specific work, we see the importance of the process of entering the performance, while in chapter 4, I show how entering the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie de Vincennes became important factors in these new theatres' construction of their identity and ethics. Like the criminologist at

the scene of the crime, the critic at a site-specific performance is in a state of suspicion and heightened awareness. Unlike the experience of traditional theatre, site-specific theatre and performances often leave the critic unsure about where the production starts and ends. The entrance to the performance is a fluid, transitional zone in which signs are often radically indeterminate.

Thresholds have always had their mythical associations, from the belief that vampires are not allowed to enter a house unless invited in by the owner, to the traditional practice of a groom carrying a bride across the threshold after their marriage. The threshold is a richly symbolic space, neither inside nor outside, separating the known world of the domestic from the unknown quantity of the outside. Site-specific theatre and performance endeavour to prolong theatre's threshold moments, encouraging the critic to linger in this transitional space, to loiter between the known and the unknown, the quantifiable and the unpredictable.

As with the presence of waste and ghost, the extension of and meditation on the threshold has implications for the act of critical writing. Writing in/on the threshold represents the avoidance of a conclusion, the refusal to attain a particular goal. One example is Ariane Mnouchkine's recent reflection on theatre aesthetics and the notion of fragility. Mnouchkine replaces the theoretical analysis of theatre, fragility and memory with a journey into the theatre in which the trees of the Bois de Vincennes are missing, exposing the importance of the entry itself, of the path into the space of theatre:

Je pense au contraire que c'est cette fragilité même qui fait qu'on s'en souvient. Je crois que nous recevons ça comme un moment rare, comme un moment... C'est cela qui me rend triste avec les arbres, c'est que je n'ai pas traversé le Bois de Vincennes en me disant: c'est un moment rare. Parce que j'y vais tous les jours, et que c'était mon chemin, c'était à moi, j'allais au travail. Et c'est quand je les ai vus à terre...' (Calle-Gruber 2001: 38)

Site-conscious criticism of performance is often characterized by just such cognitive displacements and deviations, by similarly aleatory narrative paths which we go down curiously or anxiously, a bit like Alice in Wonderland. Mnouchkine's

words continue, '[j]e n' imagine même pas ce que ça a pu faire aux gens qui ont vu leur maison détruite, ou des choses bien plus graves encore' (ibid). Deviating from accepted models of criticism and interpretation is also a recognition of homelessness, a decision to leave the shelter of theory's bricks and mortar and to undertake a critical journey.

Exposure and secrecy

The waste and ghost aesthetics relate to a feature of site-specific theatre and performance I want to make explicit here, which is its double movement of exposure and secrecy, a point to which I return in analyzing the decay of the Bouffes du Nord in chapter 5. Waste and decay are tropes of exposure (of the physical depth of things, of their historical layers) while the ghost is the trope of a secret, the residue of a crime from the past which will not allow the dead to rest. Exposure and secrecy are generalized mechanisms in site-specific theatre and performance around which ideas such as archaeology and crime, the body and death, speaking and writing cluster. As we shall see in relation to Warner's site-specific performances, the critic wants to reveal the performance's secrets, but finds that she cannot. Revelation of the secret leads to end of its controlling power, the end of the tension which produces creative modes of criticism forced to hedge around the meaning of performance in creative deviations, as a way of negatively mapping it in.

Exposure and secrecy structure the tense polarity between speaking and writing operative in site-specific theatre and performance. Frisch's encounter described earlier was dependent on his silence, since to speak would have changed the nature of the event, revealing his presence and making the incident theatrical. Writing, and more precisely, the projection of the incident into its future form as writing, became Frisch's way of maintaining its secret while staging the risk and seductiveness of exposure. As we shall see in Part 2, critics of the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie de Vincennes produced the venues as hidden and in the process exposed their desires for new forms of theatre aesthetics and ethics.

I will now turn to a case study of Deborah Warner's site-specific performances in London, in which I show how writing and texts shape this director's work, infiltrating performances in the form of books, documents or signs. I join my own personal writing to the texts of critics reacting to Warner's work, and use the documentary style of Camilo José Vergara to launch a comparison between the documentation of sites and the criticism of performances. I show that the need for secrecy and the passion for exposure produced by site-specific performances sometimes find their critical synthesis in writing which resembles the tense neutrality of the documentary project.

Chapter 3

Deborah Warner's site-specific theatre and performance: objects, reading and (inter)textuality

This chapter examines three site-specific theatre and performance productions by the British director, Deborah Warner, which took place in London during the 1990s. These were the *St Pancras Project* (1994) at the Midland Grand Hotel, *The Waste Land* (1997) at Wilton's Music Hall and the *Tower Project* (1999) at the Euston Tower. Taken collectively, they present an elegiac picture of abandoned sites in a city on the verge of a new millennium. The *St Pancras Project* exposed audiences to the neglected grandeur of the 19th century fin-de-siècle, while *The Waste Land* staged Eliot's poem, so emblematic of 20th century modernity, in a similarly 19th century building. The *Tower Project* took spectators into the heart of 20th century office life in a production which also played with colliding timescales, this time demonstrating the speed with which the modern becomes anachronistic.

All three productions were greeted with critical acclaim, although the *St Pancras Project's* importance was felt more strongly after the fact, thrown into relief by the following two productions. It was not as widely reviewed as them although it provided many critical reference points for the subsequent performances, and I therefore focus particularly on its intertextual afterlife and impact on *The Waste Land* and the *Tower Project*. Indeed, I suggest that the *St Pancras Project* was part of the thematics of secrecy which structured critical responses to the other two productions. It was the site-specific performance which people had *heard about* rather than experienced, and therefore became an object of desire for the newly initiated spectator. As with other forms of theatre and performance, but in more pronounced ways, site-specific performances create anxiety about missing things and overlooking important facts: missing an unrepeatable production, missing a key piece of information in a particular performance. I highlight this point in my own reading of the *Tower Project*, but generally speaking, site-specific performances reveal the fantasmatic nature of the desire for totalizing knowledge by integrating disappointment into their aesthetics and encouraging reconstructions between spectators and critics after the fact. Talking about site-specific performances with other spectators and reading site-specific criticism after the event are a fascinating

lesson in the partial nature of our own perceptions and reactions and a journey into the sense-making operations of others.

I examine *The Waste Land* in relation to its critical reception in order to describe the effect of the site-specificity of the performance on the writing it produced. Reading this criticism prepares the ground for a reassessment of early reactions to the sites of the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie de Vincennes which I undertake in chapter 4. By investigating the role of sites in site-specific theatre and performance, seen as identifiable genres, we are in a better position to undertake a re-reading of early criticism of these two Parisian venues.

I engage with the *Tower Project* from a different perspective, embarking on a creative reconstruction of the production from my own point of view as a spectator while at the same time reading the performance through the site-writing of the Chilean-American writer Camilo José Vergara. My own reconstruction of the event focuses on the role of objects in creating the production's generic hybridity and the way its negative poetics accentuated the cultural intertexts and aesthetic preconceptions which we take into a performance. I use Vergara's work, which sets out to document a number of abandoned buildings in the USA, as a tool to highlight critical cross-overs and differences between performance and site documentation, and to suggest that the two modes are not as distinct as one would have anticipated.

Whose Waste Land? Eliot's, Warner's or the spectator's?

When Deborah Warner's production of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* was performed at Wilton's Music Hall in London's East End in 1997, the venue attracted as much attention as the fact that the most canonical poem of high Modernism was crossing generic boundaries by being turned into a piece of theatre.⁴² This in itself was a satisfying blow to the literary purists who see theatre and performance as lesser art forms than poetry, especially next to the august, impure purity of Eliot's masterpiece.

⁴² The section on critical responses to Warner's *The Waste Land* examines the 14 newspaper reviews of the production at Wilton's Music Hall which took place between 14 December 1997 and 11 January 1998. The reviews are dated from 15 December 1997 to 2 January 1998. All references to reviews come from *Theatre Record*, 3-31 December 1997, pp. 1611-1615 (henceforward *TR*).

But what can have distracted the literary censors from their policing of generic borders?⁴³

One of the main compensations for Warner's act of hubris, judging from critics' reactions, was that Eliot's poem, staged in the East End of London, was seen as a homecoming. Susannah Clapp in the *Observer* told readers that:

Shaw has performed the piece in the Old Magazine Fort in Dublin's Phoenix Park, in L'Amphithéâtre de Morphologie in Paris and in Gooderham and Wort's factory in Toronto. She is due to take it to Adelaide. It is hard to believe that she and Warner will find anywhere more topographically appropriate for this poem full of London scenes than Wilton's Music Hall, in Grace Alley just off Cable Street. (TR: 1612)⁴⁴

The argument ran that since large parts of the poem were set in London, and specifically the East End, then this theatrical experiment was justified on the grounds that it returned a geographical specificity to the text. The venue itself, Wilton's Music Hall, contributed to critical quiescence about the production, since it too was appropriated as a distinctively British phenomenon. Numerous critics engaged in lyrical reflections on the genre of music hall, such as this characterization of the venue from the *Independent* '[it was] a place where Victorian tightrope walkers once performed knickerless over an uncomplaining audience and where Mr Wilton would whisk in singers from Covent Garden, matching the fees they commanded there, to warble late night arias to the 1,500 folk he used to cram in' (TR: 1613). Reviewers saw in the decline and shabby gentility of the venue not only a metaphor for Eliot's

⁴³ The only, flagrant, exception is Alastair Macaulay in *The Financial Times*, rare in suggesting that Shaw's performance distorted the Modernist poetics of *The Waste Land*: 'How about this for crummy verse-speaking? "I too awaited the" (sniff) "expected guest". "And bats" (sniff) "with baby faces in the violet light". This amid Eliot, of all poets, so precise and so eloquent in judging the connective metre of a phrase. The sniff as caesura!' (TR: 1614).

⁴⁴ The Old Magazine Fort in Phoenix Park, Dublin, was built around 1734 to defend the Irish during the period of English rule. It was used as a military museum for many years but fell into a state of disrepair before its reconstruction. L'Amphithéâtre de Morphologie in Paris is at the École nationale supérieure des beaux arts, a venue in which 'des générations d'étudiants ont scruté des générations de corps nus' (*Libération* 30 March 1996); the production subsequently went to MC 93 Bobigny in early 1997. Gooderham and Worts factory is a distillery plant in downtown Toronto, founded in 1832, which was once the largest distillery in the British Empire. Its period of dereliction began in 1990.

fragmented aesthetics, but also a metaphor for the state of the post-industrial, end-of-Empire nation.

The way in which Warner's project was subsumed into canonical and ideological readings of both Eliot's poem and British identity is symptomatic of the risks of site-specific performance. Decaying sites are eminently susceptible to being romanticized so that their actual decay is converted into a reactionary nostalgia. As Miwon Kwon argues, once the critique of the museum or traditional representational theatre has been assumed, it quickly gives way to a recuperation of the site-specific location as a site for discourses of authenticity and veracity (see Kwon 1997: 104).

Having made these preliminary points about the reception of *The Waste Land*, I want to suggest ways in which we can challenge this homecoming reading by a close analysis of its critical responses, especially by comparison with the other site-specific productions Warner directed in London, the *St Pancras Project* and the *Tower Project*. These site-specific productions dispensed with a written text, canonical or otherwise. They avoided using texts, but they certainly did not dispense with the idea of *text* itself. Indeed, their radical rethinking of what a text is can be productively used to reread critical responses to *The Waste Land*.

Building as text

In 1994, Warner was asked by the producers of the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT) to direct a site-specific performance whose theme would be London itself. She had been making a film just before this, and in the course of looking for locations, had found a number of empty spaces in the city. The Midland Grand, an old railway hotel in St Pancras, London had struck her as particularly exciting, and the next question became what to stage there.

Warner takes up the story: 'I set about looking for a text to put in it, but, as I got to know the building, I began to realize that it was its own text' (Cousin 1996: 234). This remark is intriguing, not least because it asks more questions than it answers. What does it mean to say that the building was its own text? Warner suggests that she only perceived this gradually after getting to *know* the building. The 'text' Warner refers to is created after a significant lapse of time, and is latent in the

building. But who writes this text? Would it be more accurate to describe the building as a rich site in which texts can be *generated*? The loss of the text metaphor's power in such a reformulation suggests not.

Reflecting on the *St Pancras Project*, the idea of text and writing resurfaced in Warner's assessment of the critical reaction which ensued. Critics had roundly attacked Warner's previous production of *Richard II* at the National Theatre, famous for its use of Fiona Shaw as the male monarch of the title. It was not only the violence of the reaction that angered Warner, but the fact that the criticism was 'ill-expressed' (ibid: 233). Paradoxically, for the site-specific *St Pancras Project*, arguably more liable to trigger critical hostility, Warner noted that it 'made critics write well' (ibid: 234).

Warner's observation about the criticism of the *St Pancras Project* warrants investigation as part of my wider argument that site-specific theatre and performance produce creative and self-exposing critical reactions. Warner herself begins the analysis of the *St Pancras Project* criticism by pointing out that it made critics write well 'in the same way that it made audiences respond well. People wanted to articulate what they'd experienced, because the truth was they had created something. It wasn't being made at them, or done to them' (ibid). Professional critics were able to produce a different kind of criticism because they could be more like spectators; at the same time, the *St Pancras Project* allowed them to be creative, to change from being critics to *authors* of their own texts.

For the performance, spectators entered the St Pancras Chambers separately and followed a clearly indicated route around the building, eventually climbing up to the top floor. The solitude of the experience was crucial to its effect, giving objects and the fleeting glimpses of human beings an uncanny quality, as Kate Kellaway notes in the *Observer*: 'I walked along the first corridor luxuriating in solitude and started the ascent up the majestic staircase. Just as I was beginning to wonder whether I might see no one, as if my thoughts had been apprehended, I spied a bellhop in baize green livery [...]' (*Observer*, 25 June 1995). The performance's sense of danger was underscored by the fact that spectators had to sign a disclaimer concerning vermin and

the risk of death, as several reviewers ruefully observe. Some compare the experience to being in a fairytale, or to the adventures of Alice in Wonderland, while the idea of following a thread around a labyrinth is also a common way to describe the enigma of the performance.

The critical reactions to the *St Pancras Project* are distinguished by a number of the characteristics which I have argued are more general to site-specific theatre and performance. Paul Taylor suggests how being alone disrupted the usual participation in a collective experience as an audience member: 'In the *St Pancras Project* it's the nature of theatrical experience that gets mysteriously inverted. Instead of the strong sense of group identity you're supposed to feel as an audience at a live event, you're tremendously conscious here of being on your own' (*Independent* 19 June 1995). Aligning the experience of theatre to its collective audience formation, Taylor registers how Warner's performance changes this, thereby questioning the generic identification of the production.⁴⁵ Kate Kellaway, in an intimate and confessional review, focuses on the way the performance was permeated by a sense of death and mortality, referring to the ghost-effect I outlined in Chapter 2:

There were no guests, only servants, no confrontation - all the figures were in retreat - no words, no narrative. The servants seemed realer than I felt. They did not seem like ghosts. The remarkable effect of the walk was that it turned the walker into a ghost haunting the building, upsetting its occupants with the heavy tread of another time. (*Observer*, 25 June 1995)

The unsettling effect of the spectator being the ghost instead of the performers will be exploited by the *Tower Project* in order to provoke critical paranoia and self-reflexivity. The critical disembodiment induced by the performance leads the critic to see herself as a mind thinking and writing, an incorporeal and perhaps disfiguring presence on the scene. A questioning of the legitimacy of the critic's presence is constitutive of the experience, underlined on reaching the top floor and the small rooms where the hotel servants lived. As Kellaway suggests, the performance did not

⁴⁵ Sarah Hemming quotes Deborah Warner as saying that 'I think work gets interesting precisely at the point when it defies categorization' (*Financial Times*, 10 June 1995)

give glimpses of any of the hotel's guests, only its working staff whose labour was crucial to the hotel's functioning. The spectator's or critic's powerful emotions and reactions related to theatre and aesthetics are abbreviated by this sudden emergence into the spaces of working lives, as Sarah Hemming observes: 'The higher up the building you go, the more remote the present day world seems, until you arrive at the airy top floor, where there is little intervention from recent decades. Here the maids slept, five to a room, and you feel the hard graft that supported this whimsical grandeur' (*Financial Times* 10 June 1995).

The *St Pancras Project* had alerted critics to their own production of the performance's meaning, hence their references to fairy tales, Alice in Wonderland and labyrinths to figure their search for ways to understand it. They turned to other forms of narrative in order to give shape to their own. Alongside these self-figurations, the trope of the ghost operated to open the borders between past and present, between the real and the illusory.

The Waste Land, or, does John Gross wear glasses?

Before turning to *The Waste Land*, it is important to make some opening remarks about theatre/performance criticism in British newspapers. Such criticism is severely restricted by considerations of space, ranging from short capsule reviews of 100 words, via medium length reviews ranging between 200 and 300 words, to full length reviews which rarely exceed 600 words. A whole range of factors, including the newspaper's political stance, the presence of a star performer, or a production's level of hype, are bound to affect the way in which a journalistic critical response is written, but it is clear that the limitations on word count lead to certain stylistic features, such as compression, a subordination of impression to judgement and of the particular to the general.

Therefore it is surprising that critics of *The Waste Land* should waste their valuable copy space on describing their journey to the venue. Lyn Gardner's review for *The Guardian* exemplifies a point made in Chapter 2 about site-specific criticism mimicking the process of entering and leaving a site-specific performance. After quickly naming play, performer and venue, Gardner advises:

Best to walk the last couple of miles I'd say. Down Lower Thames Street with its grand new office blocks, past nouveau riche St Katherine's Dock, into the warren of streets behind Tower Hill. Then through Grace's Alley covered with its bright murals and graffiti proclaiming 'Big Love'. (TR: 1611)

Not only is the critical reductionism of 'see/don't see' replaced by a speculative suggestion about what route to take to the venue, but the 'I'd say', added at the end of the first line, changes the critic's tone of voice from that of the authority figure to one of an enthusiastic friend, passing on knowledge about finding performance and venue *by word of mouth*.

Equally surprising is the mention of a piece of graffiti in the context of a review of the Modernist masterpiece. Yet here the graffiti stops being a sign of urban vandalism and is integrated into a wider conception of what the site-specific performance offers the spectator, i.e., a more intense capacity to see, notice and reflect on the environment. The critic quotes the graffiti with irony, aware of the iconoclastic game she is playing with linguistic signs. Gardner's review ends by returning the reader to the space of the city. Having experienced what she calls 'an awfully big adventure', her writing is caught up in its own synaesthetic pleasures and textualities: '[a]fterwards it is out into the gathering gloom. The river flows ever onwards. The City rumbles above and below your feet. Time stands still' (ibid).

Gardner is not alone in referring to her journey through the streets and alleys leading up to the venue. Indeed, the word 'alley' often recurs in the reviews, as if in geographically locating Wilton's Music Hall, critics were secretly and pleasurably citing a word from the poem.⁴⁶ Critics show considerable relish for finding references to the poem both in the urban environment and the building itself. Place names circulate between the city and the poem, as Paul Taylor suggests in *The Independent*: 'The Thames flows close by Wilton's Music Hall, in Grace's Alley, just behind St Katherine's Dock, an area that teems with topographical *Waste Land* associations.

⁴⁶ *The Waste Land* l. 115-6 'I think we are in rats' alley/Where the dead men lost their bones' (Eliot 1963: 67).

‘By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept...’⁴⁷ takes on a more concrete life if you’ve recently walked down Leman St.’ (TR: 1613).

One interesting version of the journey to the venue occurs in John Gross’s review for *The Sunday Telegraph*. Gross grew up in London’s East End and has recently written a book about his childhood there.⁴⁸ He introduces his review with a precise mapping of the venue’s location which resembles a list of directions given to someone lost in the street. They end with a reference to the *London A-Z* street map, making the difficulty of finding the venue, even using official sources, an integral part of the experience of the performance: ‘Wilton’s Music Hall is hidden away in Grace’s Alley, a tiny turning off Ensign Street, which is a turning off Cable Street, which is in the Southern part of Whitechapel near what was once the docks. (You have to screw up your eyes to find it in the A-Z)’ (TR: 1614). Arguably, wondering whether John Gross wears glasses is completely irrelevant to a *proper* understanding of *The Waste Land*, poem or performance. On the other hand, it annexes a precise gesture, an autobiographical image, a moment in time (produced as a result of the performance and its site-specificity), into the critical act.

Gross’s description of the venue itself is a complex amalgam of texts, partly evoking lines from Eliot’s poem, ‘[i]n the auditorium there are the original cast iron pillars and some fresh gilding (though scarcely Ionian white and gold)’ (ibid),⁴⁹ and partly textured by the external, sensual experience of the city, ‘[e]very so often a train bound for Fenchurch Street hurtles by. It is very cold’ (ibid). The reader is referred to literary works for a more accurate sense of the venue’s mood, as ‘something out of a novel by Peter Ackroyd or Iain Sinclair’ (ibid). Although the qualities of the site and poem are not in doubt, the performance itself, as if detachable from the experience, leaves him rather more sceptical: ‘The choice of site is a stroke of genius. The poem is a work of genius. But what of the performance [...]?’ (ibid).

⁴⁷ *The Waste Land* l. 182 (Eliot 1963: 70).

⁴⁸ *A Double Thread. A Childhood in Mile End - and beyond* (Gross 2001).

⁴⁹ *The Waste Land* ll. 264-5 ‘[...] where the walls/Of Magnus Martyr hold/Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold’ (Eliot 1963: 73)

Mappings of the environment around the site recur in these reviews, but not as often as references to the building's previous uses. Critics here focus both on the venue's history as a music hall, and its time as a mission hall and rag warehouse. Michael Coveney in *The Daily Mail* tells us that the 'site has been used for countless films but for no live performance since 1880' (TR: 1611). The building's previous artistic functions and its charity period are used in the reviews as exemplary of its multi-layered history and textuality. These operate as part of an indirect critical appreciation of Eliot's poem. In other words, historical data and other art forms (music hall, cinema) are called to stand in for the usual analytical procedures of criticism. The building and its uses contain the critical force which the critic would normally be expected to apply through synthesis and judgment.

Susannah Clapp's review demonstrates an historical awareness of the site which is part of the discourse of Britishness I mentioned earlier, but this is offset by attention to the minor details of the venue. Her review marshals the historical data about the site in an efficient arrangement of 'need to know' facts: 'The hall was built by John Wilton in 1858 at the back of his pub, the Mahogany Bar, and became known as 'the handsomest room in town'. Champagne Charlie sang there [...]' (TR: 1612). The summary ends on an icon of backwater Britishness: 'John Betjeman campaigned to save it from demolition in 1964' (ibid).

At the same time, Clapp betrays anxiety about missing things. Alongside the historical sweep of the venue, the tiny detail attracts attention: '[o]ver the lintel of a doorway there is a scrap of green moulding with a little bearded man in its middle' (ibid). The detail is seized on as a critical signature here, alerting the reader to the specificity of the building, but also to the uniqueness of this particular reviewer's performance experience. It is an individual and subjective act of noticing which signals the reviewer's re-writing of the performance event from her own position and perspective.

The reviews of *The Waste Land* which I have considered demonstrate some of the effects of site-specific performances on critical writing. Site-specific performances not only prompt laconically insightful comments like Robert Gore-

Langton's in the *Daily Express* (in what is admittedly a review of about 150 words) that '[s]ince TS's [sic] masterwork is stuffed with references to London streets nearby, it's a bit like sitting slap in the middle of the poem' (TR: 1615), but have the potential to change how the critical function is perceived. These reviews are not without their judgmental qualities, sometimes sexist, puritanical or tacitly asserting their own canonical values. Nor are they free from the territorializing ideology of place and the appropriation of cultural forms as part of a latent critique of Britain's globalization as a brand. However, we have to see in their emphasis on the journey to the space and the formal specificities of the building, and in their freedom to mark the individuality of the performance experience through annexed detail, the stamp of a critical method which encourages the spectator not to follow critical orthodoxies, but to couple their own idiosyncratic experience to the production of the performance's meaning.

American Ruins/London ruins: Reading The Tower Project in/through Camilo José Vergara's American Ruins

Lyn Gardner said that *The Waste Land's* venue 'echoes with its own ghosts, just as Eliot's poem is haunted by the dead and the not yet living, of cities past and present. This is theatre as architecture and architecture as theatre' (TR: 1611). In the performance, ghosts are textually mediated through the poem, and summoned up by the architecture and historical richness of the site. The metaphor of the ghost, despite its insubstantiality, joins text and site together in an economy of the trace, of something not seen, yet sensed, a mobile signifier of the possibility of transgressing physical boundaries to turn the physical into the textual and give a phantom form to memory.

The *Tower Project*, Deborah Warner's 1999 site-specific production at the Euston Tower in London, like the *St Pancras Project* four years earlier, did not make use of a written text at all. Warner's production of *The Waste Land*, the high Modernist text of decay and fragmentation, of the decay of language and in particular the language of poetry, therefore came between two textless site-specific

performances. The first of the innumerable ghosts which haunted the *Tower Project* was its missing text, but there were others: the performance of the *St Pancras Project* and the critical reactions it had generated were some of them, especially the idea that the production hinged on a secret, its enigmatic power to summon up in critics and spectators the desire to talk about it, but not to explain or reveal its enigma.⁵⁰ Another of its ghosts, more insubstantial still, was the way the words of the text of *The Waste Land* had been raised from the dead by Warner's production, circulating through the spaces of the city and critical writing. The ghost of the text in the *Tower Project* was accompanied by the ghosts of intertexts, of intertexts as ghosts, so many revenants coming back to haunt the apparently textless space of the performance.

I would suggest that the *Tower Project* was not only haunted by intertexts, but by a self-reflexivity about intertexts: their artfulness, cultural capital, and symbolic power. The textuality of the *Tower Project* was profoundly self-reflexive, as I show in my analysis, becoming an examination of the metaphors of intertextuality and their secret and complex ideological work.

In a recent interview, Warner extended her earlier comments about the discovery of the *St Pancras Project*:

My first thought was to find a text that somehow applied to the building. I was looking through 19th century literature and I thought of maybe Fiona [Shaw] doing *The Lady of Shalott* on the staircase. But the more I visited, the more I realized I was very much on the wrong track. The experience I was having – which was perplexing and evocative and romantic, and sometimes a little bit unnerving by turns – was the one I should be offering the audiences. What was dynamic in my experience was the solitary nature of it.⁵¹

The *Tower Project* also entailed being *on the wrong track*, with emotions changing *by turns*, following the convoluted path around the performance site. Theatre as a collective experience gave way here to the self-authored theatre of the

⁵⁰ The archived LIFT website for The Tower Project at www.liftfest.org/lift99/tower.html includes a quotation from Kate Kellaway's review in *The Observer*: 'I've hardly stopped talking about and even dreamt of the St Pancras Project, but I would not betray even one of its secrets...From the beginning it was extraordinary' *The Observer*, LIFT '95

⁵¹ 'Touched by an Angel' by Gerard Raymond, 8 July 2003 available at www.ibs.theatermania.com/contents/news.cfm?int_news_id=3660

solitary. The *Tower Project* involved spectators entering Euston Tower one by one at an interval of fifteen minutes. Ushers were giving out tickets and calling the building's lift, but then spectators were left alone to make the ascent with no further instructions. When the lift stopped, one realized that wondering around and establishing a personal itinerary in what was once an office space was now the only choice.

This was the first of the *Tower Project's* numerous ways of turning subjectivity back on itself, layering everyday experience so that it became unsettling. The confrontation with the solitary self revealed to the spectator how a phenomenological sense of the body's surface and boundaries is produced through interaction with others, how consciousness is structured through contact with the Other. As one made one's way into the *Tower Project*, the fact of being solitary slipped into metaphorical limbo: the solitary self became diffracted into the self at the scene of reading, the image of being caught in a maze sprang to mind, of being a ghost or revenant, unseen by others, of being shocked by the ordinary and its capacity to trigger metaphor.

The question still remains, however, how this part of the experience of walking around an abandoned building in the context of a site-specific performance differs from a more workaday experience of walking around any abandoned building. My analysis so far, concentrating on the performance's links with Warner's previous site-specific productions, provides one answer. Pearson and Shanks suggest that '[p]erformance is a special world set aside from everyday life by contractual arrangements and social suspensions, not entirely hermetically sealed, but a devised world' (Pearson and Shanks 2001: 27). Since we know we are entering a performance, we are more receptive to the sorts of creative displacements and symbolic potential of what we observe. We understand the performance intertextually, in relation to previous performances in the same vein, hence the ghosts of St Pancras and *The Waste Land*. The *Tower Project* marked itself out as a performance in numerous and particular ways, as we shall see.

At the same time, it situated its performativity in the space of ‘what if’, leading the solitary spectator, even those equipped with intertextual knowledge of Warner’s work and a cultural repertoire of theatre or site-specific performance, to ask what if these sights were phantoms of the mind, what if they were the self-created ghosts of everyday experience? What if this were not a site-specific performance at all?

Vergara’s ruins: the consequences of solitude

Discarded lottery tickets, brochures with pictures of new cars, and photographs of sailboats told of people’s dreams. Large stacks of official documents lay in temporary storage boxes ready to be moved. The files described firings, divorces, and crimes [...] The flapping wings of startled pigeons crashing against windows announce the upper floors. An increasing sense of isolation accompanies the ascent.⁵²

Camilo José Vergara’s book *American Ruins* describes the author’s visits to a number of abandoned buildings in the USA over several decades. He tells us that his project is to ‘record urban decay with a combined sense of respect, loss, and admiration for its peculiar beauty’ (Vergara 1999: 11). In a previous work, *The New American Ghetto* (1995), Vergara had used texts and photographs to document the hidden face of America in the form of its decaying inner city ghettos and their inhabitants. That book is full of human life and presents images of people living in the urban slums of Chicago, New York, Detroit, Newark and other cities. *American Ruins*, in contrast, focuses almost exclusively on the damaged and derelict buildings themselves. It maintains the documentary style of its predecessor but is more reflective and melancholy about its subject matter.

The New America Ghetto begins with a summary of the author’s past which details the loss of his family home in Chile. Vergara indicates that his project is an indirect way of coming to terms with the vanished world of his childhood. He views his meticulous photographing of ghetto sites as an obsessive need to repeat and revisit:

⁵² Vergara 1999: 29-30 The author is describing his visit to the disused Fireman’s Insurance Headquarters at the Four Corners, Newark.

How did a book like this come to be? What motivated me to travel across a nation the size of a continent to photograph its ghettos for eighteen years? Why such a fixation with keeping a record with what was declining, disintegrating, falling into ruin? Why did I have to return to the same places, observing their fate from the same corners and the same roofs? (Vergara 1995: x)

The introduction to *The New American Ghetto* also includes a survey of the authors, cinematographers and poets whose work helped shape Vergara's book:

While working on this book I have been profoundly influenced by the works of writers, musicians, filmmakers, and poets whose work resonated with the cityscapes of the American ghetto. This was very important when I was groping for ideas and images to express my observations and heighten my feelings [...] Two contrasting kinds of literature have attracted me: that portraying imaginary cities, such as Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, and that describing real cities - Charles Dickens's *London*, Émile Zola's *Paris*, Jorge Luis Borges's *Buenos Aires*, Jane Addams's *Chicago* (ibid: xi)

While *The New American Ghetto* frankly presents its influence by the personal and the literary/intertextual, *American Ruins* stages the more complex meshing of these factors in the documentary project, questioning whether objectivity about abandoned sites can ever be achieved. *American Ruins* excludes the human inhabitants from its depiction of derelict sites, but in doing so allows other voices and subjectivities to enter the text. The reflections of poets and authors are woven into *American Ruins*, such as Heine's, for example, who 'thought [derelict sites] live because people have given them a portion of their souls' (Vergara 1999: 19)

This different employment of fiction writers, poets and others to create a hybrid text allows the author to reflect on the aesthetic beauty of these monuments to post-industrial decline:

Unlike recent celebrated buildings, which are cold and distant in their perfection, derelict structures form some of our most moving urban spectacles. But their dramatic quality and extraordinary beauty are often lost on local residents. Understandably, they see in them a reflection of how bad things have gotten in their community and would like them fixed or demolished. (ibid: 207)

Local residents, so present in *The New American Ghetto*, are remarkably absent from *American Ruins*, which is the story of solitary encounters between the writer and the buildings and sites he records. The later book turns the camera lens away from human beings and replaces it with the author's written record of his entry and discovery of the sites he visits. It refers more elliptically (perhaps with the expectation of intertextual knowledge of *The New American Ghetto*) to the author's own past, this time directing our attention to the possibility that Vergara's obsessive, repeated visits to the same sites are encrypted with painful memories:

I returned to my childhood home in 1990 [in Chile] to find not even a trace of it. My documentary methods aim at objectivity. But might I not be making this work an extension of my own personal history? To some extent, yes. (ibid: 20).

Being alone in the abandoned railway stations and offices of his text turns frank, artless certainty about his personal investment in writing *The New American Ghetto* into a more speculative questioning of how this shapes *American Ruins*. Vergara here asks whether his obsessive revisiting of sites is less a desire to document a hidden and disappearing America than a need to *contain* his own grief: '[w]ill all my green, red and brown binders with their tens of thousands of slides, carefully labelled and placed in protective sleeves, end up as a heap of refuse?' (ibid: 23).

Reading into Performance

Walls are stripped bare. Offices built for people to work in are filled with a profound sense of their absence, so you gaze at what's been [...] left behind. Initially, these consist of single items of equipment in otherwise abandoned rooms: a disconnected phone, a shabby filing cabinet looming forth, spilling tiny name-tags across the floor.⁵³

This extract could come from Vergara's *American Ruins*. Its detached tone, quickly consumed reference to the author's subjective response, 'a profound sense of absence', and naming of disparate objects, all bring to mind Vergara's prose. Mention

⁵³ David Benedict, 'The View from the 31st Floor: The Tower Project/Lift, Euston Tower, London' (*Independent*, 18 June 1999)

of the 'shabby filing cabinet' recalls the piles of documents Vergara frequently finds on his visits. Yet one word alters it radically, telling us that it describes a site-specific performance rather than an untouched 'found' site. The word, which I have omitted from the above quotation, is 'artfully', 'so you gaze at what's been *artfully* left behind'.

In this review, 'artfully' is the critic's signature. It asserts his control over the experience of the performance and the wish for readers to know they are in a safe pair of critical hands. 'Artfully' insightfully anticipates what happens in Warner's site-specific production, but at the same time, tries to expose the performance's secret. The early parts of the *Tower Project*, I argue, did not strike you as 'artful', but took you through a series of stages in which the concept of the 'artful' was deconstructed. Benedict's review as it stands, therefore, with ellipses (indicating something missing, but what?) instead of 'artfully', comes much closer to the effect of the *Tower Project*.

Going up alone to the 31st floor of the empty building started alarm bells ringing. In fact, *would* the alarm bell ring if the lift got stuck, given the length of time the building had been out of use? The clanking of the lift mechanism did nothing to allay fears on this front. It was with relief that the sounds of creaking cables, and the sense of panic, stopped with the lift. One's first feeling was disorientation. Where were you supposed to go? What were you supposed to do? How was this experience a piece of theatre or performance? Stepping out of the lift was like stepping into the past. The colours of the carpets were so muted and 70s-looking, which was the first cultural intertext to present itself. One quickly realized that asking questions based on 'supposed to' was another cultural intertext: art as censoring experience, leading spectators to perform a required role. Maybe it was time to go exploring.

Finding arrows attached to the floor was like discovering the answer to a riddle. But the discovery initially led to frustration, since the office doors they pointed to were firmly locked, and one could only look through keyholes and eyelets at...nothing, empty rooms bringing disappointment and bemusement. The confrontation with disappointment was an important stage in the performance's trajectory, a cleansing of expectations about what theatre/performance should be. It

was too early at this stage to recognize its exposure of our craving for visual satisfaction and a plenitude of culturally readable signs in theatre and performance, and to anticipate that disappointment would loop back into our experience of the *Tower Project* later.

Where to next? Persevere with the offices, since they seem to be the only things on display (but what was on display?). Walking around, one became anxious to find something *significant*. Once again, the performance made you question how you approached the work of art as the search for significance or metaphorical implications. Finding something corresponding to this desired significance brought a sense of relief. One room contained a pile of computer monitors, another, a telephone on its own. Finally, something which prompted artistic/aesthetic reflection. One's mode of viewing changed from curiosity to contemplation and was itself revelatory. The VDUs were rich material for thoughts about consumer society, waste, technology and information storage. Seeing them in a rather precarious pile was unusual, and prompted images of junk mountains. Although the monitors were switched off, one's capacity for thinking as art requires of you was very much switched on. As for the telephone, endless possibilities about communication, missed connections and so on.

Yet being alone in the maze of offices, engaged in heightened and intense reflections on art and society, the feeling emerged that many of the images and intertexts swarming round these objects were cultural clichés, not profound thoughts at all, prompted by a desire *to perform the work of art competently*. Could it be that behind our conception of the work of art was an ideological operation giving us the illusion that we were complex, reflective human beings in just sufficient quantities for us to become compliant consumers? Maybe the objects had been artfully placed, but the experience so far had done much to tune one's ear to the cultural noise surrounding art and the aesthetic.

One way in which this cultural noise was produced in the *Tower Project* was through the interference of different media, either imaginatively, or provided explicitly by the performance itself. Warner tells us that after the *St Pancras Project*, people compared the experience to 'being in your own film', "and it was", Warner

adds, “though nobody was recording it” (Cousin 1996: 234). This reaction deserves further attention. It imagines the spectator as a strange hybrid of creator and created, watcher and watched. The immediacy of sensory experience is coupled with its creative reinscription in a cinematic work, so that experience is haunted by its own future viewing as cinematography. The film analogy is interesting in itself, and not only because it makes the experience of the *St Pancras Project* more generically impure than it already was. Film and theatre are often theorized as binary opposites,⁵⁴ the liveness of the latter seen as the excess to which cinema can never gain access. In such analyses, liveness is proposed as the key factor which differentiates theatre/performance from cinema. In the *St Pancras Project*, the theatre event is contaminated by the cinema’s emergence as the privileged metaphor for the apparition of the aesthetic as a haunting doubleness and self-reflexivity in our experience of sites. Cinema surfaced in the *St Pancras Project* as the theatre’s dangerous other, threatening the liveness of the performance event through its animation of the dead.

In the *Tower Project*, the uncanny cinematic feeling of the *St Pancras Project* was quoted and fragmented, rendered spectacular and spectral, by the use of CCTV, as part of the performance, to record people’s journeys around the building. The indistinct black and white images, flickering from one viewpoint to another, monitored our cinematic performances, picking up the memory of the discarded VDU monitors not only visually, but in the mutating of a signifier: monitor, monitoring. The CCTV crystallized our filmic self-productions into a series of disconnected images, splintering our narratives of the building. At the same time, it short-circuited the solipsism of the intertextual, art-oriented self by bringing scepticism and paranoia into the performance. While reinforcing the feeling of haunting by giving glimpses of other spectators, the CCTV demonstrated that we were under surveillance, and quite possibly, first and foremost, by ourselves.

Yet even the CCTV image, its all-seeing, real time, dispassionate eye which reduces the plurality and context-dependence of what it records to the bare minimum

⁵⁴ Philip Auslander deconstructs the notion of liveness by arguing that it is already mediated by

(low definition, black and white, intermittent; image as pure reduction to information and data) was not wholly reliable. Some of the images were puzzling, for example, a sheep seemed to be running through one of the rooms, while signs of sheep in the actual performance were not immediately apparent. One's thoughts ran to 'Dolly, cloning, and genetics'. Standing for (self-)surveillance and undercutting its own impartiality, the CCTV was yet another factor in the *Tower Project's* quizzical interpellation of the spectator.

Sites of Reading

The initial extracts from Vergara's *American Ruins* and David Benedict's review of the *Tower Project* are connected by a reference to files and filing cabinets. Vergara frequently comes across files left behind in the buildings he visits. These official documents are like embedded sites of reading in his text. They show us Vergara reading while we are in the process of reading his text, and their generic specificity as functional documents highlights the intertextual plurality of his own writing. 'Found' objects in a sequence of found objects, they are also legible texts documenting and archiving human lives. They exemplify how other, non-textual objects, and the derelict sites themselves, may also be subject to a form of 'reading'.

Vergara sets particular store by these 'found' texts. In Newark, he calls the building a 'time capsule' because of the discovery of files cataloguing firings, divorces and crimes. The information in the files:

candidly and vividly reveals more about Newark and its inhabitants during the past three decades than any official source. Because the fragments are unselfconscious documents, not processed for public consumption, they provide invaluable testimony about their times. (Vergara 1999: 31)

Their power comes from displacement, not only from their filing cabinets, but from the ideological function of ordering, keeping tabs and disavowing the processes of memory. Instead, they are reinscribed as the site of testimony, the trigger for imaginative reconstructions of the lives whose low points they record. Guided by his

own model of reading the facts and reconstructing their histories, Vergara turns the scanning of documents into a metaphor for responding to a site: '[m]aybe someday someone with the passion to tell the recent story of Newark will break in and 'read' this building' (ibid).

In the Essex County Jail in Newark, Vergara comes across documents left by the Bureau of Narcotics Control which used the building until it became structurally unsound in 1989. Among them, he found '[r]otting arrest records with the power to destroy people's lives' (ibid: 116). Alongside these, we hear about 'a cell decorated with women's high-heeled shoes and graffiti left by a film crew' (ibid). The found documents disseminate a reading-effect into the found objects and writing, turning them into fields of narrativity which allow us to treat them as we would documents, both as found object and legible text.

In the *Tower Project*, Warner made use of similar embedded sites of reading. An old, battered looking dictionary was placed at the threshold of one room, while a fax machine in another was printing out John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. As I was browsing the dictionary non-committally, I spotted the figure of an angel through a triangulation of glass which made it look like it was hanging outside the building. It was like a ghost or a hallucination. The word my eye had settled on in the dictionary flashed with significance. The angel, it turned out, in similar fashion to the monitor/monitoring link, had been prepared for earlier by the perplexing presence of a white bird's feather. (I did not see the fax machine and its text of *Paradise Lost*, but according to friends and the texts of critics, it was definitely there. Something in me still feels regret about missing it).

As for the cabinets, symbolic of the pure office tedium of filing (a strange throwback to the days before computers took over, but, these offices were clearly on the cusp of a technological revolution), they were open, and their contents looked like they had been rifled through. White tags littered the floor, as did children's toys and other office knick-knacks, photographs, mugs and office stationery. As with Vergara, narratives started to weave together.

Who were the people in the photographs? Why had they been left behind? How had the owners of these objects been connected? Where were they now? As the first level of narrative readings subsided, it was replaced by darker versions of events. The scene looked chaotic, like the aftermath of violence, the signs of people hurrying to escape. Perhaps reminiscent of the scene of a crime. Did the interest in filed information suggest a political crime? The possibilities expanded exponentially, producing a sudden sense of guilt about one's emotions not being proportionate to the performance. Going up a level to the 32nd floor took the *Tower Project* to other places still.

Haunted sites, haunting texts

Vergara's buildings are at once full and empty, generating information and noise, and yet often silent and still. Their physical substantiality and grandiose display of decay are offset by the absent human presences which haunt them. After being in the former Fireman's Insurance Headquarters in Newark, Vergara says that he would 'come out of this magnificent building feeling fortified by my encounters with living ghosts and eager to photograph and write' (ibid: 31). The presence of ghosts and haunting becomes dispersed as a *writing*-effect across Vergara's text, giving the buildings a permeability to the self-generated hauntings from intertexts, memories, and cultural interference.

At a further level, though, the texts are haunted by Vergara himself. A number of the buildings get repeat visits so that Vergara can chart their long-term decline. In Newark, Vergara could 'walk over the tracks my shoes left during prior visits' (ibid: 29), finding again the trace of his own ghost-self. Memories of previous versions of himself often combine with a sense of trespass and transgression. He sounds like a criminal: '[i]n the past my heavy camera bag made me look like an elevator mechanic, which gave me easy access to the building. Now visitors need to get permission from the rental agent, and there are locks, barbed wire and iron plates barring the way' (ibid: 31).

The upper floors of the *Tower Project* were filled with rooms much less 'found' and more obviously 'fabricated' than the 31st floor. Yet they were haunted by our fragmentary experience of the previous floor, the residue of our solitary reflections and the progressive staging of our own aesthetic incompetencies and misreadings. If the banal had been rendered foreign, strange or frightening by our own imaginations on the lower floor, the upper floors engineered the reverse process, whereby the baroque and lush were recirculated as part of the everyday, as restagings of those qualities *in* the everyday.

One room was full of white feathers (before barely visible, white feathers now appeared as a lavish excess), another was waterlogged, a third had a floor made out of a giant mirror. Alongside these strange, but curiously unsurprising sights (they benefited from the imaginary transformations of banal objects earlier), one started glimpsing other spectators, and then catching up with them. The angel noticed in refracted form earlier turned out not to be an apparition, but a flesh and blood actor, wearing huge, beautiful white wings (hence all the feathers in different forms). Catching up with one's phantom projection was a disorienting experience. The whole experience began to make sense, without erasing the difficult process by which one arrived there. Other angels, too, haunted the site's upper floors, crouched in a corner gazing out at the London skyline, standing on the mirrored surface, not acknowledging our presence (perhaps we, indeed, were the ghosts). But they were there, one imagines, if you needed them: guardian angels, as at least one reviewer noted.⁵⁵

At the end of the performance, you stopped for rest and on the chairs were copies of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Suddenly and only for a moment it felt cleansed of its cultural capital (just another intertext among so many?) and authority, and for this spectator, memories of painful literature exams.

⁵⁵ See Dominic Cavendish, 'The Tower Project', (*Time Out* 23 June 1999)

Conclusion

American Ruins, the study of buildings with evocative names such as Michigan Central Railroad Station, built in the same year and by the same designers as Grand Central Station, or, the Blackstone Building, Gary, is haunted by Vergara's ghost, but it is also haunted by the ghost of 'Camilo José Vergara'. Part of our reading of Vergara's text involves listening to names, the vocables and vocabulary of American identity and belonging. The names of Vergara's ruins allow us to pinpoint them and put them on the map. As well as designating, those names also disperse meaning, signifying a particular and definable place, but also diffusing nostalgia and longing. Yet what the litany of lost America, the consonantal building blocks of its place names may be invoking is the lost place, the displacement, of 'Camilo José Vergara'.

Likewise, Warner's site-specific productions create self-haunted texts which are in fact hybrid, intertextual and encrypted with their creator's subjectivity. Not texts in the conventional sense, we could instead call them textual effects, privileging the solitary and the singular.

In my examination of *The Waste Land*, I suggested how critical writing used the site to read the poem and vice versa, instead of applying canonical and ideological standards to critique the existence of a performance at all, as might have been expected. I have juxtaposed a partial and subjective re-writing of the *Tower Project* with Vergara's *American Ruins* to bring out some of their common approaches to site, and to suggest how texts and textuality mediate our relation with sites.

One reviewer of the *Tower Project* called it a 'silent trail into a shabby labyrinth' (Cavendish), while in a recent interview on her site-specific work, Warner described the effect of being solitary: 'I think, like an animal, one becomes more acutely aware. One sees and hears better'.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ In 2003, Warner took the *Tower Project*, under the new name of the *Angel Project*, to nine different sites in New York, and thus in its recent incarnation it became, literally, a meditation on American ruins. For the quotation from Warner, see Gerard Raymond's interview 'Touched by an Angel' from 8 July 2003 at www.ibs.theatermania.com/content/news.cfm?int_news_id=3660. See also Don Shewey's review 'Somebody's Watching: The Angel Project', 1 August 2003 at www.donshewey.com/theater_reviews/the_angel_project.html.

In entering a site-specific performance, we are indeed entering a labyrinth. In Greek myth, the labyrinth was the act of hubris of a great creator, designed to house and hide away a dangerous hybrid, the Minotaur. In Warner's work, the critic/spectator is just such a hybrid, a figure both of the writer for whom the requirements of fiction demand that the real be produced as a textual effect, and in whom the tension between autobiographical intertexts and the drive to be objective create a third, hybrid critical-creative text. The author of this impure text is both an historically sedimented self and a radically anachronistic and ahistorical one, a reader-writer hybrid, as monstrous as the Minotaur prowling around the labyrinth, as wily as Ariadne unspooling her thread, trying to outwit Daedalus, creator of the labyrinth. Warner's critic/spectators are both caught in the maze of her site-specific works and tireless, sly searchers for the way out, half human, rationally trying to provide objective mappings of the territory, and half animal, intuitive, instinctive and reactive.

Warner's site-specific performances conclude Part 1 of this thesis. I have focused on her work to exemplify the claims made in earlier chapters about the role of the object, the critical force of decay and the figurations of the critic-spectator at the scene of a site-specific performance. Asking what lives on after these productions have ended, the answer can be difficult to find, especially for the textless *St Pancras Project* and the *Tower Project*. I have emphasized the role that critical texts play in our reconstructions of these performances, whether we have seen them or not. Such critical texts, I have suggested, are shaped by their responsibility to record the performance and their desire to keep it secret, which I theorize as a source of critico-creative tension and self-exposure. While the production of *The Waste Land* forces us to consider what performance, and more precisely, a site-specific performance *adds* to the text, the other two productions subtract the text in order to allow its ghostly return as intertexts. Viewed together, they present a powerful meditation on theatre's connection with texts and the critic's role as intertextual subject.

This part of the thesis has been concerned to link site-specific performances with issues of genre, aesthetics and critical subjectivity, asking how we become self-conscious and self-reflexive critics in these performances and question our

epistemological processes. In Part 2, I argue that site-specific performances not only question the legitimacy of the individual critic, but connect this to a wider argument about theatre's legitimacy as an aesthetic form and its right to trespass on other spaces, the spaces of the other.

In the following chapter, I turn to the site-specific moments of two Parisian theatres, the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie de Vincennes. The images of the maze and labyrinth readily spring to mind in charting critical responses to these two sites, as indeed one reviewer, outlining his experience of finding the Cartoucherie for the first time, explicitly acknowledges.

The second part of this thesis deals with the reconstruction of the site-specific moments of the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie, and extends my analysis of site-specificity by showing how such moments are reinscribed in discourses of locational, subjective and group identity. I explain how critics use and *reuse* the specificity of sites as discursive spaces to explore the intersection of cultural politics, ethics and aesthetics in theatre. Critics use site-specificity to *produce* the theatre they want to find, and re-write the history of Brook's and Mnouchkine's theatre companies through engaging with their sites. In chapter 4, I examine how Brook and Mnouchkine have reinscribed their discovery of their venues as formative moments in the creation of new theatre practices, and demonstrate how critical reception of the first productions at the two venues exemplifies the overlap between physical disorientation and the disturbance of critical frameworks for adequately describing theatre.

Chapter 4

Finding the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie de Vincennes: reconstructing the site-specific moment and critical disorientation

This chapter examines Peter Brook's theatre, the Bouffes du Nord, and Ariane Mnouchkine's at the Cartoucherie de Vincennes, both located in Paris, as paradigmatic examples of two types of site-specific performance space. Peter Brook's Centre International de Créations Théâtrales is based at a formerly abandoned theatre close to Paris's Gare du Nord railway station, while Mnouchkine's company, the Théâtre du Soleil, operates from an old munitions factory hangar, once earmarked for demolition, at the city's eastern margin. A number of lines of argument emerge in relation to these two performance venues, connected by the idea that the analysis and assessment of a site's importance are never neutral processes. The chapter divides into three parts, the first dealing with the two sites themselves, the second with ways of approaching or arriving at them, and the third with the wider cultural implications of their geographical positioning.

Exposing borders

Emphasizing the role of a site in the production of meaning in the theatre immediately involves a meditation on limits and borders. It is no longer simply the performance which is marked out for spectatorial attention, reflection and engagement, but what was conventionally viewed as its frame, the performance space itself. This development challenges the belief that our interpretive responses to performance are switched on and engaged at a fixed and identifiable point. There are two consequences to the loss of a precise limit to a performance's beginning and end. First, it becomes the task of the spectator to judge when to start thinking aesthetically, in other words, when to start the reflective processes of narrativization and meaning-construction demanded of theatre performance. Certain questions arise as a result of this: when does one choose to be exposed in site-specific performance, and what are the risks to the ego, the dangers of self-revelation or inadvertent confession in making this judgment? Second, the opening up of the border between what is relevant to meaning construction and what falls into the category of the everyday, in which the aesthetic is suspended, turns the entry into performance-related areas into a transitional space. I explore the nature of such transitions below by arguing that our

geographical displacement into certain areas of the city is part of the ethical factors operative in site-specific performances.

Alongside questions of individual subjectivity and the implications of displacement, I analyze how the sites of the two venues have been constructed in critical discourse to accentuate their marginality and proximity to risky areas of the city. Constructions of these theatre sites were concerned to interpret them diachronically and relationally, in relation to their previous uses and functions and in association with contiguous groups or non-culturally validated behaviours or practices which were seen to inflect the performances which took place there.

By comparing the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie, I propose two different models of interaction with a site, the first based on excavation, the second on evasion. Both venues reveal the productive cultural force of such geo-political notions as the centre and the periphery. Brook's theatre tests these concepts through its embeddedness in its locality while the Mnouchkine's raises the possibility of more symbolic marginalities through its actual and fantasmatic hiddenness and invisibility as produced in critical writing.

Both theatre venues generated a range of discourses which produced their locatedness within a wider cultural framework. This chapter outlines some of these discourses and argues that site-specific theatre endeavours to invalidate the concept of boundary altogether in favour of more dynamic terms such as transaction or relay.

Discovering the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie de Vincennes: excavation and evasion

Critics of the Bouffes du Nord, as I show in chapter 5, have continually thought of the venue as a site whose meaning has to be disinterred. They peel away its layers to get under its skin, probing its depths and scratching away at it to decipher its palimpsestic secrets. I call this criticism 'excavatory' because it deals with the disjunction between surface and depth, between exposing and hiding. In contrast, the Cartoucherie has been subject to a dichotomous critical treatment which approaches it, searches for it, acknowledges its size, materiality and geographical marginality, but at the same time

defers analysis of the site's profounder implications for theatre as a cultural practice. Criticism about the Cartoucherie has repeatedly circumvented the meaning of the site and has chosen instead to focus on the Théâtre du Soleil's cultural politics and group identity. I call this critical strategy 'evasive' because it turns the site into the theatre's non-said, symbolic of the surplus of meaning to which theatre cannot gain access.

Peter Brook and Ariane Mnouchkine have recently given accounts of their discoveries of the venues which became so closely associated with their names and theatre companies. The discovery narratives are in line with these critical mechanisms of excavation and evasion and furnish the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie de Vincennes with what could be called primal scenes. In Brook's account in the memoir *Threads of Time*, the Bouffes du Nord was a dangerous, decaying edifice which he reached almost illegally: 'Micheline Rozan had heard rumours of its existence, so one day she and I crawled through a hoarding on hands and knees, and when we stood up, we found ourselves contemplating a forgotten, battered shell' (Brook 1999: 193). Brook is here depicting his moment of entry into a space which has been much talked about in 'rumours', as if the discovery moment itself contradicted this linguistic preamble. The hoarding referred to bars entrance and invites curiosity, operating as a sign of the building's dereliction but also screening off its secrets and keeping its enigma. Brook and his colleague Rozan manage to find a barely adequate gap through it.⁵⁷

The moment of discovery is staged by the move from the all-fours position of the animal to the distinctively human stance of standing upright. Instead of feeling excitement, or disorientation, Brook falls to contemplation. After making the risky and difficult entrance, the theatre strikes him as both full and empty, fragile and threatening, recognizably a theatre but also a building-site, or a bomb-site with 'a dangerous series of craters' (ibid: 195). Even though it looks physically dangerous,

⁵⁷ There is perhaps an unconscious link in Brook's description here of the hoarding both barring and giving access to the famous theatre and the talking wall of the Pyramus and Thisbe scene of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In Shakespeare's play, the wall is one of the objects by which the rude mechanicals negotiate the implications of mimesis. The gap in the wall permits the communication of desire and the conditions of tragedy.

the theatre leads to reflections and rich shifts between the physical site and its metaphorical connotations

Brook does not linger on the moment of discovery. He quickly emphasizes the venue's cultural diversity, adducing its first production of *Enemy of the People*, directed by Lugné-Poë, and its reputation for staging popular musicals, as evidence for this. We hear about the theatre's period of dereliction during which homeless people caused extensive fire damage to its interior, marks of which will be retained as part of the theatre's foregrounding of its own decay in the future. The building's parallel timelines converge to end Brook's account of the theatre's plurality in the form of its metamorphic, 'intimate' and 'chameleon' (ibid) qualities.

Ariane Mnouchkine's version of her preliminary visits to the Cartoucherie de Vincennes records her pragmatic concerns about the venue's usefulness and an uncanny encounter she had there. The sheer weight and dirt of the materials left behind from the building's period as a cartridge factory are massive impediments to plans for performance:

Au début, ça ne pouvait rien être qu'un lieu de répétition parce que l'électricité était coupée, les verrières étaient crevées, il y avait de la graisse de machine partout et des blocs de béton qui étaient les socles des grosses machines qu'ils avaient utilisé [sic]. (Cramesnil 1998: 329)

In contrast to Brook's subsiding space, Mnouchkine's is a jumble of rubble filled with matter and covered in a sticky residue of machine grease, creating an alienating, desolate and hopeless atmosphere in the factory.

Supplementing these memories, Mnouchkine also recalls an early and striking meeting with someone there which she incorporates into her account of the Cartoucherie's discovery. It begins with her seeing a young soldier sweeping the floor: 'Je suis arrivée là un jour et il y avait un petit soldat, un jeune soldat qui balayait. Alors je lui demande 'vous faites quoi?' et il me demande 'je ferme, je suis le dernier, on s'en va' (Cramesnil 1998: 329). The terse precision of Mnouchkine's memory points to the significance of this accidental meeting, allowing us to apply some interpretive pressure to what seems like an everyday encounter.

The fact that the soldier is working undoubtedly has a bearing on the way Mnouchkine positions her theatre practice in relation to work and physical labour, as I explore in detail in chapter 6. The soldier is a figure of (male) violence, yet he is also young, with a hint of self-aggrandizement and a sense of occasion ('je suis le dernier'). The exchange is a quickly snatched moment of human intimacy in a clearly rebarbative environment. On the brink of being recognized for its potential as a theatre, the Cartoucherie is also a space from which the last survivor of its factory and military past is about to depart.⁵⁸ The encounter is uncanny because the soldier is overburdened with significance, carrying the symbolic weight of the Cartoucherie's military past, the connection of the factory with work, and the announcement of his, and the factory's, symbolic disappearance and future life as a theatre.

Both discovery scenes have a strange quality. They depict the moment of intrusion into a derelict space. Brook's movement from hands and knees to upright is doubly significant in bringing motion into a static world. In Mnouchkine's narrative, sounds are deadened by the grease, the broken windows leave an echo of smashed glass hanging in the air, the substantiality of the concrete blocks stands in for the site's resistance to performance and the resilient symbolic weight of its previous use as a cartridge factory. The figure of a sweeping soldier and the brusque words of an exchange break the silence and residue of the building's past, allowing signs to circulate and sounds to come alive again. The moment of communication becomes a symbolic handover from past to present, from work and the production of weapons to theatre and the production of pleasure, even if work would continue to define the company's self-fashioning at the Cartoucherie, as I suggest in chapter 6.

What did Brook and Mnouchkine discover when they entered the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie? Brook found a risky and dangerous space whose decay and fragility prompted metaphorical thinking. The venue was a place which was simultaneously a theatre and a derelict site, a once public space of looking (and being looked at) which was now hidden and boarded up, evidently being used as a shelter by the homeless. At the Cartoucherie, the morass of industrial materials and the

⁵⁸ See Bergère and Sapin (2000) for interviews with other Théâtre du Soleil members who mention that

impact of a banal encounter presented Mnouchkine with a challenge. Theatre needed to work hard to emerge in such a place. The Cartoucherie would be the obstacle to theatre's own forgetfulness of its difference, the other space, outside the seductiveness of theatre, which could not be overlooked. That first banal encounter at the Cartoucherie represented a moment of the real life of the site, as it was, before the arrival of the company, stored away in Mnouchkine's memory to resurface after thirty years of theatre performances.

Private Journeys into Theatre

The idea of the Cartoucherie being a 'found' space is a common feature in early critical accounts of performances at the venue. Bernard Faivre's analysis of reviews of the first production at the Cartoucherie, *1789*, (Faivre 1987: 194-208), stresses the distinctiveness of this criticism's focus on 'le pittoresque du trajet, la bizarrerie du lieu, l'inconfort du spectateur comme s'il fallait mériter son plaisir théâtral en parcourant, une à une, les étapes du parcours initiatique qui mène à *1789*' (ibid: 196). The difficulty of reaching the unknown Cartoucherie is a way to validate theatre as a marginal practice. Arriving successfully at the theatre is an initiation by which critics show their mettle and expose themselves to the danger of getting lost in inimical parts of the Bois de Vincennes. The precise nature of the threat this journey represents remains vague. Without explicitly articulating the connection, the Cartoucherie's early critics used the testing journey across the Bois de Vincennes to imply that this new theatre was a leap into the unknown which would upset usual theatre norms and tacit rules.

Two reviews Faivre includes in his analysis warrant further attention from the point of view of their prescience about how an unusual site displaces a performance's effects beyond its usual temporal and spatial limits. Jacqueline Cartier (*France Soir*, 25 January 1971) reported her uncertainty about the Cartoucherie's location by reproducing a brief exchange she had had on the way there with a bemused taxi driver. She laid out the conversation in dialogue form, emphasizing the driver's mode

the soldiers did not completely leave the Cartoucherie before the company took up residence.

of address and speech patterns to assure the reader that this was both an actual occurrence and a theatrically charged event:

- Ouesqu'il est vôt'théâtre?

- A partir du château de Vincennes, vous suivez les flèches.

Le chauffeur de taxi n'en revenait pas: un théâtre au-delà du parc des Floralies...

- C'est quasiment le désert par là. Vous êtes sûre? (in Faivre 1987: 196)

On the way to the Cartoucherie, the journalist Cartier plays a role in a micro-drama in the real which stages both her identification with a social category (the theatre goer or theatre critic) and an encounter with an other who signals his difference by referring to 'vot'théâtre' and whose sociolect the journalist pointedly reproduces. Although the arrows point the way, the taxi-driver's assertion that 'c'est quasiment le désert' undermines their trustworthiness, and the trustworthiness of signs more generally. The devotion of critical space to this meeting testifies to the exposure and interpellation of identity the journalist experiences on her journey. Can she be sure that she will eventually find a theatre and can she really believe the signs which seem to flout common sense?

Critical indecency

The reaction of *Le Monde's* critic (14 January 1971), Bertrand Poirot-Delpech, 'le critique théâtral sans doute le plus influent de l'époque' (Faivre 1987: 198), is also revealing. Poirot-Delpech suggested that:

Il fallait un tel 'événement' pour faire prendre au public le chemin d'un endroit aussi ingrat, aussi hostile que la 'cartoucherie' de Vincennes. Derrière leur rideau d'arbres et de miradors, à la lueur des rares réverbères, ces dédales de places boueuses et d'entrepôts en ruine ne sont pas loin d'évoquer les camps de la mort. Au cadre de *Nuit et brouillard* s'ajoutait, jusqu'à ces derniers jours, un froid de guerre. (in Faivre 1987: 197)

The critic's inability to find a suitable way to express the strangeness of the Cartoucherie is striking. Characterized first by human-associated adjectives 'hostile', 'ingrat', it is then figured as hidden behind trees,⁵⁹ and only intermittently lit. The gothic suspense of the locale gives way to a more disconcerting image which links the disused factory and its environs with concentration camps. Finally, the Cartoucherie evokes a cinematic intertext and the whole description is rounded off by a warning about the freezing cold.

The competing intertexts and frames of reference suggest a sense of agitation in the critic, not only about the geographical environment itself, but about how he ought to explain its significance. His doubts about how to respond combine images and analogies from different areas of knowledge such as the intertext of the ghost story, the haunted castle, the gothic novel, and cinema. However, casting about for adequate critical language leads into dangerous waters with the allusion to concentration camps. As Bernard Faivre remarks, it is perhaps indecent or obscene ('indécent') to make reference to them in the context of a visit to the theatre. Yet this critical indecency, I suggest, is precisely what is powerful and disturbing about the use of site-specific performance locations.

Poirot-Delpech gives voice to the critical self as the point of convergence of a number of discordant, inadequate or unsuitable intertexts activated by the journey towards the searched for theatre site. Criticism as the faculty of discerning judgment gives way to crisis as the critic opens himself to the intrusion of the recondite, the dangerous and the repressed. Hidden behind its curtain of trees, the Cartoucherie is both a searched for space and one which has been produced by critics as very difficult to find. Language proves itself inadequate to account for the criss-crossing emotions felt on making one's way there, and remembered aesthetic representations come to fill the void.

Poirot-Delpech's critical indecency even inserts the image of the maze into his description, as if figuring its own search for the thread that will lead him out of the

⁵⁹ It is significant that Poirot-Delpech located the Cartoucherie behind a '*rideau d'arbres*' given the extent to which the site seems to cause him anxiety about the Théâtre du Soleil's departure from conventional theatre venues.

labyrinth. Fundamental to this critical indecency is the sense that the displaced site has infected its locality, charging it with an aestheticizing process which threatens a sense of discrete boundaries between theatre and non-theatre. Equally indecent is the erasure of absolutes: can the concentration camps be incorporated into a signifying chain without denying *their* specificity?

Fantasies and productions of marginality

These critical journeys to the Cartoucherie, located on the eastern border of the city of Paris, demonstrate the ways in which critics lost themselves in what one could call a *fantasy* of the margin. They travel from the imaginary centre, imputed to central Paris, out to the deconstructed and dangerous place of the Bois de Vincennes, conjuring up objects in intermediate stages between darkness and light, solidity and incorporeality, on the way.

The Cartoucherie's geographical location facilitates this production of fantasy about the danger of the margin. On the other hand, the Bouffes du Nord, situated in the 10th arrondissement of Paris, is subject to a different production of marginality. Approximately ten minutes' walk from Paris's Gare du Nord, critics could not render the Bouffes du Nord marginal in quite the same way as they could with the newly discovered Cartoucherie de Vincennes. Yet the Bouffes du Nord, by all accounts, was also situated in a difficult location to find. Georges Banu insisted in 1977 on the Bouffes du Nord's anonymity and camouflage, underlining the fact that there were few external indications outside the theatre to differentiate it from the buildings nearby (Banu 1977: 62-4). The building's position near the Gare du Nord had an important role in establishing its locational identity. Closeness to a large railway or bus station is frequent cultural shorthand for urban danger and crime. A quick reflection on King's Cross in London, or Port Authority in New York, shows the degree to which these sites operate as receptacles for the projection of urban neurosis and a sense of danger/threat, amplified in literary texts and cinematic works.

The Gare du Nord has a number of associations which help shape the Bouffes du Nord's marginality. It is an industrialized space par excellence and a significantly

commercial one, in contrast with the artistic or aesthetic space of the high art theatre venue. It is the point of exit and entry from and to the city, indeed from and to the country generally since the creation of the Eurostar link between Paris and London. In line with my insistence on the imaginary formations of marginality around the location of the Bouffes du Nord next to the Gare du Nord, it is also relevant that Brook is arguably replicating the experience of immigrant groups coming to big cities and settling around their points of access to the city, for example, the large numbers of Irish immigrants staying in West London's Cricklewood and Kilburn after alighting at Paddington from Hollyhead, or the immigrants to New York populating the East Side of the city as they made their way from Ellis Island. Staying near one's (even imaginary) point of entry coincides with immigrant experience, and situates Brook on the border between cultures, close to the railway station that could take him back to England, although not of course back to his ethnic origins, which are Russian.

While there are differences in the ways the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie were constructed as marginal, there are also numerous similarities. In a recent book on the Théâtre du Soleil, Laurence Labrouche shows in her reconstruction of the Cartoucherie's site-specific moment the ongoing discourses of hiddenness. She describes the state of the Cartoucherie before the company's arrival:

Au moment où le Soleil s'y installe, l'ancienne Cartoucherie de Vincennes est un terrain vague, occupé par des bâtiments plus ou moins délabrés, à peu près à l'abandon depuis quarante ans. Il sert, le jour, de terrain de jeux à des gamins. Le site est perdu au milieu du Bois de Vincennes, dès la nuit tombée, un des hauts lieux, à l'époque, de la prostitution parisienne, à une vingtaine de minutes de marche du métro le plus proche. Il est à peu près invisible depuis les routes d'accès et seul, le long de la Route du champ de manoeuvre, un mur d'enceinte signale sa présence [...]. [Le spectateur] finit par arriver, après avoir tourné dans le Bois à la recherche de cette invisible Cartoucherie, que l'architecture militaire, faisant bien son office, avait vouée d'abord plutôt au secret et à la dissuasion. (Labrouche 2000: 250)

Labrouche's description of the Cartoucherie is complicit in the production of secrecy and hiddenness which I mentioned earlier, as well as being concerned with describing the site as both heterogeneous and dangerously traversed by marginal(ized)

practices. The spectator is forced to walk to the Cartoucherie because the nearest metro station is twenty minutes away, thereby exposing herself to significant risks. At the start, Labrouche characterizes the site in connection with its history. Its abandonment makes it a 'terrain vague', a sentiment reinforced by the dereliction of the buildings. From this statement of fact, Labrouche introduces a perspective from which the observer finds it invisible, its indeterminate location signalled by the wall. At a third stage, the journey to the site *produces* its invisibility: the disoriented spectator's to-ing and fro-ing in the Bois de Vincennes maps out the unfindable space. Indeed, by calling it 'cette invisible Cartoucherie', Labrouche inflects the previously objective and perspectival sitings of the Cartoucherie with the subjectivity of a tone of voice: the formulation sounds like a statement of frustration, so that its invisibility now seems to be produced by the experience of searching. In the end, the Cartoucherie is not simply hidden as part of the city of Paris's geo-political strategy, but is actively in hiding from the spectator, displacing itself in order to frustrate ease of access, and by extension of interpretation.

The Cartoucherie's invisibility is highlighted in this passage and elsewhere because it holds the promise of the uncanny, the pleasures of refraction and the suspension of control that comes from finding oneself lost. The invisibility of the site is produced as a fantasmatic projection of an ideal of theatre in performance which involves searching and being deceived, and the pleasure of finding that meaning resides not where one had anticipated it to be.

The inaccessibility of the Cartoucherie becomes valuable in itself to critics because it questions the geo-political implications of urban planning (the city excludes certain groups and activities from its centre in the construction of an ideal space). Its invisibility is then seized on as an ontological trope of performance which validates the Théâtre du Soleil's project for a new form of counter-cultural theatre practice.

But Labrouche's analysis of the site as inaccessible and abandoned is paradoxical when we hear about its use by two different groups. The mention of children and prostitutes charges the site of the Cartoucherie with a number of tense

oppositions between day and night, innocence and experience, childhood and sexuality, play and instrumentalization, purity and danger. It is worth noticing how Labrousche refers to both (sub-)groups: children are ‘gamins’, an affectionate and idiomatic term, while prostitutes are abstracted to a group label, ‘la prostitution parisienne’. Before the Théâtre du Soleil brings theatre there, the site is already undeniably subject to multiple investments. Children, Labrousche implies, turn it into the exploratory space of games and make-believe in which the very absence of adults allows their imagination to explore the site. Prostitution, on the other hand, gives it an edge of danger. The presence of children softens the contours of the imaginary formation of the Cartoucherie as derelict and abject, while prostitution associates it with the exploitation of women.⁶⁰

The use that children and prostitutes make of the Cartoucherie marks the place of the future *theatre* out as a marginal space in the *cultural* imaginary. It is both a transitional space of play away from the normative rules of adult society and a dangerous and illicit space. The locality of the Bouffes du Nord was also associated with prostitution. References to prostitution at both sites leak into the presence of theatre there. Prostitution transfers its qualities of danger and risk onto the theatres, marking them out as venturing into unfamiliar zones and associating them with marginal groups and practices.

Prostitution’s role in the imaginary formation of these two theatres’ marginalities is accompanied in the case of the Bouffes du Nord by the instrumentalization of another social group. As contemporary newspaper reports on the Bouffes make clear, the area surrounding the Bouffes du Nord had a large population of immigrants living in it. Once again, the invocation of an identifiable group embodies a utopian drive about what the theatre will do, in this case, bring about the re-presentation of alterities which have metastasized in the cultural

⁶⁰ As with the connection of the Bouffes du Nord with the nearby train station, I am dealing with imaginary formations, intertexts in the cultural imaginary rather than empirical socio-historical realities. Therefore, I do not suggest that prostitution is always synonymous with exploitation, danger and criminality, but that these are associations evoked by the term.

imaginary into dangerous others.⁶¹ The point I want to underline is that the theatre's marginalities are negotiated phenomena formed by the interaction of the theatre as a locus of desire and as a tool for social change. The repressions and elisions of the cultural imaginary converge on figures such as immigrants, prostitutes, or the 'gamin' as a way of analyzing the social and cultural interventions these theatres will have and constructing a utopian space for their relations to the representation of alterities.

Finding the theatre site, inscribing its significance

In critical responses to Brook's first production at the Bouffes du Nord, 'Timon d'Athènes', the dereliction of the theatre site was clearly seen as symptomatic of the area's marginality. The theatre's decay is the subject of chapter 5 of this part, but it is enough to note at this point that critics reached for increasingly more intensive and incoherent images to reinforce the impression of the Bouffes' decrepitude. A review in *Aquitaine* (24 February 1975) described the venue as 'une carcasse éventrée par le feu, des restes calcinés, une sorte de vaisseau fantôme échoué sur le sable. Le tout, d'une hallucinante désolation'.

When it comes to locating the theatre in its wider geographical context, certain observations recur. The Bouffes is situated 'entre un café-brasserie et un magasin de farces et attrapes' (*Le Figaro*, 22 August 1974), i.e., in an anonymous area with a hint of vulgarity which is nevertheless a quaint contrast to the Bouffes' high-art seriousness. The closeness to railways lines is alluded to in comments locating the Bouffes du Nord 'sous le métro aérien, ou presque' (*France-Soir*, 12 October 1974).

The actual location of the Bouffes is given in a bewildering variety of ways: it is in 'Barbès' (*France-Soir* 16 October 1974); 'à l'angle du boulevard de la Chapelle et de la rue du Faubourg-St-Denis' (*Le Figaro*, 22 August 1974); 'à la périphérie de la ville' (*Point de Vue*, 1 November 1974); 'derrière la gare du Nord' (*Le Nouvel*

⁶¹ In *Charlie-Hebdo* (25 October 1974), the following explanation was made for the need to clarify the Bouffes du Nord's location to readers: 'Le simple fait qu'on éprouve le besoin de préciser ce point de géographie parisienne montre comme il existe bien un ghetto à Paris. La Chapelle, justement. Peter Brook joue Shakespeare dans un quartier à negres et à bicots'. The striking contrast between Brook's Shakespearean theatre and the pejoratively described immigrant groups conflicts with the usual critical strategy of appropriating the area's cultural diversity to theorize Brook's theatre ethics and aesthetics.

Observateur, 28 October 1974) and, more vaguely, in the American press ‘in a working-class section of Paris’ (*The New York Times*, 8 November 1974); ‘miles off the beaten track [...] in the heart of a sordid slum’ (*Newsweek*, 16 December 1974) and ‘in St Denis, a working class district in Paris’ (*The New York Review*, 12 December 1974).

Locating the Bouffes du Nord in its geographical context is largely a matter of the critic’s choice of what aspects of its location to privilege and is therefore revelatory of cultural identity formations in the making. The theatre does not have a fixed place. Instead, its location is filtered through these descriptive formations or productions of place. The huge variety of ways to give it co-ordinates on the mental map of Parisians produces the Bouffes du Nord’s geographical position as an unknown place, somewhere out of the way, on the margins where *we* never go. In their anxious search for a way to position the theatre in the minds of readers, some critics aim for empirical precision, others for a metonymical evocation, others still interpret its locality in relation to the Bouffes’ function. Claude Baignères associates the theatre with the contemporary interest in ‘animation’ which he describes as ‘faire intervenir dans une zone urbaine des artistes chargés de mettre quotidiennement, par mille moyens divers, le grand public en contact avec des idées, des rêves, des questions et leurs multiples réponses’ (*Le Figaro*, 14 October 1974). Elizabeth Hardwick is alone in noticing ‘[c]ommunist posters’ (*The New York Review*, 12 December 1974) in a knowing wink to the anglophone reader about the theatre’s political affiliations, while Dominique Jamet manages to incorporate the abandoned site into a wider definition of Paris’s inexhaustible beauty: ‘Mais quelle ville, quand même, que ce grand et mystérieux Paris. Pour tant de merveilles visibles, que de trésors ignorés, enfouis ou oubliés’ (*L’Aurore*, 21 October 1974).

This accumulation of locational terms first constructs the marginal identity of the Bouffes du Nord’s locality in relation to a concept of the centre of Paris (oppositionally implied as non-industrial, non-decaying, visible rather than hidden behind a railway station, easily found on a map and able to be named, already known about, as the area where *we* go). Second, the theatre’s decay and dereliction are both

caused by and constructive of its marginality. The state of the theatre affects the area around it, giving it an aura of degradation and neglect and acting as a reflection of it. As I show in chapter 5, decay is a term which disrupts boundaries: the Bouffes' decay contaminates its area, intensifying its own estranging desolation.

The Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie: decay and work

This chapter has so far outlined the different ways in which the sites of the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie have been discovered, accessed, missed and marginalized. Through their discovery and access, the sites assume a symbolic dimension whereby the irruption of human presence and consciousness into a previously derelict space dramatizes its transitionality between the not-already and the about-to-be a theatre.

The two venues are spaces of danger, risk and intrusion, resonant with the sense of trespass into somewhere out of bounds. By being missed, the Cartoucherie returns in criticism like an obsession. Critics fashion it into a site which is a desperately desired but hard to find entity, a longed-for utopian space of the future. The Bouffes du Nord is all too visible, but only in terms of its interior. Its decay is a polyvalent creator of writing, generating signification which assimilates the site into an incoherent field of metaphor and metonymy, underscored by critical desire and paranoia.

Both sites are produced as fantasies of the margin in which diachrony collapses into synchrony (the past life of the site serving its fantasmatic moment of conversion into a theatre, its site-specific moment). In these violent marginalizing practices, prostitutes, immigrants and children are used to produce a discourse of marginality to serve the utopian dream of the theatre. Adopted as cultural capital, they are spent on constructing the theatres' marginal status. Signs emptied of their referents, these appropriated modalities of site symbolize the utopia of the margin in which theatre validates, but also risks invalidating, its audacious move into other, and others' spaces.

Brook and Mnouchkine: locating the other

Ariane Mnouchkine once observed to colleagues from the Théâtre de l' Aquarium, another of the companies in residence at the Cartoucherie which was at the time preparing a production dealing with factory occupations: 'Vous vous montrez les ouvriers au théâtre; moi, je préfère montrer les gens de théâtre aux ouvriers' (Quoted in Faivre 1987: 206). This observation is in line with the Théâtre du Soleil's attempt to convert theatre from being a form of representation, situated in the privileged space of theatre, to being a form of displacement which brings about the recognition of difference. Instead of the psychological identifications and mimetic strategies of representation, theatre asserts its distance and difference from workers, a process which proved both complex and paralyzing for the Théâtre du Soleil. The Cartoucherie, as a marginal and displaced space, became the material embodiment of this displacement of theatre from a pre-established cultural matrix and the richly symbolic settings of previous theatre traditions. Theatre in an industrial complex was a symbolic rejection of the medium's association with a both a cultural space (its role as a player in the cultural field) and a geographical place (preferably as the nominal centre, a point of maximum visibility and display). The Théâtre du Soleil's move connected theatre with an architectural environment simultaneously hostile and antithetical to it in order to re-situate theatre's location in the cultural imaginary.

Such a re-location was not explicitly articulated as the reason for the company's displacement. On the contrary, pragmatic concerns, the adaptability of the hangars and the thankful end of the company's nomadism were all advanced as reasons for the company's unpredictable choice of venue. The Théâtre du Soleil's cultural relocation of theatre would not be an explicated acknowledged, but would instead be created through their actions and the gradual formation of the company's group identity by inhabiting and engaging with a contradictory location and building.

Mnouchkine's use of poetic metaphors to describe the Cartoucherie adds validity to the claim that the building itself remained something unsaid in the company's construction of its identity and alliance with work and workers. Influenced by Tadeusz Kantor's notion of 'umbrellic space', Mnouchkine called the Cartoucherie

'a lightweight umbrella' (Kiernander 1993: 20), a charming and beguiling object providing shelter and fulfilling a natural, functional use. In contrast to this view of the Cartoucherie as an extension of the human body, Mnouchkine also referred to the Cartoucherie as a ship 'which requires careful and time-consuming work before setting out on a voyage' (Kiernander 1993: 20). The building was a container for human life taking its occupiers on a journey into the unknown. The ship metaphor has more relevance to the Cartoucherie's size and appearance but indicates that reflections on the significance of the building related less, in Mnouchkine's mind, to its historical specificity and its implications for an ethics of theatre, than to the mental flexibility it produced in her and her company.

From Mnouchkine's point of view, the Cartoucherie privileges a different mode of thinking theatre. Its difference is not articulated through theoretical analysis of the Cartoucherie's role as theatre's guilty conscious. Instead, the building facilitates an embodied ethics which is performed through the company's conversions of the site for new productions. The company's work, both in and on the theatre, represents a coming to terms with the building's legacy and an engagement with its function in constructing an ethics of performance. As a former working environment, it is symbolically oppositional to the association of theatre with pleasure and leisure. Its structure and layout impede certain forms of theatre and force the Théâtre du Soleil to find new solutions to the logistical and practical problems it causes. The Cartoucherie became the Théâtre du Soleil's problem to be solved through *work*. By re-building the venue for new productions, the Théâtre du Soleil's members confront the site's former use and function and attempt to supersede them. Instead of preserving the Cartoucherie as a site of memory, they reconfigure it for a new function and in the process assume the role of workers, thereby carrying on the building's legacy in a more dynamic and less theoretical engagement with its site-specificity. The Théâtre du Soleil at the Cartoucherie takes issue with the idea of memory as located in the fixtures and fittings of the building, and resituate memory as an embodied practice.

At the Bouffes du Nord, the presence and retention of the building's decay formulate the site's role in producing an alternative ethical and aesthetic vocabulary. If the Cartoucherie privileges the theatre site as the location of the unsaid and the unreachable in an ethics of performance, the Bouffes du Nord's site incorporates ethical and aesthetic factors in an overproduction of signs and signification. The shifting forms that the site's decay takes in critical reactions map the critical and spectatorial desires and anxieties projected onto the theatre, and onto theatre as a medium more generally. Decay represents the self's desire for exposure and the drive to annex the physical world to the body subject to pain, abrasion, probing and annihilation. The permutations in the critical uses of decay indicate critical impulses to master the external world by exhausting the capacity of language to deal with it, while simultaneously serving as a trope for the erosion of this desire. Instead of the Cartoucherie's ethically motivated evasion, the Bouffes du Nord offers impassioned engagement.

Theatre sites and ethics

The writer and theorist H el ene Cixous, who has frequently worked with Ariane Mnouchkine and the Th eatre du Soleil, has argued that theatre has an ethical function because it allows us to contemplate the intolerable by depicting it with the bonus of pleasure (see Cixous 1999). Theatre stages the intolerable (in comedy as much as in tragedy) but offers the spectator charm and seduction as ways of assuaging the intensity of pain and suffering which would otherwise be unbearable.

The pleasure of theatre performances at the Cartoucherie de Vincennes comes in many forms. One feels pleasure in delaying the moment of entering the theatre (which usually takes the spectator from central Paris to the venue's marginal location in the Vincennes woods). One senses pleasure in entering a former work space, a munitions factory which no longer produces its deadly weapons but theatre performances, and yet, the building's former function is still strongly felt. Our pleasure is shaped by the work and labour of those who once inhabited this space. We take pleasure in the spectacle of performance, and pleasure in our difference from

those who used to possess this performance space. That pleasure is a profoundly melancholy and self-serving emotion, but also one which offers an ethical possibility of respect and the acknowledgment and recognition of our difference. The pleasure of discovery, distance from and intimacy with an other (our imagined projection of the human other, our movement through the other's space).

At the Cartoucherie, one searches for what is antithetical to theatre (work, labour, industry) as a way of highlighting the pleasure that puts the other in abeyance and therefore offers us the greater chance of perceiving and respecting difference.

At the Bouffes du Nord, the pleasure the building generates derives from the creative movement towards the other which the site embodies. It is the pleasure of creative exploration of the site's layers, depths and leakages; the pleasure of playing the role of historical detective looking for clues to the theatre's history and past uses. The Bouffes du Nord provides the critic and spectator with a mobile space in which site, body and writing cross-fertilize and enrich one another. It gives us the pleasure of opposites, allowing us to read death, decay and mortality in the fabric of the building in contrast with the movement and liveness of performance taking place alongside it. The Bouffes du Nord exposes the pleasures of wanting to find out and explore the other through a passion for knowledge, but at the same time layers that pleasure with the risk of destroying the other through a search for knowledge which is aggressive and disfiguring.

Conclusion

The sites of the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie de Vincennes were central in the development of the critical vocabularies which have come to characterize the hybrid aesthetics of site-specific theatre and performance. At the Bouffes du Nord, the decay of the site represented the decay of a certain theatrical form and critical idiom, exposing theatre and its critical vocabularies to their own demise. The building produced critical frameworks for characterizing the aesthetic which denied the validity of the metaphor of the frame in the first place. Instead, the building privileged

tropes of porosity, exchange, relay, dissolution, and mobility which removed the ground of their own permanence and meta-critical ambitions.

The Cartoucherie took theatre into an inimical space and contaminated it with practices which were, in theory, antithetical to it, like work, labour and production, with a view to revealing the universality of the concept of work in the experience of human beings. As a result of being conceived of as a risky and dangerous site, the Cartoucherie opened theatre up to the intrusions of the private and subjective self. The experience of theatre was partly constituted by the journeys into the space, providing performances with ungovernable private moments shaped by the anticipation of a theatre event and producing the spectator and critic as the creative agent of his/her own performance experience. The Cartoucherie's geographical marginality established the theatre as being physically and aesthetically displaced from the norm. The idea of a critical framework for assessing the experience of theatre at the Cartoucherie gave way to the idea of crossing of borders, entering and exiting and embarking on a journey.

In chapter 5, I show how the critical uses of the Bouffes du Nord's decay became a fundamental part of discourses about Brook's theatre practice, suggesting that decay was also subject to misuses which show how site-specificity can be appropriated as a form of cultural capital. The decay of the Bouffes, a former théâtre à l'italienne, represents a challenge to the idea of the permanence or durability of any aesthetic form, and highlights theatre's need to confront its own extinction. Critics seized on decay as a way of self-exposure, to collapse critical distance in the articulation of private and painful subjectivities. In Chapter 6, I analyze the connection between the Théâtre du Soleil and the use of work as a way of giving the company an alternative group identity. This association was also a tactic for questioning theatre's symbolic capital. Theatre practice was no longer at a distance from its subject, able to represent people such as workers as characters, with all the corollary implications of power and knowledge this had. Instead, it was profoundly implicated in the same set of labour relations and processes as workers, eventually, after a long struggle, making performance the staging of difference in which pleasure

and creativity were recognized as alternative economies to production and alienation. In both the cases of the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie de Vincennes, the theatre sites played a crucial role in devolving power away from representation and symbolic capital. The Bouffes's decay was a living embodiment of the end of an aesthetics of permanence and immanence, while the Cartoucherie was a radically convertible but intransigent space whose former role as a space of production profoundly informed the Théâtre du Soleil's practice.

Uncanny encounters in sites, the perceptions of their danger, the sense of trespass and intrusion, the dispersion of the theatre event outside the venue's limits, the production of marginality: all of these serve to disrupt the frame of representation. Theatre performances in site-specific venues lead to the production of an excess, a surplus to the performance event, structured by it but unassimilable to it. Indeed, the attention these sites attract, the displacements they produce, the competing discourses they generate, are all symptoms of the end of the tyranny of a certain form of representation. They are new modes of approach to theatre which validates theatre criticism as autobiography or self-exposure and legitimates spectatorial privacy or paranoia. The Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie were central factors in the belated acknowledgment in theatre theory and practice that meaning in the theatre is structured dialogically, reciprocally, intermittently, and that it cannot fix its own start and end.

Chapter 5

Peter Brook and the Bouffes du Nord and decay: staging critical desires

This chapter will take a closer look at the site of Peter Brook's theatre, the Bouffes du Nord in Paris. It focuses on the perceptible decay of the venue and examines how this has become a significant factor in the reception of Brook's work. I show how the decay of the Bouffes du Nord has been crucial in giving Brook's theatre a distinctive place in critical discourse and in the minds of spectators in Paris and beyond.

My argument has two linked parts, the first concerning an obsessive return of decay in critical writing about Brook's theatre, which I view in terms of its staging of critical subjectivity. I suggest that critical reactions to the Bouffes du Nord vary between aesthetic analysis and critical self-exposure. Tracing the uses of decay allows us to follow the semantic mobility of the concept through its migrations and mutations. It reveals a particular tendency in site-specific theatre criticism which constructs sites as theatre's material other, the counterbalance to its magic, enchantment and pleasure. In criticism of the Bouffes du Nord, decay is an overburdened concept, the site of an ethics of theatre, for the exploration of aesthetic theories and a projection of the critical self. The second part of my argument tracks the permutations of the Bouffes du Nord's decay from being a mark of authenticity and historical awareness to a sign of cultural capital, of Paris as Europe's cultural *capital city*.

Chapter 4 showed that the Bouffes du Nord's site-specificity was shaped at the moment of its inception by numerous discourses of geographical location and identity and that a range of narratives, including Brook's own, retrospectively position the venue as marginal, intercultural and engaged in the wider community. This chapter concludes by outlining the risk of a venue's site-specific moment turning into a culturally loaded style.

The Bouffes du Nord and site-specific performance in Paris

Writing about the Bouffes du Nord in 1977, Georges Banu observed that 'l'intégration des matériaux rejetés par la société dans la production artistique est un mouvement général auquel le théâtre participe' (Banu 1977: 68). Brook's use of an

abandoned theatre was therefore part of a wider cultural trend to reclaim waste objects and derelict spaces for artistic purposes.

According to Banu, site-specific performance in 1970s Paris evolved in two stages, the first of which embodied an aesthetics of disappearance, the second, a poetics of memory. The aesthetics of disappearance was motivated by a critical attitude to theatre and a recognition that the derelict spaces of the city contained their own powerful narratives of identity, desire and tragedy. Incorporating danger and ephemerality as structural (or deconstructing) principles in theatre performance, the aesthetics of memory turned theatre as metaphor of the transient into a meditation on the transience of metaphor when confronted with urban decay and dereliction.

Performance in derelict sites would no longer be the impure copy of the *permanence of language*, but the rehearsal of theatre's own *extinction*, exemplified in the *material* decay of the site it used: 'ce théâtre fait découvrir des lieux et des itinéraires, tout en se refusant à les rendre habituels, localisables, familiers. Il les rejette vite en joignant l'éphémère du théâtre à celui des espaces. Double disparition' (Banu 1987 : 243). This theatre pushed the literal decay and metaphorical disappearance of theatre together.

The process made the spectator uncomfortable. Site-specific performances led spectators to reflect on what they were doing when they went to the theatre. The factors that propelled them into alternative spaces could easily involve nostalgia, the desire to trespass or intrude, curiosity or a sense of danger. These were co-opted as part of a revised aesthetics: 'le public cesse d'être au-dessus de tout soupçon et il se voit dans l'obligation d'interroger son rapport à la représentation aussi bien que sa raison d'être' (ibid: 241).

For Banu, site-specific theatre in Paris became gradually less dominated by an aesthetics of disappearance because of the increasing numbers of performances in former spaces of art and culture such as old cinemas, theatres and so on. This shift embodied a poetics of memory:

Si dans les années soixante-dix on aimait faire intervenir l'usure du travail, du quotidien, désormais on préfère l'usure du théâtre et de la culture. Leur

mémoire. À une mémoire de vie qui imprégnait les lieux se substitue la mémoire d'un art dont le théâtre porte l'empreinte ancienne. (ibid: 245)

From being a critique of theatre's alienation from the lived spaces of the city, site-specificity shifted its emphasis to the processes of remembering. The derelict sites of Paris were now being poeticized through performance, recognized for their human associations instead of their counter-cultural gestures. Performances in industrial or abandoned work sites scheduled for demolition, created by directors such as Klaus Michael Grüber and André Engel, rejected theatrical illusionism. The use of neglected former artistic sites marked a more self-reflexive stage in Paris's site-specificity. This move represented not an iconoclastic desire to escape from institutional culture, but a wish to examine how cultural practices had shaped people's lives and memories. Old theatres and cinemas had helped form the subjectivities of people in the past, and the perceptions of the past and its inhabitants that were carried into the present.

Paris theatre's site-specific search for a poetics of memory took spectators into derelict theatres and cinemas to explore the afterlife of cultural forms. It highlighted the way cultural transmission involves painful exclusions and repressions, but also how the arts of cinema and theatre foster dreams and desires.

Derelict for over twenty years when Brook discovered it in 1974, the Bouffes du Nord was at the forefront of theatre's poetics of memory. Yet reclaiming the theatre was not only about recalling the city's cultural past and a warning against the post-industrial tendency to tidy history into certain areas and convert others, usually on the periphery, into functional, transit zones (as the location of the Bouffes du Nord was thought to be, see Chapter 4). Disappearance also became part of its aesthetics, a necessary reminder of the mutability of cultural forms and their eventual anachronism.

The Bouffes du Nord: heterotopia and decay

Michel Foucault suggested that theatres were a type of heterotopia, which he defines as a space in which time accumulates. A heterotopia contrasts with a utopia, which he

glosses as an absolutely unreal space, in that it is simultaneously absolutely real, linked to all the spaces that surround it, and absolutely unreal, because it is the space of illusion. In Foucault's words, heterotopias 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' (Foucault 1986: 24).

Foucault argues that heterotopias challenge the distinction between perception and passion. Spaces are formed through our fantasmatic association with them and cannot be divorced from the human dreams and desires which they arouse. It is therefore possible to have 'a light, ethereal, transparent space, or again a dark, rough, encumbered space' (ibid).

A large array of spaces correspond to Foucault's description, ranging from trains to museums. Cemeteries are heterotopic because they are invested with multiple temporalities, from the moment of death, to the persistence of monuments and the partial endurance of memories. Museums, although they create a utopian space for the work of art, are themselves heterotopias, spatial archives of art works from different periods, re-imagined over time by generations of visitors.

Theatres are heterotopias because they bring together different temporalities: the duration of a performance and the imagined timescale of a play, the present date of a performance and the play's historical setting, the time the play was written and the age of the building which houses it. They encapsulate overlapping timescales, the layering of the present with the plural temporalities of the past.

In drawing attention to its decay, the Bouffes du Nord exposes the way in which heterotopias are constructed at the intersection of perception and passion. Keeping the building's decay in place quotes moments from the theatre's past and inscribes them on the fabric of the building's interior. The Bouffes du Nord is composed of heterotopic versions of itself, foregrounding its previous incarnations as counter-sites, a théâtre à l'italienne, a derelict building, a cultural space trespassed on by the homeless.

The decay of the Bouffes du Nord evokes both Banu's aesthetics of disappearance and poetics of memory as part of a self-reflexive relation to its own past. It points to its period as a non-theatre (a derelict and forgotten site) as a desirable aspect of its aesthetics, and records the representational practices of the past (in keeping the traces of the former proscenium arch) as a way of signalling the contingency of art's mechanisms.

The Bouffes du Nord: early criticism

By 1977, when the CNRS's *Voies de la création théâtrale* published two studies of the first production at the Bouffes du Nord, Shakespeare's *Timon d'Athènes*, the fabric of the venue was already seen as integral to the performance. In this volume, Richard Marienstras described the venue as midway between renovation and decay, a visible protest against a rich society's search for novelty (Marienstras 1977).

According to Marienstras, the state of the theatre left the spectator unsure whether he/she had interrupted the restoration work before it has been completed or whether this was an aesthetic choice on Brook's part, a counter-cultural aesthetics of poverty. While the critic after the event is free to interpret Brook's use of decay, critics and spectators on entering the Bouffes were unable to predict how it would subsequently be interwoven with the theatre's ethics and aesthetics. At its site-specific moment, before it became a permanent venue, the Bouffes du Nord led its spectators into a transitional zone, half way between theatre and dereliction. The role of decay was yet to be articulated. One wondered whether the old theatre building was being used to critique theatre as a medium, or to make people aware of the poor treatment of Paris's cultural heritage? Was it a metaphor for the decay of the body and death, a memento mori, or rather part of a social critique of consumption? Indeed, the Bouffes's decay posed a further question: was this building a theatre, or a building site *being used* as a theatre?

Marienstras opted for seeing the theatre's decay as aesthetically motivated: 'On s'avise enfin d'un choix esthétique qui signale un double refus: refus de l'ancien, refus du nouveau – où se laisse percevoir une hésitation essentielle sur ce que pourrait

être un lieu théâtral pour la modernité' (Marienstras 1977: 15). The 'hésitation essentielle' refers to indecisiveness about the right theatre spaces for modernity, but it just as well captures the spectator's hesitation at the threshold of this oxymoronic theatre, so new in its resignification of age and dereliction. Entering the Bouffes du Nord, before its decay became a fixture theorized in relation to the ethics and aesthetics of performance there, interpellated the spectator as out of place, an intruder in an environment balancing between abolition and reconstruction.

In the same issue of *Voies de la création théâtrale*, Georges Banu provided a detailed history of the Bouffes du Nord from its opening in 1876 to its eventual closure in 1950. The Bouffes du Nord had been a théâtre populaire and a music hall before its final incarnation as 'Le Théâtre au Carrefour' in 1945. Brook's refusal to restore the venue was read as a desire to maintain the visibility of its history. Brook's first production rediscovered one of Shakespeare's most neglected plays, *Timon d'Athènes*, in a parallel movement to the finding of the theatre itself. The play's themes of entropy and decline gave the Bouffes du Nord's decay literary significance to add to its potential for social critique and embodiment of cultural history. By reduplicating the generalized corruption and waste of Shakespeare's text in the building itself, the Bouffes du Nord's decay was already circulated as a textual and literary trope, a mobile signifier linking words, texts and sites in a complex network.

From the outset, the theatre's decay compelled critical interest in its own right. In these early reactions, it was viewed as contributing to a wider movement in the arts to recuperate waste and dereliction as part of a societal critique. It was interpreted as the preserved sign of historical consciousness about the building's past in a challenge to progressivist and consumerist ideologies, and as a visible embodiment of the literary themes of its first production.

Theorizing decay: writing and the body

In more recent critical reactions to the Bouffes du Nord, the decay of the theatre has become a polymorphous term, functioning at many levels simultaneously. Before

embarking on a close analysis of critical responses, we need to disentangle the different uses to which decay is put.

Re-using decay as a critical trope is already a reflection on Brook's decision to re-use a derelict theatre, that is to say, criticism takes its momentum from the specificities of the site itself. The way the term circulates between historical, aesthetic and ethical considerations indicates a kind of obsessive return to decay as a plural site of signification. A complex metonymical chain ties these critical responses together: the desire to use decay, to use it up, to re-use and re-circulate it.

Decay is a seductive phenomenon for critics, generating writing because of its rich metaphorical potential, and at the same time, responding to their desire for theatre and performance to stage that which is beyond writing, a phenomenological experience connected to the body and senses, to which writing cannot gain access.

Much of the critical production about the Bouffes du Nord has been influenced by post-structuralist theories concerning the impact of the body on the sign-system of language, the mobility of the signifier and the notion of becoming. In Julia Kristeva's exploration of the limits of language in avant-garde poetry, the notion of the 'chora' (in Greek 'space') represents the interruption of the logic of the Symbolic by the semiotic drive (see French and Lack 1998). The semiotic emerges from the infant's contact with the maternal body before the entry into the Paternal law of the Symbolic via the mirror stage. The pre-linguistic experience of the infant in contact with his/her mother's body revolves around rhythms, colours, shapes and patterns which distort the systematicity of language. Kristeva develops chora as a mobile nexus of meaning, produced in texts by desire and identification. One of the key figures in Kristeva's revolution in poetic language was Antonin Artaud, whose theatre of cruelty had led Brook to devote a season of performance experiments to explore his theories.

Critics of the Bouffes du Nord inscribe the theatre's decay in their texts as just such a site of desire and identification. Decay is the mobile chora of the critical texts on the Bouffes du Nord, the disruption of the logic of critical writing. Decay attracts

language and words to itself in extended images, metaphors which veer off as detours, as a waste of critical words.

Decay and the other

Critics also use the Bouffes du Nord's decay to articulate the desired loss of a subjectivity as it has been structured by (theatre) representation, and its re-emergence as negated and split. Part of this re-ordering of subjectivity derives from the way in which decay records the impact of the other, both as excluded from and threatening to aesthetic forms such as theatre, and as repressed or framed by them.

Georges Banu described the Bouffes du Nord as a 'lieu impur':

Antoine Vitez classe les espaces théâtraux en deux catégories : *l'abri*, le lieu qui reçoit le théâtre sans être conçu à l'origine dans ce but, et *l'édifice*, le lieu consacré au théâtre et invalide en dehors de cette fonction. Par une belle alliance Brook parvient à les réunir dans les Bouffes du Nord où *l'édifice* s'apparente à *l'abri*. Cela rend le lieu étonnant et ambigu : il tient des deux. Un lieu impur, un lieu double comme tout ce que Brook aime. (Banu 1991: 33)⁶²

First, in relation to the notion of *l'abri*, we should recall that when derelict, the interior of the Bouffes du Nord was damaged by fires lit by homeless people who sought shelter there, the marks of which were preserved as traces of the building's past. Not a shelter for theatre then, but a shelter for those whose presence might negate or culpabilize theatre, a painful real intruding on this quintessential space of representation. In terms of place as *l'édifice*, the Bouffes du Nord retains visual reminders of being a théâtre à l'italienne, leading to reflection on the previous historical framings and positionings of the other by the aesthetic. The Bouffes's incarnations as shelter and edifice are imprinted on the building's interior as part of its general decay, keeping alive the memory of the excluded (homeless) and (mis)-represented (by the théâtre à l'italienne) other. Decay stays on at the Bouffes du Nord

⁶² See Vitez 1979 for the initial distinction between 'abri' and 'édifice'.

as the tangible mark which reminds us that the spaces of culture are both exclusionary and temporary.

Recent critics of the Bouffes du Nord: site, decay and the body

Accounts of Bouffes du Nord show a sustained attempt to theorize the theatre site as bound up with the economy of the human body, decay and waste. The critical language involved flays and excavates the site to gain access to a pain and validity which theatre as a medium might be seen to have lost. Critics have treated the site of Brook's theatre, in the down-at-heel 10th arrondissement of Paris, as organic, writing about it using metaphors of skin, body and biographical subject, and at the same time as archaeological deposit and the embodiment of decay and waste.

In these accounts, one detects a submerged narrative of the death and exposure of a body, its burial and decay, and its subsequent excavation as a result of archaeological exploration. These competing metaphors immediately suggest that the decay of the Bouffes has significantly disturbed the boundaries of pre-existing critical categories. They tell us that making sense of theatre is connected with a partly unconscious and partly conscious set of desires which we project on to it.

Critical writing about the Bouffes plays out anxieties about the decay of theatre as a medium, and stages desires for a more acute form of performance, able to bypass the logic of the visual or the suspension of the real. I have assembled these metaphors of skin, body, biography, layering and waste to show how they try to unlink our conception of site/building as object and connect it instead to the human body producing pain, waste, memory and decay. We might call this process a phenomenology of the site as body: its general direction is towards excavation, a descent via metaphor under the skin, into the body of site.

In a recent overview of theatre in Paris for *The TLS*, John Stokes described the interior of the Bouffes du Nord:

Inside, the theatre walls are of plain brick and plaster, painted in what designers call earth colours, reds, browns and ochre. The place has been stripped of the details of its history, like something left over at Pompeii; raised rostra in the stalls, cushions where the pit would once have been. And yet

when buildings endure, performance survives; those colours and textures are also redolent of the human body, of blood and bone, as if the theatre had, over the years, lost layer after layer of protective epidermis. (Stokes 1996: 18)

As well as a cursory nod to the site as archaeological deposit, Stokes here sees the inner surface of the building as skin, 'protective epidermis', slowly being stripped away to reveal what is underneath. The peeling away of skin is a painful but necessary process of abrasion. Performance in this context will relate to exposure, to a shedding of layers of protection and an exploration of a painful subcutaneous reality.

Brook's theatre makes available a new form of post-mortem knowledge. On to the archaeological textures of the site, in the form of brick and plaster, is grafted the visual intertext of the human body, laid bare or exposed. The conflicting metaphors bring about a sense of incoherence, the site of the theatre both a corpse being skinned and an object being disinterred. Its bricks and mortar concreteness pre-exists performances, but has been superimposed with visual references to the warmth of the human body.

Stokes's description opens a general overview of Paris theatre in 1996. He considers the condition of the theatre's interior as a source of fascination and a fact which requires explanation. Historical consciousness and the ephemeral present of performance are inscribed on the building and given critical form respectively as metaphors of archaeology and the painful cutting/wounding of the skin and body. At the Bouffes du Nord, Stokes implies, one encounters a more intimate engagement with the human as historical subject and living and breathing body.

In introducing the Bouffes du Nord to its non-specialized anglophone audience, Stokes's article highlights the effect of the theatre's decay on critical writing. It generates numerous metaphors and intertexts which have no inbuilt coherence. The site is the entry into a different experience of theatre which engages the spectator as critic, as embodied and historical subject, and as generator of creative responses. Before reaching the theatre's performances, our critical faculties are re-ordered by passing through the theatre structure's membrane of connotations.

Critical exposure and fire

In a recent article, David Williams also focuses on the inside of the Bouffes du Nord and the particular causes of its decayed appearance, especially on the effects of fire-damage. He develops a daring phenomenology of fire, influenced by Bachelard and Deleuze, which integrates the critic's private associations and memories with cultural and archetypal manifestations of the element and theoretical explorations of its form as metaphor. His essay then moves on to connect these analyses to the use of fire in Brook's productions at the Bouffes du Nord and elsewhere.

The critic's private memory-text of fire takes the form of a mosaic of associations he has with it. Thus the academic analysis of Brook's theatre practice across two decades begins with a staging of the critic's subjectivity, the private and complex interplay of his own set of cultural references and intertexts:

[...] The burning of the great library at Alexandria: the erasure of the archive. The nine day fire in Nero's Rome. The destruction of the Globe Theatre in 1613 during a performance of Henry VIII, its thatch ignited by the firing of a canon onstage; all those fires in theatres over the centuries. The Great Fire of London, in which over 13,000 houses were destroyed. The Hindu tradition of suttee. The burning of witches. The burning of Jeanne d'Arc. The burning of books. The fire-bombing of Cologne, Hamburg, Dresden. The Nazi crematoria. The burning of flags. [...] The fire I deliberately started in my family's back yard at the age of 6, then tried to stamp out, my shoe and sock on fire. Spitfire 'red-head' matches. At the age of 9, seeing a running man with his shirt ablaze, rolled and extinguished by passers-by; the smell of burning hair. Bunsen burners, magnesium, phosphorus, glass-blowing in school science classes. [...] Fire alarms, fire extinguishers, fireflies, fireworks, firearms. [...] Fire engines. Fire-fighters. Red-faced apologies. The self-immolation of a young Kurdish protester in the streets of London in 1999. (Williams 2000: 112-3)

Here, Williams's conceives of the critical act as an exposure of subjectivity (indeed, this example of autobiography as criticism was first given in the public context of an academic conference). Williams's writing voluntarily surrenders the usual epistemological frameworks of criticism (objectivity, hierarchical structure, conventional development of subject matter and so on), replacing it with a version of the critic as criss-crossed with interfering social, cultural and visual intertexts which

make little distinction between differing temporalities, levels of discourse, the particular and the general, the transparent and the private.

Williams's analysis takes its cue from Brook's observation that 'the cultural skin of [the Bouffes du Nord's] architectural decoration had been cauterised away' by fire (quoted in Williams 2000: 114). Williams elaborates on fire 'as écorché, a flaying of the anatomical surface of an anthropomorphized interior. A spatializing of interiority. Fire as transformation and revelation' (Williams 2000: 114). The theatre is violated and seared, while Williams invokes and aestheticizes human pain, tracing fire's metonymic adventures from brick and plaster to human body to generalized cultural process.

As with Stokes, we notice the role of skin and the subtext of physical pain in Williams's analysis. The essay brings to mind visual cultural intertexts (it evoked in my mind Titian's painting 'The Flaying of Marsyas') and horrific images such as the effects of burning on the human body. Fire captures both the transformative effect of performance on the theatre space, and the critic's own interpretive practice. Underlying both are its material effect and authenticity guaranteed by the implication of human pain.

After this opening, Williams's essay proceeds in more conventional fashion, outlining the use of fire and flame in a number of Brook productions before and after he discovered the Bouffes du Nord. Indeed, its second half is distinctly different to the first in juxtaposing the detective and research work of the academic with the experimental, autobiographically inflected, critico-creative text with which it began.

The essay has given readers permission to read intimately and confessionally, to decipher it as detectives, follow clues, puzzle over and poeticize the critic's competing intertexts. Williams's list of associations with fire is both a form of self-exposure and a search for consumption (of a signifier, of the critic's memories). Indeed, the quick movement of the list's associations and its heedless transitions between contrasting discourses emulate the effects of fire in its all-consuming rush to annihilate boundaries. In this mode of performative writing, the subject of the critical investigation reconfigures the writing strategy used to analyze it.

Williams sees decay and traces its cause. His critical response translates the trope of fire to the level of the signi-fire, asking us to transcribe the material process on to the structure of language. Our detection of what is private and personal in the critic's set of fire-connected intertexts validates the introduction of our own memories and associations as critical stratagems in performance analysis, and produces a narrativizing impulse in us as readers.

The exposure of the critical self both offers and withdraws intimacy and knowledge. Williams views the Bouffes' decay as both effect (of fire) and cause (of a revision of critical practices), as symbolic (of the theatre as creative practice in decline) and historical actuality (in witnessing to the material effects of the past), in short, as merging effect and affect: a heterotopia.

Decay and life-cycles

Moving from skin and body, critics have explicitly written about the Bouffes as a living organism with an identifiable life-cycle. Williams thinks of the theatre site itself as something which has lived and died:

In the present, its former lives are redundant, anachronistic, now no more than a spectral presence [...] Here a dead place is reanimated, phoenix-like, from the ashes of its senescent pre-history, infused by play with the possibility of future histories, new spatial becomings. (Williams 2000: 114)

In an extension of the site as living and dying body, the site also has its own biography. Georges Banu unites the body and biography metaphors when he speaks of Brook's theatre preserving 'les marques de sa biographie, biographie d'un lieu qui a vécu, car il y a, dit on, "une beauté des rides", "la beauté des restes"' (Banu 1991: 33). Banu's juxtaposition of the aged human face and the body after death indicates how the Bouffes du Nord is invested with a simultaneous animation and annihilation.

Decay functions as a signifying space in which criticism can maintain such a plurality of metaphors since, as a concept, it is predicated on the notion of collapse and deconstructing. It operates, in the vocabulary of the (both) living and dead body, as a route out of the epistemological logic of non-contradiction. This disfiguring of

language shows how criticism distorts its object, propelled by the complementary desires for semiotic intimacy and Symbolic control.

Decay: archaeology, layering and waste

As we saw in John Stokes's assessment earlier, critics of the Bouffes du Nord have also seen the theatre as an archaeological object and in terms of excavation. They use a series of layering images, one of which is building as palimpsest, a layering or overwriting where traces of previous signs are not fully effaced. Peter Brook has spoken of a 'Holy Theatre' in which 'the essential thing is to recognise that there is an invisible world which needs to be made visible. There are several layers of invisible' (Brook 1993: 58).

David Williams translates this on to Brook's venue by writing that '[a]ny space's functional status shifts as it is redefined through time, until it becomes a kind of palimpsest of cultural layers and natural processes' (Williams 2000: 114). Here, writing itself exerts its spectral presence in the materiality of the edifice. The palimpsest metaphor invokes both the archaeological object and the importance of what is under the surface. As the palimpsest is abraded to gain access to further levels of significance, so the Bouffes du Nord's decay gives plural meanings to its materiality, but accompanying the uncovering of meanings in both, is the threat of extinction.

The final stage in this itinerary through metaphors takes us to versions of site as something to be found or disinterred, as waste, surplus, and excess. For David Williams, decay and waste have changed from metaphors for a reduction to essentials to metaphors for accumulating and activating. In 1985, the Bouffes suggested 'organic decay down to the elemental' (Williams 1985: 40) whereas in 2000, decay puts the building 'in process, in a state of flux' (Williams 2000: 114).

In the fifteen years between Williams's commentaries on the Bouffes du Nord, the concept of waste has itself been subject to an extensive critical re-evaluation. If decay brings about the revelation of a purer version of the same in Williams's earlier comment, in 2000, it is a mobile term, the movement and effect of difference at the

very heart of the same. As the staging of the material's difference from itself, decay at the Bouffes insists itself in language (as we have seen in the proliferation of metaphors to deal with it) and functions as an excess (those metaphors cannot exhaust a term which installs difference-to-itself at its very heart).

These critical discourses move incoherently between surface and depth. The skin and the palimpsest are tropes of surface, exfoliated or scratched away to reveal further hidden surface layers. At the same time, the archaeological discourse plays on tropes of depth: the site is excavated or probed, beneath the surface, for lost objects or hidden meanings. This theoretical catachresis is symptomatic of the purposive incoherence of the critical approaches to the site of the Bouffes du Nord.

Decay and critical subjectivity

The critical uses of the Bouffes du Nord's decay tell us more about critics than they do about the experience of theatre performance there. Between the fact of decay and its critical uses, we find the space of a critical subjectivity anxious about and fascinated by death and retrieval. The criticism of the Bouffes du Nord is obsessed with the language of the absolutes of decay and death. While invoking the trauma of death, these critical responses establish a safe space for its repression and exhumation through the site of the archaeological deposit. The theatre site is both recently dead, if not actually dying, and long dead: both the site of a trauma, and the offer of its resolution.

Consequently, fraught and incoherent subjectivities enter the space between decay and its critical uses. The space of the Bouffes du Nord does not lend itself to a singular critical epistemology, but produces further, linked and associated narratives which draw on the psychoanalytical self, the private associations of the critic and a field of cultural intertexts. Throughout this criticism of the Bouffes du Nord, there is a persistent concern to move away from traditional theatre's representationalism. The site of the Bouffes absorbs critical desires to move theatre as a medium beyond mimesis to an interaction with the body's processes. Decay is used as a way of writing danger and risk into the aesthetics of theatre performance there.

I have suggested that the decay of the Bouffes du Nord is a material process whose connotative power and mobility disrupt the critical frameworks of performance criticism. Instead of imposing structure on the heterogeneity of signs in performance, focus on decay validates a deconstructing critical approach. Instead of building a solid, independent edifice of meaning, decay allows us to see the value of contingent juxtapositions and accidental alignments. I have suggested that decay permits critical responses to theatre to ramify in previously off-limit directions. It stages critical desires for bodily jouissance and for abjection, a corporeal intimacy with the object of study and the pleasure of consuming it in writing. Decay is a mobile topos on which desires for exposure and private investments and associations converge. In its resilience as the phenomenon which lays bare the depth and historicity of matter, it returns us endlessly to itself as the surplus and excess to which language cannot accede.

The chic translations of the Bouffes's du Nord's decay

The commutativity of decay and its cultural capital as (Parisian) theatre's incorporation of its own slow eradication, as well as its revaluing of the negative, inevitably became chic, and were required for export. Brook's attempt to maintain decay as a way of asserting the specificity of the Bouffes du Nord opened up new and challenging perspectives, but it was accompanied by a drive to recreate that decay elsewhere as part of the search for an authenticity of experience to which the signs of the Bouffes du Nord's dereliction testified.

The Bouffes's decay became so charged a cultural topos that the desire to replicate it elsewhere was great. I propose to examine briefly what has been commonly acknowledged as one of the dangers of site-specific productions, that is, its potential for empty aestheticization, by looking at the sites of some of Brook's productions before and after the discovery and critical investment of the Bouffes du Nord.

My assessment of the Bouffes du Nord's decay has accentuated plurality and mobility, but these are emergent phenomena based on site-specificity, and their

Bouffes du Nord was a probing, excavating, layering concept; here, decay is flattened into the banality of being ‘not nice’.

We have seen performance theorists underline the interplay in site-specific theatre between the ‘found’ and the ‘fabricated’. The implication in this observation is that the two terms have so far infected one another that the found has been *fabricated as found*, that Brook and his colleagues found *what they wanted to find* there, and even went so far as creating it themselves. Decay leads to decadence when it relies on self-referentiality and its when cultural capital and intertextual allusivity count more than its relation to the site in question.

Decay at the Majesty became a question of style. It was the expensively manufactured production of an auteur’s signature in the name of as aesthetics of decay, emptied of relation to the material and historical context of its site. Robert Brustein expressed his anger at the ‘feigned seediness’ of the accentuated dereliction of the Majesty:

It may be one thing to see [the Mahabharata] outdoors in Avignon, at ten dollars a ticket, watching the sun rise over the concluding rites. But at 96 dollars a seat in a production estimated at 6,000,000 dollars and in a Brooklyn theater renovated at a cost of 5,000,000 dollars in order to replicate the battered and unpatched conditions at Brook’s Bouffes du Nord, this costly ‘poor theater’ begins to take on [...] bourgeois grandiosity. (ibid: 266)

What is at stake in Brustein’s critique is not simply the economic expense of recreating the decay of the Bouffes. One senses, more importantly, that the locational specificity of the ‘Brooklyn theater’ (i.e. the Majesty) has been erased in favour of a transported and legitimizing Parisian chicness of decay. The financial sums Brustein mentions are disturbingly large; the doubled exoticism of Brook’s production (both eminently Parisian and dealing with an Indian epic) was obviously given a high, socially exclusive price. In a city criss-crossed and shaped by the history of immigration, decay and interculturalism are valued for their symbolic cultural power, not for their embeddedness in the city’s own narratives.

Brook's evident purpose was to release the awe-inspiring presence of the place itself into dramatic expression. And it is on this ground, if any, that his work can be faulted. Naqsh-e-Rustam, as it stands, is alive. What Brook has done is to reduce it to a stage set. (quoted in Smith 1972: 238-9)

We should notice here that Wardle's comment animates the Persepolis ruins in the same way as later critics, in a much more developed manner, treat the Bouffes du Nord as a living entity. Wardle suggests, however, that Brook's production closed off the ruins, reducing their living plurality to an illusionistic backdrop. Instead of engaging in a dialogue with the site, Brook's production instrumentalized it, making it an adjunct of his performance instead of interacting with it. Persepolis's status as a ruin was therefore rendered monological.

The Persepolis ruins remind us of the archaeological metaphor which crops up in later criticism of the Bouffes du Nord. In setting his 1985 production of *The Mahabharata* in a quarry near Avignon,⁶³ Brook combined the archaeological and industrial elements we have seen to be common in site-specific productions. Irving Wardle described the setting as 'magnificent', referring to:

an amphitheatre facing a blasted cliff-side, with a lofty upper pathway for the actors, and a desert floor divided by a canal. Surrounded by the most sophisticated of lighting rigs, the show is rooted in the basic elements of the universe – water, stone, and fire'. (in Williams 1988: 384)

Here, the performance's location in the quarry space gives it a transferred solidity and elemental quality, accompanied by the idea that the location strips away unnecessary layers of embellishment and technology ('most sophisticated of lighting rigs'). What does the quarry space bring to Brook's staging of the Indian epic? It serves to position Brook's theatre aesthetics in opposition to the institution of Avignon itself. The quarry's great excavations and removals of stones are an imaginary inversion or negation of the magnificent stone buildings and socio-cultural

⁶³ The quarry was the Jacques Calley limestone quarry situated eight miles south of Avignon. The *Mahabharata* was first presented there as part of the Avignon Festival in July 1985. See Hunt and Reeves 1995: 252

resonances of the city space of Avignon. A quarry is a space of danger, a space from which 'No Trespassing' signs keep us excluded. It accommodates heavy machinery, scarred landscapes, unexpected subsidances and detonations. To use such a space for performance brings all these qualities to bear on the processes of narrative, juxtaposing the creative and the productive, the jagged and massive and the ephemeral and reflective.

But by the time of the staging of *The Mahabharata* in the Boulbon quarry, Brook had already been in residence at the Bouffes du Nord for over ten years, and the decay of that theatre came to at least one critic's mind when he saw the production. David Williams noted that *The Mahabharata* 'was performed in a remote amphitheatrical quarry on the banks of the Rhône south of Avignon, the towering cliff face texturally reminiscent of the scarred and pitted back wall of the Bouffes du Nord, Brook's Parisian base' (Williams 1988: 354). Williams's comparison of the quarry to the Bouffes du Nord demonstrates the degree to which the theatre's state of decay has lodged itself in the critic's mind. However, by linking the two spaces, we lose the specificity of both. The implication is that Brook is in search of a generalized aesthetics of decay to capitalize on the pleasure of audience intrusion into previously off-limits sites, to legitimate performance by its occupation of the validating spaces of work, and to occupy a site marginal to the institutional and cultural grandeur of Avignon.

Yet one is led to ask at what point performance in such a site crosses over into cultural tourism. Presumably when its frame of reference is a decaying theatre space in Paris, so that those visiting the site are not seeing the quarry itself, but are looking for references to the Bouffes du Nord and the signature of an auteur, the mark of his distinctive style. Relating the Boulbon quarry to the Bouffes du Nord's decay in this way violently suppresses the locational identity of the quarry, aestheticizing it at the expense of its association with work, danger and the machinery of heavy industry. The radicality of decay can quickly become neutralized by being turned into a frame of reference, a short-cut for critical engagement with the specificities of a site.

To compare the blasted quarry wall to the texture of the pitted back wall of the Bouffes du Nord is to try to bypass the role of metaphor. This recuperative aestheticization, repressing the strategies of its own mechanisms, is one of the dangers of the powerful plurality of critical engagements site-specific performance releases. The Bouffes's decay could be used in a radical way by critics because it was bound up with materiality, and could not be detached from the fabric of the theatre as a signifier manipulable for purely aesthetic ends. When that decay is given critical capital in validating the use of a quarry, as in this case, then decay indeed has been set adrift in language which submerges difference and specificity in the name of cultural legitimization.

The Boulbon quarry production of *The Mahabharata* showed the dangers of the cultural validation of a term. The critique of the aestheticization and commodification of decay was taken one step further when the production went to New York. Even sympathetic critics like Hunt and Reeves mention Brook's tendency to make 'acclaimed appearances on world stages – in quarries in Avignon and Adelaide, in theatres in Brooklyn and Glasgow (redesigned at huge cost *to look as decayed as the Bouffes*)' (Hunt and Reeves 1995: 4; my italics).

In New York, a Brooklyn theatre, the Majestic, which had closed in 1968, was restored to house *The Mahabharata*.⁶⁴ Here, in starker terms, the Bouffes du Nord and its richly articulated decay once again exerted an influence over the exported production. The Majesty Theatre was made to look like the Bouffes du Nord, its own decay, its historical accretions of dirt interpreted *in relation to* the Bouffes du Nord, as a subsidiary, intertextual *allusion* to that theatre's originary decay, not as having a correlative cultural validity itself. Making the Majesty look like the Bouffes du Nord was an expensive business. This aestheticization of decay as a cultural marker was viewed by some of the production's critics as manipulative: 'Decades of dirt around the proscenium arch was left. Nothing in the restoration was made too nice. *It looked like a theatre in decay*' (Hunt and Reeves 1995: 239; my italics). The decay of the

⁶⁴ For fuller details of the reconstruction, including the extensive cost, see Hunt and Reeves 1995: 238-9.

Bouffes du Nord was a probing, excavating, layering concept; here, decay is flattened into the banality of being ‘not nice’.

We have seen performance theorists underline the interplay in site-specific theatre between the ‘found’ and the ‘fabricated’. The implication in this observation is that the two terms have so far infected one another that the found has been *fabricated as found*, that Brook and his colleagues found *what they wanted to find* there, and even went so far as creating it themselves. Decay leads to decadence when it relies on self-referentiality and its when cultural capital and intertextual allusivity count more than its relation to the site in question.

Decay at the Majesty became a question of style. It was the expensively manufactured production of an auteur’s signature in the name of as aesthetics of decay, emptied of relation to the material and historical context of its site. Robert Brustein expressed his anger at the ‘feigned seediness’ of the accentuated dereliction of the Majesty:

It may be one thing to see [the Mahabharata] outdoors in Avignon, at ten dollars a ticket, watching the sun rise over the concluding rites. But at 96 dollars a seat in a production estimated at 6,000,000 dollars and in a Brooklyn theater renovated at a cost of 5,000,000 dollars in order to replicate the battered and unpatched conditions at Brook’s Bouffes du Nord, this costly ‘poor theater’ begins to take on [...] bourgeois grandiosity. (ibid: 266)

What is at stake in Brustein’s critique is not simply the economic expense of recreating the decay of the Bouffes. One senses, more importantly, that the locational specificity of the ‘Brooklyn theater’ (i.e. the Majesty) has been erased in favour of a transported and legitimizing Parisian chicness of decay. The financial sums Brustein mentions are disturbingly large; the doubled exoticism of Brook’s production (both eminently Parisian and dealing with an Indian epic) was obviously given a high, socially exclusive price. In a city criss-crossed and shaped by the history of immigration, decay and interculturalism are valued for their symbolic cultural power, not for their embeddedness in the city’s own narratives.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified decay as one of the markers of the Bouffes du Nord's highly charged site-specificity. It has argued that the venue's decay is both a materially visible reminder of its own layered history and a phenomenon whose complexity is *produced* through critical interactions with the theatre. I have shown how the multiple applications of decay as a form of metaphor introduce a purposive incoherence into critical interactions with the site. I have analyzed what drives these emergent critical encounters: a desire to convey a more acute sense of the painful, corporeal effects of performance, and the corollary risk of destroying those effects through our critical framings of them.

I have suggested that decay operates both as a symptom of changing critical strategies which try to validate the demise of existing vocabularies for analyzing theatre and performance and to express the effects of the desiring critical self on the object of study. From a wider perspective, the uses of decay suggest responses to the fantasmatic threat to theatre from contiguous art forms such as cinema and performance art. Focusing on decay is a way for critics to give theatre performance a more dangerous quality. In the last part of the chapter, I have argued that the excluded space easily becomes an exclusive one if concepts like decay become the markers of a style or authorial signature.

When the decay of the Bouffes du Nord becomes the frame of reference for performances in other reclaimed spaces, that decay loses its mobility and plurality and becomes tied up in a search for cultural capital and symbolic prestige. As a concept, the decay of the Bouffes invites but defies our attempts to articulate its meanings, operating as a field across which the vectors of the critical self design their own unpredictable narratives. Translated as a mark of prestige, the Bouffes du Nord's decay channels its meanings towards cultural prestige and positioning, neutralizing decay by turning it into a manipulable signifier no longer grounded in a site's materiality.

The Bouffes du Nord's site-specific moment was bound up with its decay. Decay was a sign of the theatre's difference. It pointed back to a history of

representation and incorporated the building's uses while derelict (its elemental wear and tear, the fire damage caused by homeless people) as part of an aesthetics permeated with ethical reminders of the other, as interpellated by or excluded from cultural processes.

Critics found in decay a way of opening criticism to creativity and subjectivity. Decay produced writing, the *desire* to write, about the embodied self or the theatre's relation with death and mourning. It allowed for critical catachresis: the collision of surface and depth, of the living moment of physical pain and the long buried traces of the past, the trauma of the past, as found in its archaeological associations. However, as it became reinscribed in critical writing, *as* critical writing, decay was also recuperated as *quotation*. The Bouffes du Nord's site-specific moment was recycled as a sign of cultural validity, an empty aesthetics of the conscientious; high art, to use a popular but revealing phrase, *slumming it*. The Bouffes du Nord's decay permeated critical writing as a negative: a permission to develop and elaborate critical metaphors until they unravelled, just as Kantor's objects had transferred their decay onto words (see Chapter 1).

The following chapter deals with the Cartoucherie de Vincennes, focusing on the industrial element in site-specific theatre and performance in contrast to the Bouffes du Nord's status as a former cultural space. I chart the period before, during and after the Théâtre du Soleil's discovery of the venue to show how the site allows us to re-read the company's search for a group identity and examine how critics used the company's occupation of the site and their renovations of it to signify their performance ethics.

Chapter 6

**Theatre Out of Place: Ariane Mnouchkine and work in process at the Cartoucherie
de Vincennes, Paris**

In the previous chapter, I examined how the critics of the Bouffes du Nord used decay to reconstruct both a concept of theatre and the strategies of critical writing. I analyzed how the Bouffes's site-specificity was subject to multiple reinscriptions and the functions these had. The present chapter examines the Cartoucherie de Vincennes as a very different theatre to Brook's, a venue which transported theatre into a derelict, industrial zone of Paris. The chapter investigates how the site of the Cartoucherie permeates critical writing as a marker of the Théâtre du Soleil's identity.

I argued in chapter 4 that the Cartoucherie's geographical location disoriented critics and their writing. Critics turned the Cartoucherie's location into a fantasmatic, hybrid space in which a theatre utopia was being constructed, marginal to the mainstream, inflecting theatrical pleasure with the risks of displacement and the disquieting effects of the uncanny. The present chapter shows how the Cartoucherie's site-specific moment was anticipated by the Théâtre du Soleil in their identity discourses before they moved to the site, and became inscribed as integral to the Théâtre du Soleil's aesthetics and ethics for a number of years afterwards.

The Cartoucherie de Vincennes is one of the most famous post-industrial venues in the world being used for theatre and performance. As with Brook and the Bouffes du Nord, the Cartoucherie and the Théâtre du Soleil are almost synonymous, even though four other companies are based there.⁶⁵ It was built in 1874 to replace a pyrotechnic workshop and served as a munitions factory until World War 2. During the Algerian War, it became a detention centre and the site of the present Théâtre de l'Aquarium was used for interrogations. Discussion of its refurbishment began in the 1960s, involving Costa-Gavras among others. Mnouchkine first visited the Cartoucherie in August 1970, and the Théâtre du Soleil's opening production took place there in December 1970.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ The other theatre companies at the Cartoucherie are the Théâtre de la Tempête, the Théâtre de l'Aquarium, the Théâtre de l'Épée de Bois and the Théâtre du Chaudron.

⁶⁶ Information about Algerian War connection from Joël Crasmesnil, 'Les pieds dans la boue et la tête au soleil: cinq troupes s'engouffrent dans les hangars de la Cartoucherie', conference paper delivered 24 May 2003, at the Théâtre de l'Aquarium, Cartoucherie, Paris, as part of international colloquium 'Pour une histoire critique du spectacle militant' (21-24 May 2003). Henceforth cited as Crasmesnil 2003. For additional historical information, see Crasmesnil 1998 and Féral 1998

When the Cartoucherie was converted into a performance space by the Théâtre du Soleil in 1970, its geographical marginality and former use immediately put theatre in dangerous proximity with its antitheses. Theatre defined as a 'theatron', a 'place of seeing', was now hidden and secret, its link with pleasure disrupted by the venue's association with industrial production and dereliction. The fact that the company members of the Théâtre du Soleil undertook the work of converting the munitions factory at their own expense, 'ce qui à cette époque, est parfaitement nouveau' (Crasmesnil 2003), has played a central role in the subsequent construction of the Cartoucherie's site-specific moment. The crucial term in this statement is *work*. This chapter analyzes how the company's work in re-inventing the Cartoucherie as a theatre was re-inscribed as a culminating moment in its attempts to ally theatre with work, labour and industry, almost from its foundation in 1964. The Cartoucherie, as a former factory, became an embodiment of the Théâtre du Soleil's engaged theatre politics and ethics, most evidently at this site-specific moment. I trace in this chapter how the company's multiple conversions of the Cartoucherie for performances after 1970 maintained this legacy and, in particular, how descriptions of the company seized on its relation to the Cartoucherie as an analytical and critical tool.

For the Théâtre du Soleil, the work the Cartoucherie required was seen not as a problem but a solution. It showed that their decision to take theatre to the 'sinistre caserne' (Crasmesnil 2003) of a former industrial complex made their theatre practice 'une mode de vie, pas un choix de carrière' (ibid). The Cartoucherie was converted into a theatre, but also into a 'lieu de mémoire' in which the formerly closed spaces of the factories were opened to the public. In my analysis, I suggest that the discourses of work which shaped the Théâtre du Soleil's group identity can be mapped on to their role as *inheritors* of this former space of production.

The question of an ethics of theatre is foremost in examining the Théâtre du Soleil's move to the Cartoucherie. The company had struggled with questions of identity from the outset. Indeed, its identity was constantly driven by a sense of identification with work, workers, labour and production. Conceiving of themselves as at once performers and workers, the Théâtre du Soleil's members became subjects-

in-process, split subjects caught between ideas which posited performance and labour as binary opposites. Judith Butler suggests that:

Given that we reflect ethically on the principles and norms that guide our relations to others, are we not, prior to any such reflection, already in relation to others such that that reflection becomes impossible - an ethical relation that is, as it were, *prior to all reflection*? For Levinas, the Other is not always or exclusively elsewhere; it makes its demands of me, but it is also of me: it is the constitutive relation of this subject to the ethical, one that both constitutes and divides the subject from the start. For Levinas, this splitting of the subject, foundationally, by the Other establishes the nonunitary subject as the basis for ethical responsibility. (Butler 2000: 18; my italics)

While we can discern the Théâtre du Soleil's constantly reiterated identification with the other as worker in their productions leading up to the Cartoucherie, I also maintain that this identification was founded on a motivated reluctance to theorize the working other. Critical reception of the Cartoucherie employed extensive descriptions of the Théâtre du Soleil's manual work and renovations of the site as a way to *avoid* theoretical analysis of their identification with workers, showing us the company *doing*, not *reflecting* on what they were doing. Descriptions of what the company was doing with the Cartoucherie took the place of explicit analysis of the Cartoucherie's ethical significance. The Cartoucherie itself was therefore a critical tool, a site in which the working other as constitutive of identity, but not positioned and framed by theory, could take (a) place, but not positioned and framed by theory. The Cartoucherie became the site of the other '*prior to all reflection*'. Site-specificity, critical writing, the resistance to theory and the creative *production* of the other, all converged on the Cartoucherie as the discursive space of an ethics of theatre.

The resistance to formulating theories of theatre, in my view, has been one of Ariane Mnouchkine's most distinctive characteristics as a director and theatre practitioner. While France's directors have a long tradition of producing theoretical reflections on their theatre work, Mnouchkine has never done so. Hélène Cixous suggested recently that Mnouchkine '*ne fait pas la théorie de la chose: elle l'agit*'

(Cixous 2000b: 224). Mnouchkine's practice is motivated by intuition, not theoretical reflection, as Cixous suggested to Mnouchkine in a discussion on one of their collaborations: '*sans être grand théoricien*, tu as dit cette chose qui est très importante [...]' (Calle-Grüber 2001: 35; my italics).⁶⁷

Nancy Fraser has suggested that in 20th century theories of ethics, the main debate has revolved around whether ethical action should be based on a poetics of identification or a politics of recognition (see Fraser 2000). I trace how the Théâtre du Soleil adopted a poetics of identification with the working other as a way of constructing its ethics of theatre, and argue that at a discernible point in the company's history, identification gave way to a politics of recognition. In both cases, the site of the Cartoucherie played a fundamental role in articulating the company's relation with the other.

Collective creation: from identification with work to recognition of the other

Interviewing Mnouchkine in the 1970s, Denis Bablet made the observation that absolute collective creation was impossible. The phrase 'collective creation' was originally used to describe three post-1970 Théâtre du Soleil productions (*1789*, *1793*, *L'Âge d'or*) which dispensed with a pre-existing text and were devised by members of the group working in unison through experiment and improvisation. Mnouchkine gave the combative response that 'creation can be collective, and absolutely collective, precisely if everyone is in his or her place, ensures maximum creativity in each function, and if there's someone who centralizes [...]' This does not imply any hierarchical vision' (in Williams 1999: 57).

Mnouchkine uses the Fordist imagery of the assembly line to mimic and subvert the processes of industrial production. The theatre workers ensure the maximum production of *creativity* in a slickly organized machine where all the parts contribute equally to the end product. This rhetorical imitation of the assembly line of creativity is no accident. The Théâtre du Soleil not only identified *with* workers, but saw themselves *as* workers, even though their product was designed to critique the

⁶⁷ The point was made in the context of a discussion on the use of real water towards the end of the

very dehumanization and mechanization of bodies on which automated working practices relied. From the company's origins, work was seen as the universal bond linking human beings, and the company believed that its creativity could only be genuine if it participated in the work structures and processes which it sought to turn to creative ends.

By 1995, Mnouchkine and the company were less concerned with the work of art's mode of production than with the creativity it produced in the audience which made spectators into co-creators and co-owners of a performance. In a Théâtre du Soleil group interview, Mnouchkine referred to a typical company production as 'Cet art, cette "oeuvre d'art commune"', adding, '- j'aime bien cette expression' (Picon-Vallin 1995: 80). This comment advances the idea of collective creation from its 1970s version. Instead of a collective *process*, Mnouchkine's calls the *end result*, the work of art itself, communal. The production is shared between its creators and audience, whose input is also a crucial part of the creative process. The work of art, Mnouchkine implies, is generated by the multiple exchanges of theatrical performance.

Work, building, aesthetics

Mnouchkine often uses elaborate metaphors to describe the Théâtre du Soleil's practice. These do not try to theorize the connections between creativity and work, but are permeated with references to it. In 1995, the company's preparations for *Les Atrides* were seen in terms of constructing a building, a resonant analogy for a company which had sought to reconstruct the practice and ethics of theatre in their long-term reconstructions of the Cartoucherie, as I shall explore in detail below:

Je pense à la façon dont le travail se partageait pendant la construction d'une cathédrale. Il y avait un concepteur, un architecte qui faisait le plan, et puis il y avait ceux qui sculptaient tel ornement, telle sculpture, telle gargouille, ceux qui s'occupaient des vitraux. Et ces arts différents devaient être extraordinairement bien coordonnés pour que, par exemple, telle pierre arrive au bon moment. Ce qui est curieux dans notre travail, c'est le rapport mobile

entre l'ensemble et le détail, tout le temps. Les uns sont sur le détail, quelqu'un est sur l'ensemble, et puis brusquement celui qui était sur le détail doit passer à l'ensemble et finalement, moi, je dois aller considérer un détail. Constamment, on fait succéder des gros plans, des plans larges. Je me demande parfois si ce que nous faisons, quand nous sommes tous là en train de préparer un spectacle, ne ressemble pas à *ce travail de bâtisseur*, en tout petit, sur huit mois et non sur quatre-vingt-dix années, même s'il nous paraît à nous immense. (ibid: 83; my italics)

Mnouchkine distances her explanation from the rigours of theoretical analysis. The work of cathedral building is simply *juxtaposed* with the creation of a performance. The detailed elaboration of the cathedral figure carefully maintains the difference and distinctness between cathedral building and performance building, while the cinematic terms 'des gros plans, des plans larges' underline the cathedral's provisionality as an analogy. While the Théâtre du Soleil's members elicit comparison with manual labourers or artisans, they might equally be compared to cinematographers editing a film.

Among Théâtre du Soleil members, Mnouchkine is not alone in using labour and (building) construction as metaphors for the company's aesthetics. Designer Guy-Claude François calls his theatre designs for the inside of the Cartoucherie 'a tool' with which the group constructs its performances, while also calling the designs perfectly 'functional'.

Le lieu de représentation, la Cartoucherie, joue un rôle très important. J'ai l'impression de construire quelque chose qui doit plus servir d'outil qu'être beau. Un outil ne s'invente qu'à partir des besoins et ceux-ci sont indiqués par Ariane, par les acteurs. Une chose qui est parfaitement fonctionnelle, qui correspond parfaitement à un besoin, d'abord celui d'un poème, d'un texte, enfin celui d'un acteur, devient belle, enfin, je crois que c'est ainsi que je définirais la beauté au théâtre. (ibid: 78)

In a theatre context, François defines beauty as that which is perfectly functional. His critical lexicon for the company's performance aesthetics borrows implicitly from the formerly functional, factory space of the Cartoucherie. Theatrical beauty is a useful and functional object not an intrinsic and metaphysical quality.

The Cartoucherie might be a tool helping the company to craft a theatre of beauty, but it also has wider symbolic dimensions. Mnouchkine suggested that a warning should be issued to prospective company members: 'Il faudrait écrire sur tous nos frontons 'Si tu ne veux pas souffrir, n'entre pas ici'. 'Si tu as peur de la douleur, ne fais pas de théâtre' (ibid: 80). The Cartoucherie becomes a symbolic threshold for the entry into a theatre involving suffering and pain. The warning written on its pediments would convey to prospective group members that the pleasure of theatre is reached via pain to the ego and perhaps also to the body. The site of the theatre, the Cartoucherie itself, embodies the company's alternative agenda of work, pain and suffering, necessary steps in producing the ethically mediated pleasure of the Théâtre du Soleil's performances.

Theatre: 'pas un métier du tout'

When ten students from the Sorbonne founded the Théâtre du Soleil in May 1964, they gave it the status of 'Société coopérative ouvrière de production'. Amongst the ten, there was '[a]ucun fils d'ouvrier, mais des enfants de la classe bourgeoise' (Bablet 1979: 7). Richard Monod and Jean-Claude Penchenat have noted the reluctance among the company's family members, and even the company itself, to think of theatre as a genuine form of work: 'Les réticences des familles ou des intéressés eux-mêmes ne viennent pas de ce que c'est un métier honteux, mais plutôt de ce que ce n'est pas un métier du tout' (Couty and Rey 1980: 210). The move into the dubious area of theatre was compounded by the fact that many of the ten founder members had recognized professions already and there was a number teachers among them.

The Collins Robert defines 'métier' as a 'genre de travail déterminé, reconnu ou toléré par la société et dont on peut tirer ses moyens d'existence', while the Collins Robert bilingual gives a wide range of translations for 'métier' from 'job', 'occupation' and 'trade' to 'craft' and 'profession'. The dominant idea is of an occupation which is acknowledged as such in the wider community. Having a 'métier' inserts a person in a social network of work relations which are associated

with skill and usefulness, hence expressions such as ‘il a du métier’ or ‘il manque de métier’ (Robert) which entail explicit judgments on a person’s contribution to society. The Théâtre du Soleil’s identification with work and workers was undoubtedly prompted by a wish to overcome the social perception of theatre as not a proper job, but it was also linked to their social milieus and, perhaps unconsciously, to their own suspicion that theatre and performance were not legitimate forms of work or social engagement.

Adrian Kiernander sees their first production, *Les Petits Bourgeois*, by Maxim Gorky, premiered in 1964, as a confrontation with the company’s middle-class backgrounds:

[...] the picture Gorky presents of an oppressive form of patriarchal social organization may well have been familiar to many members of the company at the time. Performing this play was a way of exorcising this aspect of their backgrounds, confronting their own past so that they could transcend it and move on. (Kiernander 1993: 47)

By 1972, the group had changed to include students and people from poorer backgrounds. Although observing that it was ‘hard to say what they have in common’, Mnouchkine contradicted this by mentioning that new recruits to the company were tested by their willingness to undertake manual work: [w]e never used to turn any applicants away. We would say, ‘Come back tomorrow at 7.30, there’s this set to be moved’, and that would discourage at least eight out of ten. The company is made up of the people who stayed’ (in Williams 1999: 26). The acid test for a new company member, above and beyond class allegiances or economic background, was a commitment to the physical work theatre, and especially theatre at the Cartoucherie, demanded.

Arnold Wesker’s La Cuisine: the universality of work

The Théâtre du Soleil’s first major success came with *La Cuisine*, an adaptation by company member Philippe Léotard of Arnold Wesker’s play set in a restaurant kitchen (see Wesker 1967). In an interview published in 1967, around the time *La*

Cuisine was first staged, Mnouchkine said: '[d]ans l'activité d'un être, il n' y a au fond, que deux activités essentielles: le travail et l'activité amoureuse. L'échec dans le travail, c'est aussi grave que l'impossibilité de réussir son amour' (quoted in Bablet 1979: 19).

This play became the Théâtre du Soleil's first major exploration of 'le travail' and the background to the production already shows work operating as an identificatory principle. Rehearsals took place in an unheated hangar on rue Pelleport in 1967/8, in Mnouchkine's words, 'en plein hiver [...] dans un local non chauffé, nous faisons des improvisations sur la chaleur! Une merveille!' (ibid: 23). The description of the freezing winter underlines the degree of imagination needed to perform the physical effects of the sweltering restaurant kitchen, while, more importantly, advancing the company's own oppressive working conditions as a source of empathy and solidarity with the kitchen workers of the play.

Performing the effects of the kitchen's heat required imagination and improvisation, but to perform the work which took place in the kitchen, the company employed a professional chef to teach them how to cook. Their performance would keep faith with the way this oppressive work affected the workers' bodies and structured their movements and actions. The production borrowed real equipment from the Gare Montparnasse kitchens which were being renovated at the time, not in the name of realism, but to reinforce all the more powerfully the imaginative departure from the real which the performance enacted. These objects were imported into the performance to symbolize its desire for intimacy with its subject, and to point the audience's attention back to the contexts of the real kitchens from which they came. The company had learnt to cook in order to perform cooking, but their training was not meant to emulate kitchen workers realistically. It was the necessary identification, one might almost say rite of passage, in order for their imaginative experiments to be grounded in the material conditions they sought to stage. Similarly, their freezing rehearsal conditions had given them an insight into the material working conditions of the kitchen, although tellingly, as exactly its opposite.

Wesker asserted that under no circumstances should real food be used in the performance. In fact, according to Bablet, he vetoed it as ‘tout simplement impossible’ (ibid: 20). The instruction was tantalizing for Mnouchkine: ‘[c]e qui me passionnait, et me passionne encore, c’est cet extraordinaire rapport entre le réalisme le plus total et cette transposition essentielle qui était l’absence de nourriture vraie...’ (ibid: 23) The absent food is the play’s way of staging its own difference from the real kitchens on which it is based. In an insightful act of negation, the banning of real food removes the very essence of what constitutes *the real work* of a real kitchen. The absent food therefore becomes the play’s foregrounding of its difference, the very site of its performativity.

The universality of work was so strong a belief for Mnouchkine and the Théâtre du Soleil at this time that it overrode other factors in the staging of Wesker’s play, such as the significance of cultural specificity. Bablet outlines the company’s strategy in transposing Wesker’s play to a French context: ‘Il faut d’abord adapter le texte à la réalité française: le Cypriote devient un arabe, l’Irlandais un pied-noir, etc. On cherche des équivalences pour les noms, les origines provinciales des uns et des autres [...]’ (ibid: 23). In the name of a greater closeness to the situation of workers in France, Léotard’s adaptation suppressed the play’s cultural specificity to Britain and its particular colonial history and immigrant populations, in order for French audiences to be able to perceive the play’s relevance to their own society. *La Cuisine* highlights the way in which cultural differences lead to conflict in the confined and pressured work space of the kitchen, so it is odd that the company should so expediently change the details of its cultural context. However, the belief that the oppression of work and labour were universal, and perhaps more urgently, the necessity of conveying this in as powerful and direct a way as possible, took precedence over considerations about the particular cultural and social formations of oppression in different national contexts.

Wesker as worker

The programme note to *La Cuisine* emphasizes the link between work and alienation, claiming that the play restores human dignity to characters whose bodies and minds have been distorted by labour:

[...] Wesker réussit ce que peu d'auteurs obtiennent: nous donner une véritable représentation de l'aliénation et non pas une simple explication. Arnold Wesker n'idéalise pas les travailleurs. Il constate simplement les résultats du mode de vie qui leur est imposé et l'inhumanité qui pervertit l'air qu'ils respirent. 'La Cuisine' est une pièce écrite sans revendication, sans protestation, sans prise de position simpliste. C'est une pièce sur la dignité humaine qui résonne en nous avec une incroyable authenticité. (programme note for *La Cuisine*)

This assessment rests on a contrast between representation and explanation. Wesker has succeeded in doing 'ce que peu d'auteurs obtiennent', presenting workers' alienation without telling people what to think about it. Indeed, the note implies that authors and intellectuals may be unable to convey workers' conditions with authenticity because of their tendency to over-explain and theorize. Wesker's writing does not bring about a conceptual understanding of working class oppression, but an apprehension of its effects, its invisible pervasiveness making it as naturalized as the air one breathes.

The programme's biographical note for the author suggests that Wesker may have achieved his singular reticence and descriptive authenticity precisely because his own apprenticeship was as a worker. Instead of being limited to Wesker's theatre achievements, the programme mentions that '[e]ntre 1948 et 1950, il est apprenti ébéniste, charpentier, vendeur en librairie', before outlining his experience of manual jobs just before moving into theatre:

Entre 1952 et 1956, après son service militaire, *il ne refuse aucun des emplois qu'il réussit à trouver: aide-plombier, garçon de ferme, commis de cuisine, enfin il travaille pendant deux ans comme pâtissier à Londres, et neuf mois à Paris comme Chef.* (programme note for *La Cuisine*; my italics)

Wesker has undertaken a wide variety of physical labour, giving his play, and the company's choice to perform it, extra validity. The job list tells its own story: he has been apprentice and artisan, learnt a trade and made functional objects as a carpenter and cabinet maker. His experience of different work environments, often in a subordinate position, showed him the effects of hierarchies. The Théâtre du Soleil does not use Wesker's past to ennoble him as a manual labourer with special insights into working class oppression, but to assert instead the continuity between that work and the work of theatre writing and performance.

To that end, when the biographical note deals with Wesker's theatre projects, it highlights his link with workers' unions: '[En 1961] il crée le Centre 42, première tentative en Angleterre pour la décentralisation du théâtre et des arts en général avec l'aide des syndicats' (programme note for *La Cuisine*). Wesker's projects used the Roundhouse in London, a former industrial building in which the Théâtre du Soleil would eventually perform *1789*. In their presentation of Wesker, the company uses his experience as a manual worker to express their own conception of theatre as work, and not *a* work (of art), in process.

After their original production at the Cirque Medrano in April, and a national tour, the Théâtre du Soleil gave free performances of the *La Cuisine* to striking factory workers during the events of May 1968. They performed from May to June 1968 at Neyrpic, Merlin-Gérin, Sud-Aviation, the eight Citroën factories in the Paris region, Renault in Billancourt and elsewhere in France.⁶⁸ Denis and Marie Bablet suggest that:

[p]lutôt que par des discours et des prises de position, c'est par des actes que le Théâtre du Soleil manifeste sa solidarité avec les travailleurs [sic] en lutte. La troupe restera très impressionnée par les contacts qu'elle aura eus à cette époque avec le monde du travail jusque là ignoré; l'expérience les confirme dans le refus du vedettisme et la volonté du travail en équipe. (Bablet 1979: 25)

⁶⁸ See Kiernander 1993 for a full list of performance dates and venues.

Le songe d'une nuit d'été: 'des hommes travaillent à une oeuvre importante, à une fête'

In the context of their treatment of working class problems in performance and their meetings with factory workers at the time of the political ferment of May 1968, it seems surprising that the company should have chosen Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as their next production. More than ten years later, Bablet still maintained that there was 'Aucun lien apparent entre *La Cuisine* et *Le songe d'une nuit d'été* de William Shakespeare créé dix mois plus tard' (ibid: 27).

One clear link, however, was the site-specificity of the Cirque Medrano itself. During performances of *La Cuisine*, '[I]es rugissements des lions et les barrissements des éléphants ponctuent les entrées des serveuses' (Couty and Rey 1980: 215). It is no wonder the company should turn to a play which they called 'un fabuleux bestiaire' in their programme note.

The Cirque Medrano, whose name was changed to the Cirque Montmartre following Joseph Bouglione's expulsion of the Medrano family in 1963,⁶⁹ was an inspirational setting for a production which famously revolutionized ideas about a play still heavily encumbered with sentimentality, blamed on:

[...] la tradition, celle qui date de l'époque qui a ressuscité Shakespeare, le romantisme. Celle qui veut qu'on joue cette pièce dans les décors de carton pâte hérités de la décoration traditionnelle du théâtre à l'italienne décadent du XIXe s., toiles tremblotantes, 'charmilles' et 'petites fleurs' peintes, fausse herbe sur le sol, 'miévreries' hétéroclites de mauvais goût. Celle aussi qui fait de la pièce un divertissement comprenant tout un fatras de 'gentilles fées', de 'lutins', de farfadets et autres 'esprits ailés' portant tutus ou ailes de gaze et balancant dans les cintres au bout d'un fil. (ibid: 28)

In contrast to these romantic, incorporeal 'winged spirits', the Théâtre du Soleil detected violence and animalistic sexuality in the play:

Le Songe d'une nuit d'été est la pièce la plus sauvage, la plus violente dont on puisse rêver. Un fabuleux bestiaire des profondeurs dont le sujet n'est rien moins que ce 'Dieu furieux' qui sommeille dans le coeur des hommes. Tout y

⁶⁹ See Médrano 1983 for description of this expulsion.

est direct, brutal, 'naturel'. Aucune féerie, aucun merveilleux mais du fantastique avec ce que le fantastique a de vénéneuse angoisse, de terreur (programme note, *Le songe d'une nuit d'été*).

The company highlighted the play's carnality in numerous ways. Initially, the question of translation arose since existing French versions of the play were thought too literary. Philippe Léotard made a translation with 'plus de fées, mais des hommes et leurs fantasmes concrétisés par de demi-dieux, des êtres de chair et de sang' (Bablet 1979: 28). Mnouchkine insisted on finding a scenographic way to evoke the play's animality, leading to a creative impasse which almost cancelled the whole production, according to Roberto Moscoso: 'après des jours de désespoir [...] Ariane Mnouchkine était prête à renoncer au *Songe* si on ne trouvait pas quelque chose en profond accord avec ce que nous pensions' (Quoted in Bablet 1979: 29).

Mnouchkine finally settled on the idea of using a large number of goat skins stitched together to carpet the floor of the stage. These were full of metonymical and metaphorical implications, evoking the play's animality, reminding audiences of the site-specificity of the venue with its circus animals, and most importantly, tapping into the play's latent violence by keeping the body shapes of the skinned animals easily discernible.

Work and labour were central to the Théâtre du Soleil's interpretation of *Le songe d'une nuit d'été*. The manual workers, most obviously Bottom, undergo some of the play's most important transformations. Indeed, their engagement in work gives them the capacity to be most profoundly affected by the leap into the extraordinary. Their labour, normally expended in producing *things*, is here directed towards producing a performance, a creative experience. The practice of work, labour and creativity are inextricably entwined in the characters of the rude mechanicals, as the production's programme note suggests:

Un peu plus loin, beaucoup plus loin, des hommes travaillent à une oeuvre importante, à une fête. Et le rythme apaisant de cette occupation les protège des soubresauts et des frissons. Tant il est vrai que la furie toujours déçue qui brûle en nous ne partage notre âme qu'avec ce qui unit les hommes: le travail. Nos artisans ne sont pas bien sûr à l'abri de l'effroi, des péripéties, de la force

des choses. Par le masque qui lui est soudain imposé, l'un d'eux plonge dans l'extraordinaire, l'incroyable, le merveilleux (programme note *Le songe d'une nuit d'été*).

To provide some literary critical context to this analysis, one needs to bear in mind that Jan Kott's study *Shakespeare notre contemporain* had been published in 1964, proposing a re-reading of Shakespeare's work in relation to violence and sexuality. The Théâtre du Soleil's programme note echoes Kott's suggestion that: '*Le Songe* est la plus érotique de toutes les pièces de Shakespeare. Et sans doute dans aucune de ses tragédies, *Troilus et Cressida* excepté, l'érotisme n'est-il aussi brutal' (Kott 1992: 183).

Kott focused on the play's sexual dimensions, especially in relation to the character of Titania. While the Théâtre du Soleil followed Kott's reading, they also gave equal emphasis to issues of work and labour not mentioned in *Shakespeare notre contemporain*. In their view, the rude mechanicals are the characters who most painfully confront meaning-under-construction, the interface between the material world and its verbal (re-)presentation. They grope towards an understanding of the processes of mimesis, but their incapacity to escape the force of things redefines poetry as that which *engages* with things, unable to leave them behind.

The manual workers undergo the play's greatest transformations and yet stay the same (their play at the end still retains all its 'rudeness' and unintentional humour). They remain grounded in the material world, even when they engage in the extraordinary processes of creativity. No wonder, then, that the Théâtre du Soleil should be attracted to Shakespeare's version of creativity, which emphasizes the impact of labour, the value of the learning *process*, and the innocence and 'rudeness' of the final production.

Different working methods: children and utopias

I have so far reviewed how work served the Théâtre du Soleil as a discourse of group identity and a critical tool for interpreting texts. In the process, work was gradually being rearticulated to change the perception of theatre as a valid *métier*, not the

opposite of work and labour, but produced by them. The company put as much emphasis on the work they undertook to create a performance as the actual performance itself. Their commitment to theatre as a source of pleasure was underpinned by the process by which it was achieved. Not simply a source of legitimation, the company reinscribed their work and working processes as integral to the aesthetics of their eventual performance. For the company, theatrical pleasure and work were symbiotic: theatre did not merely *represent* work, but converted it into performance, *re-used* it as performance. If work was what united human souls, as the company suggested in relation to *Le songe d'une nuit d'été*, then the vertiginous pleasures of theatre had to be redefined as inextricable from the processes of work, industry and production.

In 1968, Catherine Dasté took the improvised stories of 6-10 year olds from the École Jules-Ferry at Sartrouville to create a children's play for the Théâtre du Soleil called *Jérôme et la Tortue*. The notion of work permeates Emile Copfermann's analysis of the play's subject as:

[...] un thème développé par le philosophe Herbert Marcuse: l'instauration d'une société répressive s'imposant par le travail, opposé au jeu. Dans un pays lointain règne un arbre-sorcier qui contraint tous les habitants à travailler pour lui.⁷⁰

Work, the production suggested, could even reach into the domain of childhood. By taking children as its creative force, *Jérôme et la Tortue* implied that the regime of work permeates all strata of society, disseminating itself, even at an unconscious level, in those too young to articulate its effects except through improvised narratives. Once again, the company placed equal emphasis on conveying how the production came about. The theatre production used the ways in which the knowledge acquisition and acculturation of school pupils were permeated by work to underline the company's theories about its universality and unconscious effects, and

⁷⁰ *Les Lettres Françaises* (18.4.1968)

by extension, to show how theatre practice was both shaped by work and able to lay bare its mechanisms.

Like the Medranos in 1963, the Théâtre du Soleil was expelled from the Cirque Montmartre in 1968 and was forced to look for a new venue. The company spent the summer of 1968 in residency at the old salt factories, the Salines d'Arc-et-Senans, in le Doubs, where their stay was documented by Claude Roy.⁷¹ This was another significant stage in the company's formation by the site-specificity of their venue. Roy saw the use of the old salt factories as part of Mnouchkine's quest to create a utopian space for the company. Indeed, the experience of this utopia-in-process convinced him that his own planned book on utopias was superfluous; theoretical analysis no longer seemed necessary in the light of the Théâtre du Soleil's project:

[o]bservant l'utopie Mnouchkine dans le décor délabré, somptueux et harmonieux de l'utopie Ledoux, ma grande et magistrale étude sur l'utopie en général oubliait de s'écrire, parce qu'Ariane lui imposait de vivre. (ibid)

Through observing the Théâtre du Soleil, Roy came to the conclusion that the concept of a utopia was underpinned by the process of work:

Une coopérative de créateurs soumis à la seule discipline de la perfection d'un travail enrichissant (même si on n'a pas le sou) instaurait dans la cellule-mère de la cité 'utopique' de Ledoux une république qui *marchait*. Le plaisir de l'ouvrage 'bien faite' compensait les angoisses de la question d'argent. (ibid)

Conceived by the architect Ledoux as part of a 'cité utopique', the Salines were integral to a now decaying utopian architectural project whose use by the Théâtre du Soleil changed the very definition of the term utopia: '[i]l ne s'agit plus de comprendre l'utopie, mais de transformer par elle la vie, comme disait à peu près Karl Marx, le célèbre utopiste, ennemi de l'utopie' (ibid).

⁷¹ *Le Nouvel Observateur* (23.9.1968)

The Théâtre du Soleil and les Halles

1968-9 saw a number of newspaper reports dealing with the application of the Théâtre du Soleil, still without a fixed base, to use one of the vacant pavilions of les Halles in central Paris. The application, and its failure, were a turning point for the company. Theatre at les Halles promised the company geographical, cultural centrality and the chance to use one of the city's historical work sites which had been lying empty for some time. When the company's application was rejected, the Théâtre du Soleil reacted by repudiating the notions of cultural centrality and visibility which les Halles would have offered. The company had marshalled a group of high profile culture figures in support of their application, but the proposal, which included plans to involve the local community in cultural *animation*, was dismissed without explanation.

The Théâtre du Soleil's missed opportunity at les Halles throws into relief some of the factors which later made the Cartoucherie de Vincennes so influential for the company's aesthetics. At the same time, it historicizes the decision to move to the city's eastern margin. The Ville de Paris's symbolic rejection and silence also add a political dimension to the apparently accidental discovery of the Cartoucherie. After the experience with les Halles, the company sought a different type of space in order to position themselves oppositionally, as indeed they found on a grand scale in 1970.

Les Halles has been the subject of extensive literary and theoretical treatment, not least in Zola's *Le ventre de Paris*, where its vast markets are depicted as the organic, boisterous epicentre where food and human hustle and bustle meet decay and waste in equal measure (see Zola 2002). Walter Benjamin saw in les Halles the very site of Paris's modernity, in which consumerism and commodities were displayed and rendered spectacular (see Benjamin 1986). In the cultural topography of Paris, les Halles represented the city's human centre in contrast to its august buildings and spectacular vistas. The site of production and consumption, it was also the space of literary and cultural fascination.⁷²

⁷² Christopher Prendergast calls les Halles in the 19th century '[...] that belly which supplies the bellies of Paris, abundant yet disgusting, always close in the Zolaesque *imaginaire* to the excretory functions, to the stence of rotting substance' (Prendergast 1992: 21-2)

The plans to re-use les Halles were aimed at re-vitalizing a site which had lost its central role in the city's life, becoming 'ces pavillons Baltard à structures métalliques, immenses fleurs aquatiques nervurées que – la force de l'habitude – nous ne voyions même plus'.⁷³ Prestigious cultural bodies were interested in occupying the site, including the Comédie Française, which planned to use it for 'animation culturelle'. Copfermann outlined the Théâtre du Soleil's project for one of the pavilions:

Chassé du cirque de Montmartre – parking ou building demain? – le Théâtre du Soleil momentanément abrité par le Théâtre de la Commune d'Aubervilliers, a déposé également un 'projet d'aménagement du Pavillon Baltard no II', lequel, tout en respectant l'architecture du lieu l'équipera : chauffage, plancher de niveau, portes, gradins mobiles.⁷⁴

The company planned to renovate the pavilion's interior while leaving its exterior intact, a strategy they went on to adopt with the Cartoucherie. Copfermann's incidental worry about the disappearance of Cirque Montmartre (Medrano), 'parking ou building demain', hints at the belief that giving the Baltard pavilions to the Théâtre du Soleil might ensure their survival.

Marcel Cohen reported that a number of groups wanted to adapt the pavilions for commercial purposes.⁷⁵ While the Théâtre du Soleil members 'se proposent [...] de faire descendre le théâtre de la scène et de le porter jusque dans les écoles du quartier qui deviendraient autant de petits séminaires théâtraux', they were vying with:

[d]es commerçants [qui] regardent également avec envie vers l'ancien ventre de Paris. Certains veulent y organiser des expositions et des ventes de produits régionaux, d'autres y installer des galeries marchandes, et certains même...un marché de la voiture d'occasion (ibid).

⁷³ *Les Lettres Françaises* (30.4.1969)

⁷⁴ *ibid*

⁷⁵ *Paris-Jour* (15.4.1969)

After participating in the 1968 Avignon Festival, the company heard that the Baltard pavilion had been handed over to Jean Danet and the Tréteau de France.

This was the company's second major failure to secure a permanent venue after the Cirque Medrano expulsion. The Cirque had left its mark on the company because it offered 'ses parodies, son joyeux entassement, ses animaux tristes et des petites annonces politiques' (Couty and Rey 1980: 217). They saw though how the unpredictable aspects of the site produced innovative creative processes:

[a]u cirque Montmartre, le spectacle interrompu par les événements autant que par M. Joseph [le propriétaire] ouvrait d'autres perspectives. Le corps, puisque corps il y a, y disait de façon plutôt inquiète et troublée les aventures de la sensualité [...] c'était aussi un nouveau rapport à l'espace, qui impliquait la sensualité du spectateur, non seulement son imaginaire. (Couty and Rey 1980: 217)

We have also seen how the Théâtre du Soleil maintained its engagement with the concept of work at the Cirque Medrano through its choices to perform plays which explicitly or through re-readings dealt with the issue of labour and its link to creativity. The failure to secure les Halles, and its central location, pushed the Théâtre du Soleil to search for sites elsewhere as a way of validating the marginality of their project. At les Halles, the Théâtre du Soleil would have been a highly visible cultural body. By moving to the Cartoucherie at the edges of the city, the company would embrace their peripheral location as a critical mechanism which gave them counter-cultural power to critique the centre. It also drew attention to the city's exclusion of industry and weapons-making from the version of itself it presented to the world.

After the disappointment of les Halles, the company investigated 'toutes les salles, arrière-salles, cafés, hangars, clubs de billard, théâtres, cinémas, salles de boxe, patronages, cirques, en gardant la nostalgie du Médrano [sic] de leurs premiers succès'.⁷⁶ Then, in August 1970, Mnouchkine and the Théâtre du Soleil discovered the Cartoucherie de Vincennes.

⁷⁶ *Le Monde* (23.11.1969)

Recycling work at the Cartoucherie

As pointed out earlier, many critics have underlined the physical work which the company undertook to prepare the former factory for performance. Critics' descriptions of the company's conversion of the building occur with such regularity that they cannot fail to be significant in themselves.

Colette Godard's account stresses the active role of Ariane Mnouchkine and Soleil members:

Les quarante-quatre comédiens réunis autour d'Ariane Mnouchkine ont entrepris de l'aménager [...] plâtre blanc sur les murs, poutres et portants peints en noir, sous les verrières nettoyées un grillage pour la sécurité et un vélum blanc ignifugé pour l'acoustique; les portes neuves, équipement électrique, chauffage. (Quoted in Cramésnil 1998: 330)

Monod and Penchenat tell us that:

[I]e mois de décembre est particulièrement froid. Le lieu n'a pas de chauffage, les verrières des toits sont brisées, les murs délabrés, le sol endommagé, les gouttières fuient. Tout le monde se met au plâtre. D'immenses échafaudages sont dressés pour repeindre les murs et les structures en fer du XIX siècle. Des radiateurs de chauffage à air pulsé sont loués. Il faudra les éteindre au début des représentations à cause du bruit. (Couty and Rey 1980: 219)

Bernard Faivre pushes the Théâtre du Soleil's role furthest by suggesting that the company members had to *transform themselves* 'quelques temps en plâtriers, menuisiers ou manoeuvres pour retaper les lieux' (Faivre 1987: 205). This account comes closest to explaining the implications of the refurbishment for the company's identity.

The first two accounts emphasize the company's confrontation with the specificities of the building. The enormity of the renovation task is underlined by the heavy industrial materials being used. While evoking the idea that the Théâtre du Soleil members were happy to get their hands dirty, they shy away from making the point as clearly as Faivre, who suggests the role these renovations had for the company's cultural identity politics in the making.

Seeing themselves into workers was part of the Cartoucherie's symbolic transition from factory to theatre space, turning the Théâtre du Soleil into its inheritors. They made the Cartoucherie into a theatre, but kept its working origins alive through their actions and commitment. In the process of creating a theatre out of the Cartoucherie's industrial dereliction, the company brought about a rupture with its functional past and a reinscription of its work and labour associations in the name of performance.

The conversion of the Cartoucherie was at one and the same time a sign of the group's empathy and respect for its past and a negotiation of the company's identity. Through their renovations, and the later description and recurrence of these in critical writing, the company positioned itself in relation to the alienated and disenfranchised working other now absent from the Cartoucherie. Their work was part of the work of memory. They had entered the space of the working other who had permeated their theatre projects until then as a universal identificatory principle, and in converting the Cartoucherie, they assumed, through their actions, the symbolic weight of the industrial space.

Production, creation: producing creation at the Cartoucherie

The Théâtre du Soleil put the relation between 'production' and 'creation' under great pressure after they had moved to the Cartoucherie. The term 'production', of course, can be employed in both an industrial and a theatrical context. Its use in French to refer to an artistic object dates back at least to Molière (Littré), while the OED dates the artistic usage back to Hobbes (1651). Littré gives its earliest usage of the French term 'production' in an industrial context, '[a]bsolument et au singulier, en termes d'économie politique, ce que le sol, l'industrie produisent' as 1868. In the OED, specific industrial uses are cited from 1825 and 1863.

From the perspective of Ariane Mnouchkine, in the early 1970s, the second use of 'production' had infected the first, turning artistic endeavours into another form of industrialized production. Her strategy to prevent the concept of 'theatre

production' becoming equated with the industrial processes of production and consumption is to resignify it using the term 'création'.

In an interview, Émile Copfermann asked about 'création collective'.⁷⁷ Mnouchkine had argued that '[n]ous ne voulons pas tomber dans la *production*, régulière et normalisée, qui dévaloriserait notre travail'. Copfermann detected a trace of fetishism for work in Mnouchkine's attitude: '[n]'est-ce pas une attitude quelque peu romantique et utopique, la nostalgie d'un artisanat dépassé...?' (ibid).

Her response rests on two arguments: first, that Soleil's project involves 'la recherche d'un langage', a statement which corresponds to the emphasis on 'création' as a way of going beyond what is initially a linguistic double-bind in the word 'production'. The second draws on a metaphor of movement: '[n]ous avons une démarche en épi. Notre continuité a été l'abandon des voies que nous avons tentées' (ibid). Finding a way around the process of production, a new path, sounds like it has been borrowed from the experience of journeys out to the hidden Cartoucherie.

The relation between theatre, finance and production dominated Mnouchkine's public statements of this period. Since the cycle of production and consumption were the greatest dangers to the Théâtre du Soleil's attempts at creation, re-using the Cartoucherie was a powerful way to break the cycle.

Asked about the role of business patronage of the arts in 1970, Mnouchkine answered that private finance could have only a detrimental effect on art, while admitting that one rarely had the choice to refuse it:

Il ne s'agit pas pour nous d'élaborer une doctrine du mécénat et de la diffusion [sic] de la culture. Mais il faut bien constater que:

La société de consommation existe;
Certains professionnels de la production et de la diffusion des biens de consommation estiment, quelles qu'en soient les raisons, qu'ils ont le 'devoir' d'assumer des responsabilités 'culturelles';
Les gens 'cultivés' les plus conscients mettent en doute la valeur de cette 'culture' qu'ils possèdent, et la voient clairement devenir, elle aussi, objet de consommation (on dit alors qu'elle est 'récupérée');

⁷⁷ *Les Lettres Françaises* (20.1.1971)

Les gens qui ont atteint un certain niveau de bien-être matériel ont aussi un sentiment que la consommation de biens, seulement matériels, ne les comble plus; qu'ils ont besoin, à des niveaux quantitatifs et qualitatifs divers, du spectacle (théâtre-cinéma), de la musique, des arts plastiques [...]⁷⁸

This statement reads like an artistic manifesto. By becoming hypostatized as a form of duty, 'le spectacle' enters the cycle of production and consumption as a particularly valuable commodity, one whose assimilation is all the more pernicious since its power to contest commoditization is itself subject to this very process.

Converting (audiences at) the Cartoucherie

The Cartoucherie's initial conversion was only the first in a number of major transformations of the Théâtre du Soleil's hangar space in the years after 1970. In their celebrated production of *1789*, Pierre Marcabru shows how the Théâtre du Soleil had designed the theatre in order to make the spectator active:

Imaginez une suite de tréteaux, qui enserrent le public, public qui va, qui vient, ou peut se reposer plus loin, sur des gradins, et qui écoute, et qui regarde, et que les acteurs traversent, public badaud comme une foule, public devenu foule, attentif à ce qui se dit, et puis se passe, dans ce désordre très calculé. Deuxième miracle: Ariane Mnouchkine crée la complicité, la participation, le contact; le voyeur s'efface et se meurt, le spectateur devient actif.⁷⁹

The conversion of the Cartoucherie for new performances reached its apogee in the 1974 production of *L'Age d'or: Première Ebauche*. The enormous task of transforming the interior of the Cartoucherie became a source of fascination for critics such as Julien Brunn:

Et pourtant le travail continue. Et quel travail! Un bulldozer, des tonnes de terre, la cartoucherie transformée en un vaste chantier: c'est la construction du nouveau 'décor'. Décor entre guillemets, car ces travaux rompent avec toute tradition théâtrale. Il s'agit de mettre en place, à l'intérieur du hangard [sic], un espace mouvementé: collines, crêtes et vallées. Il y aura en tout quatre

⁷⁸ *Contact* April 1970

⁷⁹ *Elle* 24.5.1971

‘cratères’, et le public sera assis à même les pentes douces, sur un tapis brosse.⁸⁰

Brunn emphasizes how the Cartoucherie’s transformation involves an industrial scale mobilization of heavy machinery. The Cartoucherie is turned into a building site, before a part of the actual production itself will *stage* a building site, on which the play’s central character, Abdallah, meets his death. Claude Morand’s study of the company’s preparations for *L’Age d’or* similarly underlines the company’s massive industrial scale work:

[L]’espace de la Cartoucherie abrite aujourd’hui quatre théâtres simultanés, quatre aires de jeu constituées par quatre cratères. L’équipe technique, les comédiens ont participé à un fort étrange ‘retour à la terre’, en y déversant 35.000 tonnes ... De cette terre, qui recouvrit le plancher de 1793, ils ont fait quatre collines, reliées par deux chemins de ronde qui se croisent. Pour parachever ce ‘décor’ qui n’en est pas un, mais plutôt une structure architecturale, ils ont déversé du sable maintenu par un gigantesque grillage, coulé du béton, et recouvert le tout d’une manière végétale plus connue sous le nom de tapis-brosse [...] ⁸¹

Both accounts suggest that the term ‘décor’ is no longer applicable to this mass of materials. One needs rather to speak of a new *architecture*, which rebuilds the Cartoucherie on the inside but leaves the outside intact. The accounts show a fascination with the wealth of materials being used and the immense mobilization necessary for the refurbishments. As both critics imply, such renovations require a new vocabulary to deal with them. Their size and scale break with previous traditions.

Published in 1975, the text-programme of *L’Age d’or* is a document in which many of the discourses and implications of the Théâtre du Soleil’s affiliation with work arise. Its first photograph (Théâtre du Soleil 1975: 15) confirms the written accounts of the Cartoucherie’s new architecture by showing a heavy-duty lifting machine in the middle of what looks like a building site, with three figures engaged in physical work, one of whom is shovelling sand. Girders, ropes and rope-ladders

⁸⁰ *Le Quotidien de Paris* 22.5.1974

⁸¹ *ATAC Informations*. November 1974

hanging from ceiling supports add to the impression of a construction site rather than the inside of a theatre.

Even earlier, the text exhibits its close alliance to the working environment and conditions which the production went on to stage. On the title page, not only are the company members credited, but we so are 'les habitants de Lussan, des mineurs des Mages, des travailleurs de l'usine Kodak à Vincennes, un groupe de jeunes immigrés, un groupe de lycéens [qui] ont collaboré également au spectacle' (Théâtre du Soleil 1975: 7). Giving workers, immigrants and school pupils equal prominence in *L'Age d'or*'s construction is fully in line with Soleil's practice of identifying itself with these groups, especially with the first, and of refracting the processes of creative activity through ostensibly different modes of activity.

L'Age d'or went one step further by classing itself as a first draft and not a finished theatre text, a work in progress which was still open to future development and evolution. Mnouchkine's note in the *texte-programme* acknowledges that it was a difficult but valid decision to subtitle the text 'First Draft':

L'Age d'or - Première Ebauche. Première ébauche! quelle insolence!
Admettre que l'on cherche, que l'on n'a pas encore trouvé. Partager des erreurs avant de les avoir déguisées en parti pris. Confronter avant d'avoir assuré [sic] ses arrières. Laisser voir que l'on ne fait qu'entreprendre, que très peu est encore dit, qu'il reste beaucoup à raconter. Ne faire d'un spectacle que ce qu'il est: un moment dans la quête d'un théâtre au présent. (Théâtre du Soleil 1975: 20).

As well as demonstrating to the spectator or reader the different stages of the theatre's conversion in preparation for the production of *L'Age d'or*, and challenging the traditional concept of authorship, the *texte-programme* incorporates the idea of the first attempt as a key part of the production's aesthetics and ethical strategy. The first draft functions on one level as a symbolic political gesture, as the editors of *Théâtre/Public* noted in saying that '[i]t's true that the rules of our society prohibit us from confessing to an attempt' (quoted in Williams 1999: 60). The greater demand that Soleil meet its public has a legitimate impact on shaping the unfinished aesthetics

of the company's performance, pushing it towards legitimizing the incomplete as an ethical position.

The *texte-programme* of *L'Age d'or* contains an extract from Sophie Lemasson's rehearsal log of 20 February 1975 which charts the process of staging the construction site on which the play's central character dies. The project began on 3 December 1973 with Mnouchkine suggesting that the company listen to sound recordings of work environments such as a construction site, a printing press and the Stock Exchange. Lemasson notes that '[c]es bandes-sons permettaient donc, à l'origine, de transposer *la donnée réaliste de lieux de travail*' (Théâtre du Soleil 1975: 142). Exposure to this realistic data would be a way of avoiding imaginative clichés about work sites. Yet a set of sounds from workplaces, once it is subject to recording, displacement (to the Cartoucherie rehearsal space) and the attention of performers, has already been contaminated by its projected contribution to the aesthetic process. Nevertheless, it is this very recognition of the impossibility of non-contamination which propels the company, both in this specific example, and in its use of the former munitions hangar of the Cartoucherie, to negotiate 'the realistic data of workplaces' through the processes of creation.

Lemasson continues her account by showing how the data on the tapes is creatively transposed. The tapes are seen first as having a discernible rhythm, like 'une partition musicale' (ibid: 143), which then prompts the actors to choreograph '*leur espace du chantier*' (ibid). Lemasson traces the itinerary from the 'realistic data' via the analysis of the structuring mechanisms of the aesthetic, to the actualization of a created workplace. In Lemasson's words, the company produces a space 'dans lequel chacun de leurs personnages va se mouvoir, agir, rencontrer les autres, provoquer des conflits et ainsi raconter une histoire' (ibid).

The use of real workplace sounds does not aim to heighten the created construction site's *realism*, a term Mnouchkine has consistently rejected. Instead, it focuses the company's attention on the responsibility of aesthetic transposition, or more precisely, on the ethics of performance. This ethical position derives from a recognition of the workplace sounds in their singularity and socio-historical

specificity, the awareness of the impulse to gain access to that singularity, and the realization that such reproductions of the real betray it.

The act of listening to real workplace sounds before developing their created work-site involved positing the inaccessible as a structural principle of their creativity. Here, the company's use of work has reached a crisis point: they listen to sounds of a real construction site in order to stage a construction site, having already turned the Cartoucherie into a construction site to facilitate the creative transposition of a construction site.

As we have seen throughout this chapter, the company constantly aligned itself with workers on such a site through their organization, their subjection to practical necessities, their articulation of their identity and their choice of performance venues. In *L'Age d'or*, work as a concept has become overburdened, marking the end of the company's pure period of 'création collective'.

From work, via creativity, to affect

In the rehearsal log, Sophie Lemasson noted:

le 3 décembre 1974, une rencontre avec des travailleurs de l'usine Kodak qui se trouve à Vincennes. La discussion et les échanges s'engagent tout d'abord dans un langage abstrait et théorisant - l'Exploitation avec un grand E -, puis peu à peu la connaissance mutuelle se fait, plus précise, et des 'anecdotes' sont formulées de telle manière que les comédiens peuvent plus facilement imaginer une transposition théâtrale. Ce soir-là, ce sont les travailleurs de chez Kodak qui sont les auteurs de ce qui va s'improviser. (ibid: 150)

The Théâtre du Soleil's meetings with workers during the development of *L'Age d'or* released the company from its creative stalemate. In an interview with Denis Bablet, Ariane Mnouchkine confirmed the value of these encounters:

[i]t was a very bad moment. We felt we needed a rupture. I thought that the actors needed to act. I say the actors, but I was also scared. We needed our work to be confirmed [...] Since that experience of the Ardèche, we have decided to have a great deal of contact with various social categories. (Williams 1999: 57)

The company's encounter with workers provided the break Mnouchkine alludes to because it directed their attention away from their own quest for self-definition. Instead, it allowed them to begin to come to terms with theatre's association with pleasure as an alternative economy to that of work. As Adrian Kiernander reports, the Théâtre du Soleil had had the first hint of the potency of that alternative economy during performances of *La Cuisine* in front of striking workers in 1968: '[i]ronically, and perhaps significantly for the future direction of the company, the workers frequently responded somewhat negatively to Wesker's realistic, everyday naturalism and regretted that they could not see *Le Songe* instead' (Kiernander 1993: 63).

In the *texte-programme*, the actor Jean-Claude Bourbault recalls some of the group's meetings with workers. He points out that the company's improvisational work on characters had allowed him to recognize people in his everyday life: '[j]e reconnaissais mon voisin de palier, le travailleur dont les bruits me réveillent tous les matins, le patron du bar où habituellement je bois mon café, le directeur de l'agence qui gère avec peine mon argent' (Théâtre du Soleil 1975: 87). The recognition moves not just from everyday life to theatre, but also in reverse: the people he mentions, connected to his home, his social and his financial life, are no longer components of a humdrum everyday, but are actively thrown into relief. The sense of intimacy and connection with the other in life's everyday spaces make *recognition* both a more universal, and more generous concept than that of work.

Work and recognition are still closely bound up, since these people's association with work, in particular 'le travailleur', are made explicit. But their other associations with a space (*le palier*), a sound (*les bruits*) and an habitual activity (*je bois mon café*) suggest a significant development, away from work as the object of identificatory desire, towards traces, absences and memories as ways of articulating what one might call a poetics of the other.

Bourbault's recollects the venues in which the company's improvisations took place, in particular one local village hall particularly ill-suited to performance. Yet on a second visit, the room 'nous paraît moins disgracieuse; j'y trouve même un certain

charme, comme à ces bâtisses abandonnées où une odeur, un petit détail, vous font revivre les heures glorieuses qui s'y sont écoulées' (Théâtre du Soleil 1975: 95). The room's practical impediments are now a reminder of a previously successful improvisation. Its objects are no longer obstacles to be removed but actively perform the work of memory.

The creative deadlock of *L'Age d'or*, which forced the Théâtre du Soleil to go out once again and meet workers, introduced a new dimension to the company's occupation of the Cartoucherie. It helped the company learn to stop converting the Cartoucherie, and instead to be converted by it.

Coda: the work of memory and the memory of work

The Centre Louis Jourdain published a slim volume called *Mémoires des Cartouchiers* in 1995. The book deals with the experiences of a number of men and women factory workers who had been employed at the Cartoucherie Nationale in Bourg-lès-Valence over a period of four decades after the 1920s. Its editor, Gisèle Daspres, explicitly sees the book's role as helping those involved in its creation to come to terms with the past. Concerned about too many positive images of the cartridge factory in the oral testimonies, she writes:

Au fil des pages, le lecteur pensera peut-être que les textes expriment beaucoup d'images positives sur la Cartoucherie, en effet la personne âgée se confronte toujours à un travail de relecture de sa vie, construction d'une histoire avec des images positives du passé qui lui permettent de continuer à être vivante aujourd'hui. (Daspres 1995: 12)

Early on in the book, former workers Gaston Emery and Pierre Marechie outline the necessity of forgetting and their sense of guilt about having worked in a munitions factory:

Ainsi pour que ce destin impitoyable passe son inexorable chemin, nous pouvons sans état d'âme et pour seulement notre pain quotidien, oublier que notre travail, nos gestes jugés anodins sont peut-être facteurs de destructions, d'horreurs, sources de tous les chagrins. (ibid: 23)

The book has three central themes: the effects of the work on those employed in the factory; the influence of the factory on the surrounding community and the workers' reactions to revisiting the factory. The accounts often underline the physical dangers of their repetitive and frequently dangerous daily tasks. Apart from describing the nature of their labour, many former workers express the sense of bonding, often along gender lines, created by the factory's enforced intimacy. Others speak with respect and gratitude of those who trained them, or tell stories of the pranks and sense of camaraderie they got from subverting authority figures, or again of the strict hours of their timetable. Further accounts mention how the factory complex was structured like a small town and the artificial community this created. Several descriptions concur that the factory's working hours shaped the lives of people in the surrounding community, imposing a rhythm and sense of community on it.

The book's participants frequently recall the threat of closure which hung over the cartoucherie for several years. Of course, the aim of the entire book is to catalogue the memories of those who worked in a now defunct space and outmoded profession, but the factory's closure is given a dramatic coda in the former employees' accounts of returning to their old work place. They are shocked by the sense of dereliction, the contrast between the decay and the past industry and productivity. Many are outraged at the lack of respect shown to their former work environment.

The demise of the cartoucherie, which once employed over 3000 factory workers, was inevitable given the advances in weapons technology. André Bontoux gives a vivid account:

[e]n octobre 1930, lors du début de mon apprentissage, M. Quintou, excellent ouvrier, taillait des cames: il disposait pour ce travail, d'une perceuse, de burins et de limes et il lui fallait près de trois mois pour faire une pièce. Quelques années plus tard, le même travail se faisait sur fraiseuse, en reproduction manuelle (douze heures environ). (ibid: 74)

He himself managed to streamline the process, reducing the production time to one and a half hours. In its final stage,

[e]n 1975, étant devenu contrôleur de l'armement dans les usines privées, j'ai vu faire les mêmes comes, en moins d'une minute, sur la première machine à commande numérique installée dans la Drôme. *C'est, je crois, une des raisons du chômage actuel* (my italics). (ibid: 74-5)

Bontoux does not object to the reduction in work but to the consequent superfluity of the workers. The shrinking production time leads one to reflect on the wasted lives of workers, consumed with a task later so easily automated.

Yves Bertrand is the author of another of the book's most striking accounts. On his second visit to the derelict cartridge factory, he encounters a scene similar to that of the newly recovered Cartoucherie de Vincennes as described by Mnouchkine. The sight of the factory, and its contrast with his memory of a work space full of activity, are heartbreaking:

Dans la pièce qui jadis abritait la plus haute fonction de cet établissement ayant occupé jusqu'à quatre mille travailleurs, tout est désolation: vitres brisées laissant les intempéries s'engouffrer et accomplir leurs oeuvres destructrices, murs souillés, cheminées arrachées, planchers cachant leurs belles lames de chênes sous un immondice de crasse, c'est à vous fendre le coeur. (ibid: 79)

Conclusion

The Théâtre du Soleil's use of the Cartoucherie de Vincennes gave the company a distinctive group identity and ethical stance which it had been preparing since its foundation in 1964. Its choice of performance texts, use of venues and reinscription of its own material hardships as a source of identification and solidarity with workers all anticipated the move to the former munitions factory in the Bois de Vincennes. The arrival at the Cartoucherie marked the beginning of the company's 'création collective', and as well as constructing their own performance texts, the company members renovated and reconstructed the theatre venue for new productions. This construction also operated at a symbolic level, as the company tried to change the perception of theatre to allow it to be thought of as a valid 'métier', a form of work

which happened to produce not objects, but creativity itself, both in the company members, and in audiences who came to the venue.

The Théâtre du Soleil's identification with work was given symbolic form in the derelict factory site of the Cartoucherie, and was acted out in the company's conversions of the space, first into a theatre and then into a new form of theatre architecture which aimed to make the audience at performances active and mobile. I suggested that identification with work and workers reached a crisis point in 1974, and that we can discern a shift around this time in the company's ethics, from identification with the working other to recognition of the difference of the other from a more affective, emotional and untheoretical angle. Critics had a fundamental input in the use of the site of the Cartoucherie as a tool for representing the Théâtre du Soleil's experimental theatre aesthetics and ethics. The Cartoucherie was used as another way of speaking about theatre, as a utopian project and a way of life.

I added the coda from the *Mémoires des Cartouchiers* in a performative gesture, to turn the final part of the chapter over to the voices and memories of those who worked in a cartridge factory. Similar voices and stories still resound at the Cartoucherie de Vincennes, if we care to listen to them. They do not conform to our negative expectations, as the book's editor explicitly notes, but instead paint a complex picture of oppression mixed with camaraderie, of physical danger combined with a sense of feeling useful and productive. Most devastating for the workers is the sight of their former work place in a derelict and run down state. Like the workers, the building itself was deemed superfluous, as if in symbolic rejection of what it stood for, i.e., an industrial past, a weapons factory and wasted lives, both inside the building and as a result of its products. In occupying the Cartoucherie de Vincennes, the Théâtre du Soleil reclaimed a site which was a guilty secret, whose memory was being allowed to decay like the hangars themselves. By reclaiming the site, the company also reclaimed and revalued the lives of those who had worked there, using their space of production for productions of a different kind.

The present chapter has addressed a question which has been hanging over much of this thesis, concerning what theatre gains or loses from occupying decaying,

industrial or hostile spaces. I have argued that the Cartoucherie undermined theatre in a number of ways, forcing it to question its ethics, subject matter and aesthetics. One way it did this was to provide critics with a new critical lexicon drawn from the site: terms such as 'production', 'tools', 'function', 'building', 'construction' and 'work-site' all reshaped theatre's ethics by rewriting its critical metaphors through and across the specificities of the site.

Second, theatre was forced to fight for its survival at the Cartoucherie. The space had to be adapted for theatre, but theatre also had to be adapted to conform to the demands of the site, both physical and imaginary. Theatre's fight for survival was embodied in the Cartoucherie building which required hard and constant work in order to be converted. The company transformed the Cartoucherie for its earliest productions as a combative and aggressive move to build a new theatre in an antithetical environment. Symbolically, the company was attacking the Cartoucherie in order to master its challenge to theatre. Only later did it come to accept that the relationship with the site could be less conflictual and more dialogic: instead of only trying to convert the Cartoucherie, they left some space for the site to convert them.

Third, the Cartoucherie as an industrial space wiped away theatre's associations with privilege, wealth, and vacuous pleasure. While the Théâtre du Soleil firmly embraced a theatre of pleasure and spectacle, their work ethics and their theatre/work site put theatrical pleasure in dialogue with the wider social processes of production, consumption and workers' alienation. Part of the message the company wanted to convey in taking over the Cartoucherie was to show that workers' oppression need not entail the oppression of the imagination, and indeed, as we saw with their re-reading of Shakespeare's play, may make the impact of theatrical pleasure all the more powerful and revolutionary.

Theatre in post-industrial places produces complex effects in spectators. It risks producing recuperated emotions which aestheticize work and industry, making spectators little more than cultural tourists with an easily assuaged conscience. In not theorizing their use of the Cartoucherie, and not making explicit the role the venue

had in their ethics and aesthetics, Mnouchkine and the Théâtre du Soleil perhaps saw the only way of avoiding precisely these pitfalls.

Conclusion

Writing in 1950, the French director and founder of the Avignon Festival Jean Vilar spoke about theatre's relation to the secret. He began by observing that theatre represented a passion for knowing, and said that '[l]e mot de Wilde en ce métier est une loi: "l'esprit critique seul est créateur"' (Vilar 1955: 132). For Vilar, theatre was the art of the negative, in which lies, illusion, and errors of judgment exposed a profounder version of the truth; a theatre which had at its very heart a contradiction of 'mensonge et vérité [...] secrets et découvertes (ibid: 136).

Centre stage in this theatre was the spectator, engaged in the critical and creative process of reconstructing theatre's implications; a theatre which 'il faut construire' (ibid: 132), which offered temporary 'puissance et plaisir' (ibid: 135). Theatre, Vilar claimed, was based on the desire to understand, and the spectator's passion for knowing should not be underestimated:

[...] il ne faut jamais désespérer du génie naturel des spectateurs. Et c'est pourquoi on ne désespère jamais de la qualité de leur jugement, si l'on ne doute pas des *romans secrets, souvent extraordinaires*, de tout homme et de toute femme. (ibid: 138; my italics)

The '*romans secrets, souvent extraordinaires*' of spectators have been a crucial factor in my presentation of site-specific theatre and performance. Site-specific performances also situate the extraordinary fictions which they produce in the sites they use, hidden, secret and latent fictions which the spectator finds there. Site-specific theatre and performance, as I suggested in chapter 3 on Deborah Warner, revolve around the passionate keeping of a secret and the equally passionate desire for its exposure, and at the meeting of these opposing desires, one finds the spectator driven by a critical consciousness and creative impulse.

Site-specific theatre and performance are based on paradoxes. Their search to renew theatre risks its negation by using sites which threaten to dominate performances to the detriment of their identifiably textual, literary or theatrical elements. Their regeneration of the medium engages with decay and waste, not only in tangible forms, but as a free-wheeling metaphor, indeed as a new way of thinking about metaphor. Instead of privileging the visible and the art of spectacle, they

foreground the invisible and the ghostly, layering the pleasure of theatre and performance with the emotions of guilt, secrecy and intrusion. Their melancholy aesthetics are shot through with glimpses of death, the ghosts of memory and haunting traces of the past.

Yet at the same time, they betray 'an attitude suspicious of any final account of things' (Pearson and Shanks 2001: 132), which I ascribe to their inbuilt criticality. Like Oscar Wilde, they present the critical spirit as the model of creativity, turning spectators into critico-creative agents, advancing tentatively through a labyrinth of secrecy and exposure. Hence my focus in this thesis on the critical voices which reconstruct their experiences of site-specific performances, anxious, like Guy Scarpetta in my introductory comments, to record their inability to record, to turn the misapprehensions of the scene of theatre into the scene of writing.

Site-specific theatre and performance produce a critical utopianism, in which the act of criticism and the figure of the critic are represented *in the process of constituting* criticism. This criticism-under-construction is both a creative act and a staging of the possible invalidation of criticism at the moment it is uttered. Louis Marin developed the concept of the 'utopique' to show how fiction plays with the figure of utopia both in texts and as text (see Marin 1973: 24). In outlining the 'criticality' of site-specific theatre and performance, I have argued that they play, in an analogous way, with the concept of criticism as a figure, with figurations of criticism and the critic (from decay and waste, to the archaeologist and forensic detective) both in texts and as textual effects. Criticality, I suggest, is the utopic space of site-specific theatre and performance.

How the criticality of site-specific theatre and performance is formulated was the subject of Part 1. I showed how the conceptual space of site-specific theatre was based on the notion of 'finding' objects and spaces for performance. As a result, theatre as a textual entity, produced through the intentionality of an author, gave way in site-specific performances to theatre as something recovered or retrieved. In Kantor's critical voice, we heard the language of emotion and affect which dominate site-specific criticism. His critical texts performatively staged their difference from

previous critical writing, fissured and stressed by the impassioned critical ego, reading like performance texts or creating a hole in language, a space of negation for a new modality of theatre to inhabit. Site-specific performances proposed their generic hybridity in order to build the criticism of forms into their aesthetics. By producing fragmented, disoriented spectators instead of audience-as-microcosm-of community, they privileged negative emotions like paranoia, boredom and lack of certainty, allowing criticism and self-criticism to pervade their aesthetics.

A further element of the criticality of site-specific theatre and performance was their complex relation with writing. In chapter 2, I examined how writing pervades site-specific performances but in phantom or waste form, reconceived from the perspective of the spectator and his/her epistemological processes, or in relation to the text from which words are in flight and around which they circulate. The return of writing in site-specific performance took authority away from the text and put it firmly in the hands of the hybrid critic-spectator whose desire to write and expose the self, through creativity, informed critical processes. Such desires recurred in relation to the Bouffes du Nord in chapter 5, where critical searches for self-legitimation and legitimate forms of theatre were read in the competing critical narratives of the theatre's site.

In Part 2, I analyzed the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie de Vincennes because they embody self-reflexivity about theatre's validity and legitimacy, from the inside and outside respectively. The Bouffes du Nord asked whether theatre had to foreground its own decay, *as a cultural form*, in order to be exposed to less constricting modes of representation, or to escape from representation altogether, while the Cartoucherie raised questions about theatre's difference from work and labour and its complex incorporation of these concepts in order to establish an ethics of theatre embodied in the Cartoucherie site.

This thesis began with the belief that critical writing could help understand the aesthetics of site-specific performances and ended with the conviction that site-specific performances are primarily identified *with* and *through* the modes of critical writing they generate. Critical writing, I have maintained, *produces* site-specificity.

In analyzing the impact of site-specific theatre and performance within the wider field of theatre/performance studies, I accentuated the critical genealogy of site-specific performances to show how these modes problematized the borders of theatre. At their heart, site-specific performances exploit generic hybridity to create tension between language (characteristic of live theatre performance) and silence (the site-specific work of art), text and performance, mobility and stasis (audiences becoming mobile, performers staying still, as in the *Tower Project*). They eradicate formal and generic markers of theatre, such as group audience formations, to allow theatre qua genre and memoried/embodied practice to resurface as if it were a scene of the unconscious. Yet even in establishing this genealogy, I focused on the revised critical writing which sought to deal with these new developments in art and performance. Critical writing had to be disfigured, not necessarily to replicate textually the effect of a certain art work or performance, but to signal their difference and power to disturb. I showed how Kantor turned to poetic effects to give his performance theory urgency, passion and the openness to negation needed to capture the effects of these arts of the negative: of the abandoned room, the decayed object, the textless performance.

This led to a wider investigation of the fluidity and self-questioning which governed these critical texts, and how they drew their critical tropes and writerly effects from the sites and performances they covered. Critical texts *borrowed* and *reused* the performances they dealt with. They staged their own critical processes not *at the same time as* analyzing performances, but as the very embodiment of the performance analysis itself.

Site-specific performance turned the critic into a self-critic. I demonstrated the nature of this self-criticism in Deborah Warner's *Tower Project*, which I saw as a critique of the acculturated self, censored by the disciplinary experience of encounters with art and other aesthetic forms. This is why I worked the dynamics of disappointment and paranoia into my reading, since these are crucial stages in the remodelling of the critical spirit according to the specific modalities of sites.

Through the analysis of critical subjectivity and its crucial role in *producing*, not merely *recording*, site-specific performances, I was able to make the claim for the

wider legitimacy search which has marked theatre projects bound up with specific sites. I turned in Part 2 to the issues of site-specificity and legitimation in relation to the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie. There, I outlined the general discourses around sites which produced a 'site-specific moment' crucial in the reception of these two experimental theatre projects, and examined how discourses generated by the sites continued to represent a critico-creative engagement with theatre's aesthetics and ethics long after the Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie had become established performance venues.

In the Bouffes du Nord, we saw an ongoing project to excavate theatre's aesthetics in a critical quest for the inscription of the other on the body of the theatre site. The site's decay was a polymorphous signifier of theatre's past misrepresentations and future utopian desires, taking account of what and who it excluded from its representations. At the Bouffes du Nord, I argued, the ethical space of theatre became a painful negotiation of theatre's desire to frame the other. The site of the Bouffes du Nord made theatre's own negation a structural part of its aesthetics and ethics.

Through reviewing the critical discourses around the Cartoucherie de Vincennes, I examined how Ariane Mnouchkine's theatre company proposed the site of the factory as the discursive ethical space of its performances. The use of the Cartoucherie site became the key source of the company's ethics of identification with work and the working other in the early 1970s. While suggesting that the site-specificity of the Cartoucherie was produced both before and after the company moved there, through a network of identificatory discourses, aesthetic choices and political action, critical reactions to early productions at the venue were also assessed to show how the analysis of the site's functionality and renovations became the indirect way of establishing the company's anti-representational, identificatory performance ethics. While the Bouffes du Nord embodied theatre's risky and painful excavation of the other, the Cartoucherie functioned as the non-theatrical excess which supplemented the pleasure and catharsis of theatre's spectacular fictions. In short, the site of the Bouffes du Nord represented the passion to know, probe and

expose the other and the dangers such a passion entailed for the other-as-subject, while the Cartoucherie de Vincennes posited the other as that which remains secret in order all the more forcefully to reassert its presence.

This thesis has sought to analyze the uses of site-specificity, and in the process has created a more volatile and fluid term than at the start. It locates site-specificity as a constantly negotiated field in which the subjective desires of the intertextual self contribute to a critical movement which questions the legitimacy of theatre as a cultural form. Site-specific theatre and performance position this critical quest as part of a wider reflection on social practices formed by our imaginary associations with sites which correlate dereliction and decay with exclusion and negativity. Site-specific performances stage and explore these exclusions by enhancing and revaluing the negative for its critical force and creative potential. They reveal the tension between secrecy and exposure to be not a static binary opposition but a constantly shifting and fluid source of critical and creative agency.

Further research into site-specific theatre and performance could take a number of directions. One way forwards would be to examine in closer detail the effect of moving performances associated with specific sites to other venues. I have been conscious throughout of how the site-specificity of a venue codes a performance and provides it with critical reference points, and undertook this type of analysis in relation to Peter Brook's performances at the Jacques Calley quarry in Avignon and the Majesty Theatre in Brooklyn, New York (see chapter 5). It would be revealing to examine archive material on Brook's performances in Glasgow and elsewhere, or Mnouchkine's staging of productions premiered at the Cartoucherie in places like Bradford, in order to gauge how critical reactions dealt with the legacy of the Bouffes du Nord's and the Cartoucherie's site-specificity. One would have to ask whether the sites for such productions functioned as quotations of their original venues, or whether they were able to engage with the site-specificity of their temporary locations. This approach would have the added benefit of exploring issues of symbolic capital and interculturalism, which I touched on in relation to Brook's

touring productions and the Théâtre du Soleil's adaptation of Wesker's *La Cuisine* respectively.

Another rich research vein would entail examining the links between site-specific performances and questions of gender. There would be critical scope in viewing the relation between sites and site-specific performances through the lens of feminist thinking about the body and mobility (Irigaray 1977; Braidotti 1994). My arguments concerning the potential of decay to destabilize epistemologies of criticism could be resituated in the context of debates around 'écriture féminine' and a Cixousian politics of writing. Gender issues permeate the group identity politics of the Théâtre du Soleil, and my analysis of the former function of the Cartoucherie as munitions factory and military installation (often male-associated spaces), as well as the emphasis I place on work, could lead to exploration of how the company challenges fixed accounts of gender identity through their performative reiterations of the site's legacy. One might also ask to what extent Mnouchkine's embracing of an ethics of work and her resistance to theory are linked with her gender.

From the outset, I indicated that my analysis would employ texts which did not necessarily record site-specific performances but which brought insights to them. Many such texts have accompanied my research into site-specific theatre and performance, from writers such as Georges Perec (1974) or W.G. Sebald (1999; 2001). At times it has seemed that the creative/critical texts of site-specific performance criticism were indistinguishable from the uncanny site-writing of such authors, whose work deals with insubstantiality and spectrality, the traumas of aestheticization and the evanescence of the body. One insight that site-specific performances have given me is the possibility of *reading otherwise*, in the gaps and holes of texts, listening out for their poetics of the negative and their aesthetics of dereliction. Such readings, I have argued, are an integral part of our construction of site-specific performances, and the relay between performance and reading has been a productive one from my perspective. The experience of site-specific performances and their creative criticality could instructively be used to re-read authors like Perec

and Sebald as site-specific, haunted by their interactions with sites, equally disturbed by the effect their writing has on sites.

In summary, site-specificity produces self-critical spectators, questions the legitimacy of theatre and performance as cultural practices and serves as a tool for aesthetic and ethical analysis. It produces distinctive modes of writing and renders the border between a performance and its critical afterlife permeable. I have outlined what I see as the key points about site-specific performances, as well as raising wider questions about how criticism interacts with its subject and how theatre benefits from continual analysis of its own (mis-) representations. The thesis has endeavoured to realign criticism as a creative act, and to that extent, advocates a mode of performative writing which acknowledges and incorporates the investment of the self and the risks of exposure in criticism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allsopp, Ric and David Williams (eds) (2000), 'Openings'. *Performance Research* 5.1

Appadurai, Arjun (1986), *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Ardenne, Paul (2002), *Un art contextuel. Création artistique en milieu urbain en situation d'intervention de participation*. Paris: Flammarion

Armstrong, Tim (1998), *Modernism, Technology and the Body*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Aronson, Arnold (1981), *The History and Theory of Environmental Scenography*. Ann Arbor: U.M.I. Research Press

_____ (2000), *American Avant-Garde Theatre. A History*. London: Routledge

Artaud, Antonin (1938), *Le théâtre et son double*. Paris: Gallimard

Augé, Marc (1985), *La traversée du Luxembourg. Paris, 20 juillet 1984. Éthno-roman d'une journée française considérée sous l'angle des moeurs, de la théorie et du bonheur*. Paris: Hachette

_____ (1992), *Non-lieux. Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

Auslander, Philip (1997), *From Acting to Performance*. London: Routledge

_____ (1999), *Liveness. Performances in a Mediatized Culture*. London: Routledge.

Bablet, Denis (ed.) (1983), 'Kantor: le Théâtre Cricot 2. La Classe morte, Wielopole/Wielopole'. *Voies de la création théâtrale* 11. Paris: Éditions du CNRS

_____ (dir.) (1991), *Le théâtre de Tadeusz Kantor*, CNRS Audiovisuel (France)

Bablet, Marie-Louise and Denis Bablet (1979), *Le Théâtre du Soleil ou la quête du bonheur*. Paris: CNRS Serddav

Bachelard, Gaston (1957), *La Poétique de l'espace*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France

- Banu, Georges (1977), 'Timon d'Athènes et sa mise en scène par Peter Brook. L'écriture spatiale de la mise en scène'. *Voies de la création théâtrale* 5. Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 59-120
- _____ (ed.) (1985), 'Brook. Études, textes, propos'. *Voies de la création théâtrale* 13. Paris: Éditions du CNRS
- _____ (1987), 'De l'esthétique de la disparition à la poétique de la mémoire', *Voies de la création théâtrale* 15, ed. Elie Konigson. Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 230-52
- _____ (1991), *Peter Brook. De 'Timon d'Athènes' à 'La Tempête' ou Le metteur en scène et le cercle*. Paris: Flammarion
- _____ (2002), *L'Oubli. Essai en miettes*. Besançon: les Solitaires intempestifs
- Barr, Richard L. (1998) *Rooms with a View. The Stages of Community in the Modern Theater*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press
- Barrault, Jean-Louis (1974), *Memories for Tomorrow (The Memoirs of Jean-Louis Barrault)*. Tr. Jonathan Griffin. London: Thames and Hudson
- Barré, François (2002) 'Contours et Alentours' in Charbonneaux 2002, 5-17
- Barthes, Roland (1953), *Le degré zéro de l'écriture*. Paris: Seuil
- _____ (1973) *Le Plaisir du texte*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil
- _____ (1976) *Poétique du récit*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil
- _____ (1980) *La Chambre claire: note sur la photographie*. Paris: Seuil
- _____ (1982) *Littérature et réalité*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil
- _____ (1986) *Sur la littérature*. Grenoble: Presses universitaires de Grenoble
- Baudrillard, Jean (1968), *Le système des objets*. Paris: Gallimard
- _____ (1979), *De la séduction*. Paris: Éditions Galilée
- Bauman, Richard (1977), *Verbal Art as Performance*. Rowley: Newbury House
- Benjamin, Walter (1986), *Reflections. Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*. New York: Schocken
- _____ (1999), *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press

- Berger, John (1972), *Ways of Seeing*. Harmondsworth: Penguin
- _____ (1984), *And Our Faces My Heart Brief as Photos*. London: Writers and Readers
- Bergère, Sylvain and Emmanuelle Sapin (dirs) (2000), *Histoires de Théâtres. Le Théâtre du Soleil*. La Cinquième, MK2 TV
- Best, Victoria and Peter Collier (eds) (1999), *Powerful Bodies. Performance in French Cultural Studies*. Bern and New York: Peter Lang
- Betsky, Aaron (1997), *Queer Space. Architecture and Same Sex Desire*. New York: William Morris and Co.
- Bharucha, Rustom (1993), *Theatre and the World. Performance and the Politics of Culture*. London: Routledge
- _____ (2000), *Enigmas of Time. Reflections on Culture, History and Politics*. Bangalore: Visthar.
- Birringer, Johannes (1991), *Theatre, Theory, Postmodernism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press
- Blanchot, Maurice (1955), *L'Espace littéraire*. Paris: Gallimard
- Blau, Herbert (1982), *Take Up the Bodies. Theater at the Vanishing Point*. Urbana and London: University of Illinois Press
- _____ (1992), *To All Appearances. Ideology and Performance*. London: Routledge
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1982), *Ce que parler veut dire. L'économie des échanges linguistiques*. Paris: Fayard
- _____ (2001) *Langage et pouvoir symbolique*. Paris: Seuil
- Bowie, Malcolm (1987) *Freud, Proust and Lacan. Theory as Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Bradby, David (1991), *Modern French Drama 1940-1990*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- _____ and Annie Sparks (1997), *Mise en scène. French Theatre Now*. London: Methuen

_____ and Maria M. Delgado (eds) (2002), *The Paris Jigsaw. Internationalism and the City's Stages*. Manchester: Manchester University Press

Braidotti, Rosi (1994), *Nomadic Subjects. Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary French Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press

Broadhurst, Susan (1999), *Liminal Acts. A Critical Overview of Contemporary Performance and Theory*. London: Cassell

Brook, Peter (1976) [1968], *The Empty Space*. Harmondsworth: Penguin

_____ (1993), *There Are No Secrets. Thoughts on Acting and Theatre*. London: Methuen

_____ (1998), *Threads of Time. A Memoir*. London: Methuen

Brown, Michael P (2000), *Closet Space. Geographies of Metaphor from the Body to the Globe*. London: Routledge

Buren, Daniel (1998), *À force de descendre dans la rue, l'art peut-il enfin y monter?* Paris: Sens & Tonka

Burke, Sean (1992), *The Death and Return of the Author. Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

Butler, Judith (1993) *Bodies That Matter. On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. New York and London: Routledge

_____ 'Ethical Ambivalence' in Garber 2000, 15-28

Calle-Gruber, Mireille and Hélène Cixous (eds) (2001), *Au théâtre Au Cinéma Au Féminin*. Paris: L'Harmattan

Carlson, Marvin (1989), *Places of Performance. The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press

Carrière, Jean-Claude (1985), *Le Mahabharata*. Paris: Centre international de créations théâtrales

Carsten, Janet and Stephen Hugh-Jones (eds) (1995), *About the House. Lévi-Strauss and Beyond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Carter, Erica, James Donald and Judith Squires (eds) (1993). *Space and Place. Theories of Identity and Location*. London: Lawrence and Wishart

- Cauquelin, Anne (1999), *L'art du lieu commun. Du bon usage de la doxa*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil
- Certeau, Michel de (1990) [1980], *L'invention du quotidien. Arts de faire*. Paris: Gallimard
- Chambers, Colin (1980), *Other Spaces. New Theatre and the RSC*. London: Eyre Methuen
- Chambers, Ross (1999), *Loiterature*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press
- Champagne, Lenora (1984), *French Theatre Experiment Since 1968*. Epping: Bowker
- Charbonneaux, Anne-Marie and Norbert Hillaire (eds) (2002), *Oeuvre et lieu. Essais et documents*. Paris: Flammarion
- Chaudhuri, Una (1995), *Staging Place. The Geography of Modern Drama*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press
- Chauveau, Philippe (1999), *Les théâtres parisiens disparus, 1402-1986*. Paris: Éditions de l'Amandier
- Cixous, Hélène (1985), *L'histoire terrible mais inachevée de Norodom Sihanouk, roi du Cambodge*. Paris: Théâtre du Soleil
- _____ (1987), *L'Indiade ou L'Inde de leurs rêves et quelques écrits sur le théâtre*. Paris: Théâtre du Soleil
- _____ (1999), 'Between Poetics and Ethics: An Epic Approach to Reality' in Williams 1999, 147-158
- _____ (2000a), *Tambours sur la digue: sous forme de pièce ancienne pour marionnettes jouée par des acteurs*. Paris: Théâtre du Soleil
- _____ (2000b), *Croisées d'une oeuvre*. Paris: Galilée
- Cousin, Geraldine (1996), 'Exploring Theatre at Play. The Making of the Theatrical Event', *New Theatre Quarterly* 12 (47), 229-236
- Couty, Daniel and Alain Rey (eds) (1980), *Le théâtre*. Paris: Bordas
- Cramesnil, Joël (1998), 'Une aventure théâtrale en marge de l'institution. La Cartoucherie de Vincennes', *Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre* 50, 327-348

_____ (2003), 'Les pieds dans la boue et la tête au soleil: cinq troupes s'engouffrent dans les hangars de la Cartoucherie'. Conference paper, 24 May 2003, as part of international colloquium 'Pour une histoire critique du spectacle militant' (21-24 May 2003).

Crimp, Douglas (1993), *On the Museum's Ruins*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT

Croyden, M (1969), 'Peter Brook's *Tempest*', *The Drama Review* 13.3, 125-8

Culler, Jonathan (ed.) (1988), *On Puns. The Foundations of Letters*. Oxford: Blackwell

Daspres, Gisèle (ed) (1995), *Mémoires des cartouchiers (Bourg-lès-Valence, Drôme)*. Bourg-lès-Valence: Centre Louis Jourdan

Davis, Colin (2000), *Ethical Issues in Twentieth Century French Fiction. Killing the Other*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press

Dejean, Jean-Luc (1971), *Le théâtre français aujourd'hui*. Paris: Alliance française

Delgado, Maria M., and Paul Heritage (eds) (1996), *In Contact with the Gods? Directors Talk Theatre*. Manchester: Manchester University Press

Derrida, Jacques (1972), *Marges de la philosophie*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit

_____ (1993) *Khôra*. Paris: Galilée

_____ (1995) *Mal d'archive. Une impression freudienne*. Paris: Galilée

_____ (1998) *Demeure*. Paris: Galilée

Diamond, Elin (1997), *Unmaking Mimesis. Essays on Feminism and Theater*. London and New York: Routledge

Duve, Thierry de (2002) [1987], 'Ex-Situ' in Charbonneaux 2002, 80-90

Duvignaud, Jean (1965), *Sociologie du théâtre. Essai sur les ombres collectives*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France

_____ (1974), *Le Théâtre contemporain. Culture et contre-culture*. Paris: Larousse

_____ (1977), *Lieux et non lieux*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard

Eliot, T.S. (1963), *Collected Poems 1909-1962*. London: Faber and Faber

- Ellmann, Maud (1987), *The Poetics of Impersonality. T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound*. Brighton: Harvester
- Ernaux, Annie (1993), *Journal du dehors*. Paris: Gallimard
- Esslin, Martin (1987), *The Field of Drama*. London: Methuen
- Faivre, B (1987), 'Décentremments (Suresnes 1951; Aubervilliers 1965; La Cartoucherie 1970)', *Voies de la Création Théâtrale* 15. Ed Elie Konigson. Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 166-20
- Felman, Shoshana (1977), 'Turning the Screw of Interpretation', *Yale French Studies* 55-6, 94-207
- _____ (1992), *Testimony. Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. London and Routledge: New York
- Féral, Josette (1982), 'Performance and Theatricality: The Subject Demystified', *Modern Drama* 25.1, 170-181
- _____, Jeannette Laillou Savona and Edward A. Walker (eds) (1985), *Théâtralité, écriture et mise en scène*. Ville de la Salle: Hurtubise
- _____ (1988), 'La théâtralité. Recherche sur la spécificité du langage théâtral', *Poétique* 75, 347-361
- _____ (1995), *Dresser un moment à l'éphémère. Rencontres avec Ariane Mnouchkine*. Paris: Éditions théâtrales
- _____ (1998), *Trajectoires autour du Soleil. Autour d'Ariane Mnouchkine*. Paris: Éditions théâtrales
- _____ (2000), 'The Artwork Judges Them. The Theatre Critic in a Changing Landscape', *New Theatre Quarterly* 16 (4), 64, 307-14
- French, Patrick and Roland-François Lack (eds) (1998), *The Tel Quel Reader*. London: Routledge
- Fischer-Lichte, Erika, Josephine Riley and Michael Gissenwehrer (eds) (1990), *The Dramatic Touch of Difference. Theatre, Own and Foreign*. Tübingen: Narr
- _____ (1997), *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre. A European Perspective*. Iowa: Iowa University Press

- Forbes, Jill and Michael Kelly (eds) (1995), *French Cultural Studies. An Introduction*. Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Fortier, Mark (1997), *Theatre/Theory. An Introduction*. London: Routledge
- Foster, Hal (1996), *The Return of the Real. The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: M.I.T. Press
- Foucault, Michel (1986) 'Of Other Spaces' *Diacritics* 16.1, 22-7
- Fraser, Nancy (2000), 'Recognition without Ethics?' in Garber 2000, 95-126
- Frisch, Max (1977), *Sketchbook 1946-1949*. Tr. Geoffrey Skelton. New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
- _____ (1979), *Tagebuch 1966-1971*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp
- Fuchs, Elinor (1996), *The Death of Character. Perspectives on Theater after Modernism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press
- Gaillard, Françoise (2002), 'Lieux et non lieu de l'oeuvre' in Charbonneaux 2002, 90-97
- Garber, Marjorie, Paul B. Franklin and Rebecca L. Walkowitz (eds) (1996), *Field Work. Sites in Literary and Cultural Studies*. New York and London: Routledge
- _____, Beatrice Hanssen and Rebecca L. Walkowitz (eds) (2000), *The Turn to Ethics*. London and New York: Routledge
- Gatti, Armand (1962), *L'Enclos*. Paris: Fayard
- _____ (1968), *Les 13 soleils de la rue Saint-Blaise*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil
- Gauthier, Michel (1987), *Les contraintes de l'endroit*. Paris: Les Impressions nouvelles
- Genette, Gérard (1982), *Palimpsestes. La littérature au deuxième degré*. Paris: Seuil
- Godard, Colette (1980), with Natacha Decan. *Le théâtre depuis 1968*. Paris: J.C. Lattès
- Goffman, E (1975) [1974], *Frame Analysis. An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Harmondsworth: Penguin
- _____ (1990) [1959], *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London: Penguin

- Gontard, Denis (1973), *La décentralisation théâtrale en France, 1895-1952*. Paris: Société d'édition d'enseignement supérieur
- Goodman, Lizbeth (ed.) (1988) with Jane de Gay, *The Routledge Reader in Gender and Performance*. New York and London: Routledge
- Gough, Richard (ed.) (1998a), On America. *Performance Research* 3.1
- Gough, Richard (ed.) (1998b), On Place. *Performance Research* 3.2
- Gould, Peter and Rodney White (1986), *Mental Maps*. Boston and London: Allen and Unwin
- Graver, David (1995), *The Aesthetics of Disturbance. Anti-Art in Avant-Garde Drama*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press
- Green, André (1997), 'The Psycho-analytic Reading of Tragedy' in Murray 1997, 136-162. Tr. Alan Sheridan.
- Gross, John (2001), *A Double Thread. A Childhood in Mile End - and beyond*. London: Chatto and Windus
- Grosz, Elizabeth (1995), *Space, Time and Perversion. Essays on the Politics of Bodies*. New York and London: Routledge
- Grotowski, Jerzy (1976) [1969], *Towards a Poor Theatre*. London: Eyre Methuen
- Guest, Harry (2000), *The Artist on the Artist*. Exeter: Elm Bank
- Guilbaut, Serge (1983), *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art. Abstract Expressionism, Freedom and the Cold War*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press
- Harbison, Robert (1977), *Eccentric Spaces*. London: Deutsch
- Harbouri, Petrie (1998), *Graffiti*. London: Bloomsbury
- Harvey, David (1990), *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Helbo, André (1991), with Marvin Carlson [et al.]. *Approaching Theatre*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press
- Highmore, Ben (2001), *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory. An Introduction*. New York: Routledge

- _____ (ed.) (2002), *The Everyday Life Reader*. London: Routledge
- Holt, Nancy (ed.) (1979), *The Writings of Robert Smithson*. New York: New York University Press
- Huber, Joerg (1986), *Paris Graffiti*. London: Thames and Hudson
- Hughes, Alex (1999), *Heterographies. Sexual Difference in French Autobiography*. Oxford: Berg
- Hunt, Albert and Geoffrey Reeves (1995), *Peter Brook*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press
- Huxley, Michael and Noel Witts (eds) (1996), *The Twentieth Century Performance Reader*. New York and London: Routledge
- Innes, Christopher (1993), *Avant-Garde Theatre 1892-1992*. London: Routledge
- Irigaray, Luce (1977), *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit
- Jacobus, Mary (1999), *Psychoanalysis and the Scene of Reading*. Oxford: Clarendon
- Johnson, Barbara (1979), *Défigurations du langage poétique. La seconde révolution baudelairienne*. Paris: Flammarion
- Jowitt, Deborah (ed.) (1997), *Meredith Monk*. Baltimore and London. Johns Hopkins University Press
- Kantor, Tadeusz (1982), *Metamorphoses*. Paris: Éditions de Chêne
- _____ (1990a) *Le théâtre de la mort*. Lausanne: L'Age d'homme
- _____ (1990b), *Wielopole/Wielopole. An Exercise in Theatre*. Tr Mariusz Tchorek and G.M. Hyde. London: Boyars
- Kaprow, Allan (1966), *Assemblage, Environments and Happenings*. New York: H. N. Abrams
- Kaye, Nick (1994), *Postmodernism and Performance*. London: Macmillan
- _____ (1996), *Art into Theatre. Performance Interviews and Documents*. Singapore: Harwood Academic Publishers

- _____ (2000), *Site-Specific Art. Performance, Place, and Documentation*. New York: Routledge
- Keith, Michael and Steve Pile (eds) (1993), *Place and the Politics of Identity*. New York and London: Routledge
- Kelley, Jeff (1993), *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*. Berkeley and London: University of California Press
- Kiernander, Adrian (1993), *Ariane Mnouchkine and the Théâtre du Soleil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Klaver, Elizabeth (2000), 'Autopsy and the Savage Eye. Some Dramatic Practices'. *New Theatre Quarterly* 16.4 (64): 324-332
- Kobialka, Michal (1993), *A Journey Through Other Spaces. Essays and Manifestos 1944-1990. Tadeusz Kantor*. Berkeley and London: University of California Press
- Kofman, Sarah (1970), *L'Enfance de l'art. Une interprétation de l'esthétique freudienne*. Paris: Payot
- Kott, Jan (1993) [1964], *Shakespeare notre contemporain*. Tr. Anne Posner. Paris: Payot
- Kowzan, Tadeusz (1975) [1970], *Littérature et Spectacle*. Paris: Mouton
- Kristeva, Julia (1974), *La révolution du langage poétique. L'avant-garde à la fin du XIXe siècle. Lautréamont et Mallarmé*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil
- _____ (1980), *Pouvoirs d'Horreur. Essai sur l'abjection*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil
- _____ (1991), *Étrangers à nous-mêmes*. Paris: Gallimard
- Kwon, Miwon (1997) 'One Place After Another. Notes on Site-Specificity', *October* 80 Spring 1997, 85-110
- _____ (2002), *One Place After Another. Site-specific Art and Locational Identity*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: M.I.T. Press
- Labrousse, Laurence (1999), *Ariane Mnouchkine, un parcours théâtral. Le Terrassier, l'enfant et le voyageur*. Paris: L'Harmattan
- Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson (1980), *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press

- Langer, Susanne (1953), *Feeling and Form. A Theory of Art developed from Philosophy in a New Key*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Larue, Anne (ed.) (1996), *Théâtralité et genres littéraires*. Poitiers: La Licorne
- Laurent, Jeanne (1955), *La République et les beaux-arts*. Paris: Julliard
- Lebel, Jean-Jacques (1966), *Le Happening*. Paris: Les lettres nouvelles
- Lefebvre, Henri (1994), *The Production of Space*. Tr. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell
- Lourau, Renée (1980), *Autodissolution des avant-gardes*. Paris: Éditions Galilée
- Lyotard, Jean-François (1971), *Discours, figure*. Paris: Klincksieck
- McAuley, Gay (1996) 'Theatre Practice and Critical Theory', *Australasian Drama Studies* April, 28, 140-45
- _____ (1999), *Space in Performance. Making Meaning in the Theatre*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press
- MacDonald, Claire (ed.) (2001), Departures. *Performance Research* 6.1
- McDougall, Joyce (1986), *Theatres of the Mind. Illusion and Truth on the Psychoanalytic Stage* London: Free Association
- McEvoy, William (2003), 'Theatre Out of Place. The Bouffes du Nord and the Cartoucherie', *Journal of the Institute of Romance Studies* 8
- McHale, Brian (1992), *Constructing Postmodernism*. London: Routledge
- McNamara, Brooks, Jerry Rojo and Richard Schechner (1975), *Theatres, Spaces, Environments: Eighteen Projects*. New York: Drama Book Specialists
- Madral, Philippe (1969), *Le Théâtre hors les murs. Six animateurs et trois élus municipaux nous parlent*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil
- Manguel, Alberto (1996), *A History of Reading*. London: Harper Collins
- Marcus, Sharon (1999), *Apartment Stories. City and Home in Nineteenth Century Paris. Berkeley and London*. Berkeley and London: University of California Press

- Marienstrass, Richard (1977), 'Timon d'Athènes de Shakespeare et sa mise en scène par Peter Brook. La représentation et l'interprétation du texte', *Voies de la création théâtrale* 5. Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 15-57
- Marin, Louis (1973), *Utopiques. Jeux d'Espaces*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit
- Mathews, Timothy (2000), *Literature, Art and the Pursuit of Decay in Twentieth-Century France*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Matoré, Georges (1962), *L'espace humain*. Paris: Éditions du Vieux Colombier
- Médrano, Jérôme (1983), *Une vie de cirque*, Paris: Arthaud
- Milligan, Jason (2002), *Here, There and Everywhere. Eight site-specific one-act plays*. New York and London: Samuel French
- Mostafavi, Mohsen and David Leatherbarrow (1993), *On Weathering. The Life of Buildings in Time*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: M.I.T. Press
- Mounicq, Jean (1992), *Paris retraversé*. Paris: Imprimerie nationale
- Mounier, Catherine (1977), 'Deux créations collectives du Théâtre du Soleil: 1793, L'âge d'or', *Voies de la création théâtrale* 5. Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 121-278
- Mufson, Daniel (ed.) (1999), *Reza Abdoh*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press
- Murray, Timothy (1997), *Masochism and Mime. The Politics of Theatricality in Contemporary French Thought*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press
- Nora, Pierre (ed.) (1984), *Les lieux de mémoire*. Paris: Gallimard
- Orlando, Francesco (1993), *Gli oggetti desueti nelle immagini della letteratura. Rovine, reliquie, rarità, robaccia, luoghi inabitati e tesori nascosti*. Turin: Einaudi
- Parent, Michel (1971), *Création théâtrale et création architecturale*. London: Athlone Press
- Parker, Andrew and Eve Kosofsky-Sedgwick (eds) (1995), *Performativity and Performance*. London: Routledge
- Pavel, Thomas (1986), *Fictional Worlds*. Cambridge Mass. and London: Harvard University Press
- Pavis, Patrice (1996), *Dictionnaire du théâtre*. Paris: Dunod

- Pearson, Mike and Michael Shanks (2001), *Theatre/Archaeology*. London: Routledge
- Perec, Georges (1967), *Un homme qui dort*. Paris: Denoël
- _____ (1974), *Espèces d'espaces*. Paris: Éditions Galilée
- Phelan, Peggy (1992), *Unmarked. A Politics of Performance*. London: Routledge
- _____ (1997), *Mourning Sex. Performing Public Memories*. London: Routledge
- _____ and Jill Lane (eds) (1998), *The Ends of Performance*. New York and London: New York University Press
- Picon-Vallin, Béatrice (1995), 'Une oeuvre d'art commune. Rencontre avec le Théâtre du Soleil, mars 1993', *Théâtre/Public* 124-5, 74-84
- Pizzato, Mark (1998), *Edges of Loss. From Modern Drama to Postmodern Theory*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press
- Poinsot, Jean-Marc (1999), *Quand l'oeuvre a lieu. L'art exposé et ses récits autorisés*. Villeurbanne: Institut d'art contemporain
- Pottecher, Maurice (1899), *Le Théâtre du peuple. Renaissance et destinée du théâtre populaire*. Paris: P. Ollendorff
- Poulet, Georges (1963), *L'espace proustien*. Paris: Gallimard
- Prendergast, Christopher (1986), *The Order of Mimesis. Balzac, Stendhal, Nerval, Flaubert*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- _____ (1992), *Paris and the Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Read, Alan (1993), *Theatre and Everyday Life. An Ethics of Performance*. London: Routledge
- Réda, Jacques (1977), *Les ruines de Paris*. Paris: Gallimard
- Ritter, Roland and Bernd Knaller-Vlay (eds) (1998), *Other Spaces. The Affair of the Heterotopia*. Graz: Haus der Architektur
- Roose-Evans, James (1984), *Experimental Theatre. From Stanislavsky to Peter Brook*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Ross, Kristin (1988), *The Emergence of Social Space. Rimbaud and the Paris Commune*. Basingstoke: Macmillan

Rosset, Clément (1976), *Le réel et son double. Essai sur l'illusion*. Paris: Gallimard

Rudnytsky, Peter (ed.) (1993), *Transitional Objects and Potential Spaces. Literary Uses of D.W. Winnicott*. New York and Chichester. Columbia University Press

Sarrazac, Jean-Pierre (1995), *Théâtres du moi, théâtres du monde*. Rouen: Éditions Médiannes

Savedoff, Barbara E. (1999), 'Frames', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 57, 3, 345-356

Sayre, Henry (1989), *The Object of Performance. The American Avant-Garde since 1970*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press

Scarpetta, Guy (1985) *L'Impureté*. Paris: Grasset

_____ (2000), *Kantor au présent. Une longue conversation. Essai*. Arles: Actes du Sud

Schechner, Richard, (1969) *Public Domain. Essays on the Theatre*. Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company

_____ (1982), *The End of Humanism. Writing on Performance*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications

_____ (1983), *Performative Circumstances. From the Avant-Garde to Ramlila*. Calcutta: Seagull

_____ (1988), *Performance Theory*. London: Routledge

_____ (1994) [1973], *Environmental Theater*. New York and London: Applause

_____ (2002) *Performance Studies. An Introduction*. London: Routledge

Sebald, W.G. (1999), *Vertigo*. Tr. Michael Hulse. London: Harvill

_____ (2001), *Austerlitz*. London: Hamilton

Segal, Naomi (1981), *The Banal Object. Theme and Thematics in Proust, Rilke, Hofmannsthal and Sartre*. London: Institute of Germanic Studies

Seym, Simone (1992), *Das Théâtre du Soleil. Ariane Mnouchkines Ästhetik des Theaters*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler

Shanks, Michael (2002), 'Creating an Archaeology of Performance' available at www.roehampton.ac.uk/artshum/arts/performance/ARCHAEOLOGY/TowardsArchaeology.html

Shiach, Morag (1991), *Hélène Cixous. A Politics of Writing*. London and New York: Routledge

Silverman, Hugh J. (ed) (1998), *Cultural Semiosis. Tracing the Signifier*. New York and London, Routledge.

Smethurst, Paul (1996), *Space, Time and Place in the Postmodern Novel*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of London

Smith, A.C.H. (1972), *'Orghast' at Persepolis*. London: Eyre Methuen

Smith, Ali (2001), *Hotel World*. London: Hamish Hamilton

Smith, Neil and Cindi Katz, 'Grounding Metaphor. Towards a Spatialized Politics' in Keith and Pile 1993, 67-83

Soja, Edward (1989), *Postmodern Geographies. The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. London: Verso

Stallabrass, Julian (ed.) (2000), *Locus Solus. Site, Identity and Technology in Contemporary Art*. London: Black Dogs

Stallybrass, Peter and Allon White (1986), *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. London: Methuen

States, Bert O. (1985), *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms. On the Phenomenology of Theater*. Berkeley and London: University of California Press

Steiner, Peter (1982), *The Prague School. Selected Writings, 1929-1946*. Tr. John Burbank et al. Austin: University of Texas Press

Stokes, John (1996), 'Brook, Mnouchkine et les autres', *Times Literary Supplement* (3 May), 18-19

Styan, J.L. (1982), *Max Reinhardt*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press

Théâtre du Soleil (1975), *L'Âge d'or. Première ébauche*. Paris: Stock

Tilley, Christopher (1999), *Metaphor and Material Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell

Trotter, David (1996), 'Modernity and its Discontents. Manet, Flaubert, Cézanne, Zola', *Paragraph* 19, 251-271

_____ (2000) *Cooking With Mud. The Idea of Mess in Nineteenth-Century Art and Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Tulane Drama Review

Ubersfeld, Anne (1977), *Lire le théâtre*. Paris: Éditions sociales

_____ (1996), *Les termes clés de l'analyse du théâtre*. Paris: Seuil

Ulmer, Gregory, (1988) 'The Punctum in Grammatology' in Culler 1988, 164-189

Vanden Heuvel, Michael (1991), *Performing Drama/Dramatizing Performance. Alternative Theater and the Dramatic Text*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press

Varda, Agnès (dir.) (1999), *Les Glaneurs et la Glaneuse*, SCEREN (CNDP)

Vattimo, Gianni (1988), *The End of Modernity. Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture*. Cambridge: Polity

Vergara, Camilo José (1995), *The New American Ghetto*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

_____ (1999), *American Ruins*. New York: Monacelli Press

Vilar, Jean (1955), *De la tradition théâtrale*. Paris: l'Arche

Virilio, Paul (1980), *Esthétique de la disparition*. Paris: Balland

Vitez, Antoine (1979) 'Abri ou édifice', *ATAC Informations* 106, Dec 1979-Jan 1980

Watt, Stephen (1998), *Postmodern/Drama. Reading the Contemporary Stage*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Wesker, Arnold (1967), *La Cuisine*. Adapted by Phillippe Léotard. Paris: L'Avant-Scène

White, Edmund (2001), *The Flâneur: A Stroll Through the Paradoxes of Paris*. London: Bloomsbury

Wilkie, Fiona (2002), 'Mapping the Terrain. A Survey of Site-Specific Performance in Britain', *New Theatre Quarterly* 18. 2, 140-160

Williams, David (1985), 'A Place Marked by Life. Brook at the Bouffes du Nord', *New Theatre Quarterly* 1.1, 39-74

_____ (ed.) (1988), *Peter Brook. A Theatrical Casebook*. London: Methuen

_____ (ed.) (1999), *Collaborative Theatre. The Théâtre du Soleil Sourcebook*. London: Routledge

_____ (2000) 'Except the Cinders - a Fire Trajectory', *Performance Research* 5.1, 112-119

Wilson, Emma (1996), *Sexuality and the Reading Encounter. Identity and Desire in Proust, Duras, Tournier and Cixous*. Oxford: Clarendon

Winnicott, D.W. (1980) [1971], *Playing and Reality*. Harmondsworth: Penguin

Woodward, Christopher (2001), *In Ruins*. London: Chatto and Windus

Worton, Michael and Judith Still (eds) (1990), *Intertextuality. Theories and Practices*. Manchester: Manchester University Press

_____ and Judith Still (eds) (1993) *Textuality and Sexuality. Reading Theories and Practices*. Manchester: Manchester University Press

Wright, Patrick (1991), *A Journey Through Ruins. The Last Days of London*. London: Radius

Zola, Émile (1993) [1868], *Thérèse Raquin*. Paris: Garnier-Flammarion

_____ (2002) [1873], *Le ventre de Paris*. Paris: Gallimard