

# "Textual Turns - and a Turn-up for the Books"

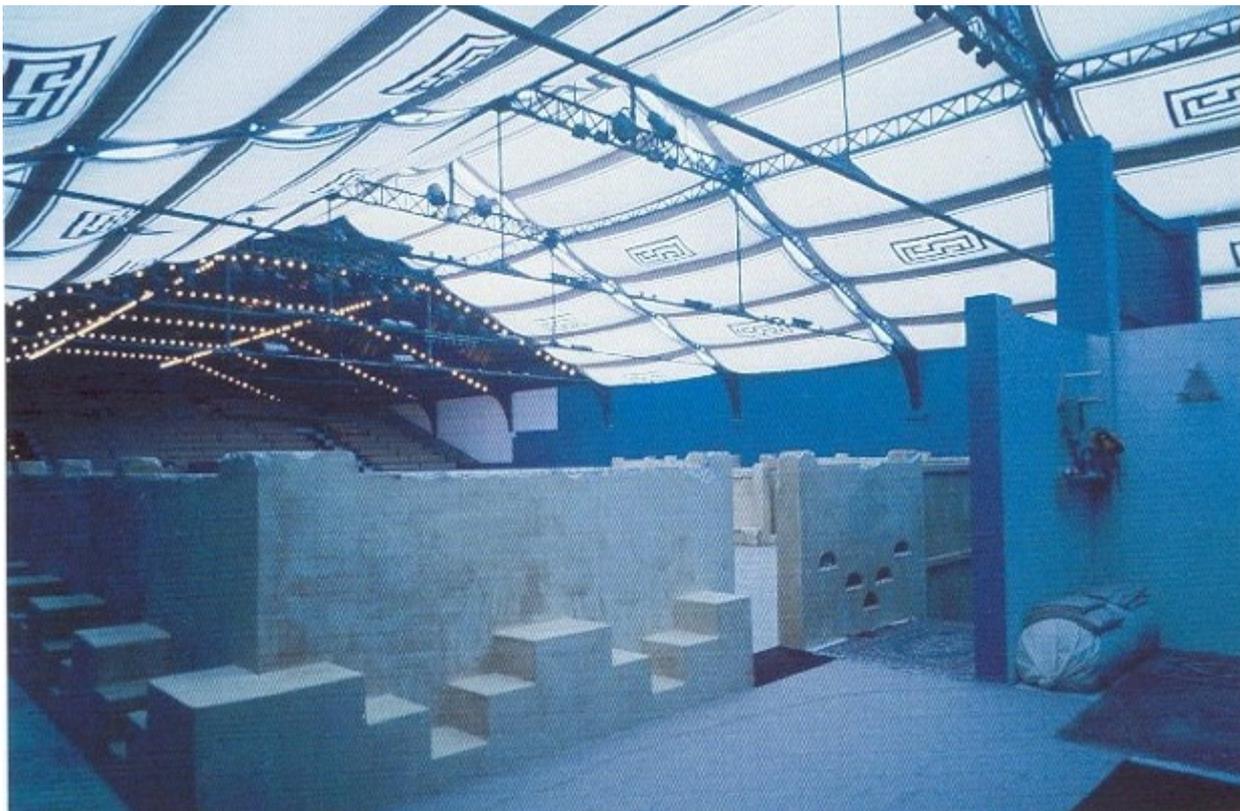
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## 1. *Starting from...complexity and heterogeneity*

What are the key issues which surround the question of the textual, and of textual conditions, when the researcher's engagement is with live performance practices? Is there something specific to the live event which confounds those of us who work with and engage predominantly in research through published writing? Although my own presentation here is live, I clearly have with me a written script, from which I shall proceed to read. As I do so, however, I want to show you some live-performance "data" specific to professional performance work presented to live audiences at particular moments in the late 20thC.



**Fig.1**, by Martine Laurent, from *Les Atrides: Iphigénie à Aulis and Agamemnon*, by Théâtre du Soleil, 1992 (1)

"Data" is plainly a very general term, but in the present circumstances I want to retain it in part because of its generality and apparent imprecision, and in part because we have not yet done with the question of the nature and status of live performance "traces", in their possible relations with publishable writing. I am starting here, in addition, from the suggestion that while it is in

*writing* and the written text that most of us here meet most easily, it is also the case that writing is not the dominant code in theatricality, and that the *textualisable* is not, for most theatre practitioners, either the preferred option or theatre's aspiration. Now, one of the tasks I have set myself today is to begin, at least, to persuade those of you who are not experienced in research into live performance, of the complexity and heterogeneity of the full "assemblage" of professional theatricality, and of what I shall assert to be the consequent inadequacy of the notion of the "textual" - despite the weight of late 20thC "textualising" history - as a means of thinking and wording that complexity and heterogeneity. I am going to suggest, to mark this first point, that even where, after the early writings of Roland Barthes (2), we interpret "text" to mean "weave", it remains the case that the full theatrical assemblage, *at work*, draws together disparate elements, some of which, in their heterogeneity, resist any such attempt at their homogenisation.

In the first image (above) the obediently two-dimensional, "paged" shot seems to me to provide some sense, at least - provided you are able to think yourself into the spaces to which it refers, to unfold them in your imagination, and to position yourself then within one or another such fold - of theatre as a complex, multi-dimensional *apparatus* or *set of apparatuses*, assembled in such a way as to promote certain sorts of human relationships, certain sorts of productive actions, certain sorts of engagements and - as a consequence - certain sorts of expectations. I want to add to this initial list the following: certain sorts of contracted-for interactions, which, in the professional sphere, at least, involve a number of financial engagements, ethical engagements, as well as procedural engagements.

When however I add a second image to this first shot of Ariane Mnouchkine's *Cartoucherie* (Théâtre du Soleil, Paris, internally reconstructed for the cycle of Greek tragedies which she staged there in the early 1990s), both of which were taken from one production within that cycle:



**Fig.2** M. Laurent *op. cit.*

I wonder to what extent and in what detail you now retain the particulars of the first image as well as the implications of its complex multi-dimensionality? The second shot, more conventionally "theatrical" - it is taken from, and thereby reasserts the conventional primacy of, the spectators' point of observation; and more conventionally "dramatic" - it records staged

human action, the work of professional performers, rendered complex and "othered" by Mnouchkine's own imagination - seems to me not only to be (albeit curiously) more conventionally "textualisable", but more familiar, more readily grasped, not least because it naturalises my point of observation: my eye (my "I") slips easily and comfortably into the position which the photographer has provided - as though it were my own.

The third shot (**Fig.3**, M. Laurent *op. cit.*, below) seems to me to take us further toward this naturalisation of theatre's human interface, further toward the already extensively *textualised* play of subjectivities and the narrativisation of the dramatico-theatrical; further away then from the vital account of the heterogeneity of systems and operations within the full theatrical assemblage.



The deictic play ("I, you, she/he/it, my, our, your...") is solicited, contracted for, and starts up as though programmed by the powerfully seductive - and performative (3) - work of interactive faciality, gestuality and genuinely interactive bodywork. Let me explain briefly what I mean here: deictics are also called shifters. They are markers, allowing us a shorthand mode of self-representation ("I", "me") and of address ("you", "she ..."). And each of us, as others have pointed out, is "I" (hence none of us owns the marker; it is a token of exchange, which shifts between users). I am arguing that any close-up facial encounter instantly "stages" a potential drama which shifts across and between different participants. In this photographic image, one face is front-on, one is oblique. The spatial set-up combining difference, reinforces the availability of the open face. Apparently "given to" spectating (her face is a gift), and recognisable - *as though in our own live human image* - this deictic play turns out to be, for me at least, almost

irresistible: I can't see past the I-you of this staging option. It holds me, to the extent that it fills my (spectating) gaze. Yet I am aware, in confronting my own reaction to it, that because I have "seen the show", what I am seeing, as though "in the shot" is my own memory of the show. The shot, for me, is a performance-event mnemonic. It binds me in, dramatically, and it is productive, thereafter, of a whole series of little narratives relating to the event. (But I can't speak for you.)

Its appeal is sharpened, for me at least, by the fact that it was live, when I first experienced it; its operations were, in this sense, in no way commensurable with cinema's series of (literal) *after-images*. Liveness, in those peculiar conditions of theatricality, regardless of its recent treatment by writers on the posthuman (4) seemed to me to assert its presentness as human-interactive, hence requiring of all of us an ethical negotiation (5). The performers, let's not forget, actually *see us* - curious creatures that we are in this voluntary self-imprisonment and demanding gaze. They see our curiosity - and in Mnouchkine's work, to whose image I return below - they look spectators *right in the eyes* (6), while simultaneously performing facial and gestural detail and positional specifics which invite spectators, in addition, to engage with what is effectively a somatic semiotics (operating through pattern-making and recognition) which requires no discursivisation:



I have enlarged the image here in a flimsy attempt to evoke the power of the live: I am effectively declaring that because the live is schematically, proportionally "human", human in its dimensional relationship with present spectators (the latter is rarely the case in film on the large screen), it achieves an impact unavailable in other significantly visual, performance-based media. It *invites* human curiosity - which may *work it*, but remains unsatisfied in the event, and plays on, thereafter, as an unresolvable knot (7).

My own research comes from a training in semiotics: in somatico-semiotic terms of the live (with which live spectators engage), what is significant however is not then "a sign" nor "a signifier", but rather 1) the phenomenological power of the present human-real; 2) its disciplinary specificity, which is professional, and - because the professionals involved are highly experienced - a matter of performance as *performance-reflexive meta-semiotics*; 3) the interrelationships - between different body positioning and gestuality, the respective hand positions and reach of the arms; the partial openness and exposure of the woman performer's palm and her face, combined with her direct and his oblique looks. These, too, have a schematic density which makes them recognisable, firstly, without our having seen them before, and secondly without our need to discursivise them to taste their effects/affects.

The overlay of these three, for a spectator, has a semiotic force which is compounded in the given instance by its disciplinary excellence (which I have argued elsewhere *gives us more than we have bargained for*). In addition, its semiotic force is liable to be both figural (reactivating in us some sense of older patternings and their affects), and constellational (8) - a spiderweb and network of values, none of which, individually, has the performance force of the whole.

I would argue that our uses of it, as spectators, depend initially upon our recognition of performance-mastery "itself", and only secondly upon the articulation, by *mise en scene*, of a spatio-temporal and human dynamic (9), whose particulars - whose details - are once again combinatory in their power. Because they operate, in the work, through patterns or schemata - and are musical in this rather than "textual" - their operations transcend the input of the individual performer, who might, as a result, seem to "do more (in performance-making terms) than she knows". What this means is that we cannot readily equate performer-knowledges with those of *mise en scene*, nor with those of a spectator. At the same time, however, and in apparent contradiction, I would argue that the performer also *knows* (as artist) *more than she does*, and differently: she inhabits the work, while mastering its implications in terms of performance-reflexive meta-practice. She participates in and has access to the work in terms of the technical meta-languages and meta-practices of its professional production; but these meta-knowledges tend to be dialogue-based, often somatic, expert or technical in register, and situation-specific, rich in deixis (shifters) linked to performance-specifics ("Like this - or do you mean like we did yesterday?"). In short, any supposedly "textual condition" of the expert performer is largely imposed from without, and to my eye inappropriately, to the extent that it causes us to misrecognise her complex expertise and its recourse to quite specific registers and functions of language.

In the simplest of terms, then, I am asking you to recognise, with regard to Fig. 3 (which I take here to be exemplary), that the "knowledge-situation" of professional live performance is a highly particular and curious one: the performers cannot see what spectators can see, and in this sense their (sight-based) knowledge of performance is different from our own; nor can spectators see what *metteur en scene* saw (nor *when*). In addition, the professional or performance-reflexive meta-semiotic mastered by the experienced performer is other than "already textualised" (or "discursivised" where the term is understood to refer to language-in-use). What has been mastered as performance-reflexive meta-semiotic, in other words, cannot be detached from the material circumstances of its articulation, within and as a part of which it operates, and in whose terms it finds its place. Its *being*, that is to say, lies in its peculiar heterogeneous materiality. In contrast, one of the highly economical advantages of "text", in a literal sense, lies precisely in its ability to be detached from the circumstances of its initial articulation: it *trans*-fers, and in so doing, it *de*-fers. (I am stressing this peculiarity of expert-live-performance practices here, that what is peculiar to it is in fact a primary condition of its effects and affects, for the simple reason that what brings us together today is experience of the textual, and not experience of professional mixed-mode performance meta-practice.). This particular "constitutive peculiarity" of performance-disciplinary mixed-mode meta-practice is often overlooked in textual analysis of *mise en scene*; that analysis often overlooks, in addition,

the fact that the performer, as individual artist, has lent her artistry to another's signature. To the extent that the larger articulation is signed - in this case by Mnouchkine herself - the textualised analysis of *mise en scene*, presented as though it were, or could substitute for, the "work itself", readily inscribes within that textuality an ethical oversight, with regard to difference, ownership and responsibility.

The corollary of the axiom - that no performer can *see* *mise en scene*, of which she makes up one part affecting/affected by the other parts - is that no spectator can see other than what she is enabled to see: that is, what she is given (by *mise en scene*) to see - where "seeing", however, may also expand, thereafter, in terms of that spectator's "mind's eye". (In the latter case, this provides one instance of the workings of the ancient arts of hypotyposis (10).) Meanwhile, however, the spectator is also called upon, in Mnouchkine's work at least, to deal with the experience of the frontal and commanding gaze of that performer, whose impact, in my experience, is ongoing, sometimes inexhaustible. A spectator's work, in other words, required to combine both phenomenological and semiotic operations, *may never be done* (it is at the very least never exhausted by any wording "of it" which may follow). As spectator, I can relive the pleasurable burden of Mnouchkine's work with these performers, but I cannot give it up or resolve its curious impact by wording. My perception of it has formed a knot. The best I can say, at this point, and in terms of this inexhaustibility, is that the director has foreseen this impact, at the moment of casting the production.

Now, I have myself, in the 1980s, produced splendid *spectator-semio-analyses* - as though of theatre productions "themselves" - from this particular point of observation, mistaking for "theatre analysis", as I did so, the "spectator studies" in which I thereby participated, and whose values as well as point of view and modes of production, in turn, I reproduced. It was possible in the 1970s and 1980s, in any number of theatre departments in UK and European universities, to seem to analyse "theatre" as though the latter occurred within that reduced, spatio-temporally "organised" engagement, which apparently - but only apparently - took place between "the performer" and/or "the director", and "the spectator". Much "textualisation" of performance, "rehearsed" through this extremely tight but ambiguous interface between performer, "(absent) director" and spectator, struggled, however, not least because of three striking difficulties: 1. the first related to the knowledge-status of the perceptions and responses of "a spectator", given as representative of all spectators; 2. the second related to the commonsensical supposition that "the performer" was performance's *subject*, liable thereafter to occupy the position of subject in clauses produced as though "about performance". 3. The third, meanwhile, was the difficulty presented by a spectator's and a performer's relationship to the director's real absence-in-presence.

In the first case, I would simply suggest that any textual account produced on behalf of "a spectator", to the extent that it is more than simply reductive, "*represents*" only that writer's own position, perspective, and engagement, and needs to be owned as such. This is a simple matter, after all, of an ethics of mixed-mode practice, both spectatorial and discursive. In the second case, while "the performer" is commonsensically foregrounded in much performance, and is necessarily active in theatre, s/he has never been commensurable with "theatre itself", which, as should already be clear from the few images I have so far provided, plainly extends well beyond, and differs significantly from, the little world of the performer, and her or his actions. Indeed, to the extent that the *mise en scene* oversees and tends to coordinate and to orchestrate the performer's actions, "the performer" - even where she *acts out* independence or autonomy - must be viewed as rehearsing bracketted subject positions, as these are enabled by *mise en scene*. From this perspective, "the performer" bears the traces of *mise en scene*, which have, to a significant degree, been *im-*pressed upon her, informing even the detail of her facial expressivity and gestuality (as we see above in Fig.3, where gestuality of both performers and her facial expressivity are in large part co-ordinated from without). In the third case, a writer-spectator has to attempt to deal with that absent-presence whose signature-mark is felt, but

whose status as subject of the event is obscure - not least where the event seems to do more than, or other than, its director knows.

Who - or what, then - is subject and Actor in *the writing of* theatre performance's clauses, where these are produced by the performance analyst? The director (function)? Mise en scene itself, despite the fact that its combinatory particulars (and their impact through symbolic and schematic hypotyposis) tend to *do more than* does either the metteur en scene or the performer? My own response leans toward the notion that more even than constellational, mise en scene, directing, plus performing and spectating is *combinatory*, by which I mean that the combination of the work of identified theatre Subjects, plus other systemic theatrical choices (perceptible, if we know where and how to look, in the slightest single detail of performance), is greater than - when it elicits the contribution of a spectator - and different from, the sum of its disparate parts (11). I have elsewhere identified this combinatory power as catalytic, or mutually transforming.

Let me attempt another example: a principal Actor-role in theatre is focused in the interaction of lighting design and lighting operations, with other elements of mise en scene. There is no possibility of identifying that luminosity (12) which theatre so rarely and almost magically foregrounds, without our identifying the considerable role of light and of illumination in the combination. Light, in theatre, is both functional *and* potentially a vital ingredient in foregrounding not just "the space", but indeed whatever else is really and metaphorically illuminating/ed in live theatre. Lighting and expected-illumination are performative in the sense that both are Actors, directing spectators to look at what is thereby foregrounded (while encouraging us to look, as well, at what is not).

## 2. Lesson in Writing

What then are we actually *textualising*, when some of us attempt to "write theatre performance/s"? This question cannot be effectively approached unless we review, however briefly, the history of theatre-writing in the university. The account of the role and relationship of writing and theatricality, in what is called the European tradition, at least, tends to be traced from Plato's *Republic* through Aristotle's *Poetics* (in which the oration of dramatic poetry was preferred to what was called "spectacle"): this is a history of attitude and ethos with regard to the respective power of the materially-embodied and the written, hence ideological in its implications. We don't have the time or the means today to pursue those early *written* manifestations, except to note firstly that earliest extant philosophical *writings*, in that European tradition, reveal a concern (undoubtedly indicative) with regard to the (work of the) actor and to performance itself: poetic writing, detachable from the material circumstances of writing and its performance, could be seen, according to that philosophical/ideologically-charged writing, to be able to *transcend* human materiality, and to survive it. This has been, in other words, writing's ancient mission, invested with all of the power thought to accrue through the material body's apparent vanishing (or erasure; or suppression).

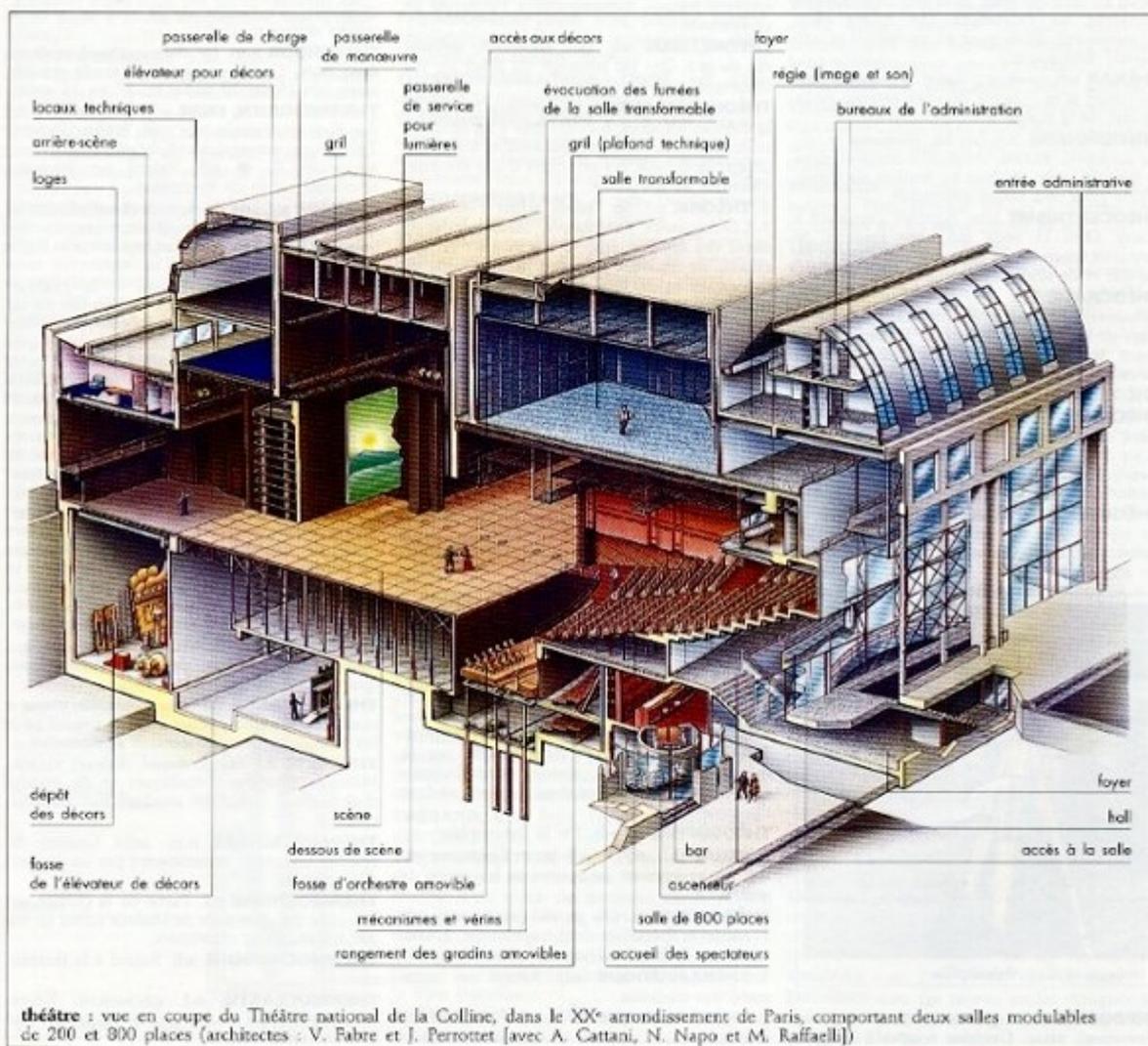
To what extent can we eradicate from present ways of seeing, doing and wording, this ancient prejudice, together with the attitudes and ethos its own textualisation encoded? Perhaps we can't, unless we can attempt a "reverse engineering" of our own accumulated and naturalised attitudes and ethos, on the basis of which we might sidestep, if not wholly avoid, this philosophical inheritance. (Richard Hornby's recent diatribe, in *New Theatre Quarterly* (Vol XVIII,4:2002), against devised performance-making in the professional sphere, may well bear some of the traces of this "philosopheme" (or minimal unit of philosophical engagement) which dramatically opposes the written and writerly, on the one hand, and the materially-embodied, on the other.)

There has been, in addition, a more recent knowledge-political and dramatic history: what were theatre teachers attempting to escape, when Theatre and Performance Studies broke away, in the

British university in the 1970s, from English Departments? Dramatic writing, in the English literary tradition, participated in what might be called a little closed economy, for which writing provided the base materials, the operating mechanisms, and the desired output. Theatre, in the dramatic literary tradition of the university, would seem to have existed primarily to be writing-productive: its task was to excite the further production of an explanatory writing, not least in the case of late 19thC/early 20thC naturalistic theatre, with its growing claim to social engineering through the explanatory operations of what has been called, with a certain irony, "sub-text".

Written explanations, performed - as though on theatre's behalf, to legitimize it - in terms of writing-productive-apparatuses inherited from linguistics and literary theory (and film theory), seem to have grown in direct proportion, in the final decades of the 20thC, to what could be argued to have been "unsaid" in dramatic dialogue and its performances. It participated, in this inherited tradition, in the identification and discussion of those late 19th and early 20thC social forces which elaborated social and psychological "explanatory myths" (13) which were apparently appropriate to the airing of one or another social and psychological threat or "disruption". Writing in Dance Studies and Music offers a useful contrast with Drama: because Dance Studies did not emerge from dramatic-literary studies, in that period of explanatory expansion, and because neither Dance nor Music performance necessarily depends upon characterisation and narrative, these disciplinary fields have developed without significant dependence upon that inherited burden and its "habits of mind and wording".

But let's come back to the heterogeneous assemblage which is theatre in the professional sphere: I shall not at this point enumerate the theatrical systems without whose operation and co-operation no engagement in performance subjectivities would be available to spectators. These systems are numerous and diverse, expanding in time and space around the heightened moments of "the show", which they target but with which they are incommensurable. I have elsewhere drawn on a diagram of an operating theatre (Fig. 4, taken from Larousse (14)), supposing that observation of this diagram, in contexts like this one, might be productive, rather than simply representative; might be sufficient to cause those of you who lack experience of a professional working theatre to begin, at the very least, to *differently imagine* theatricality in the complexity of its operations, operators, technology, *technè* - and aspirations:



**Fig.4**

I want to ask you to focus momentarily on the relatively tiny stage and spectator space included in this diagrammatic account, where performer and audience actually meet. The full and complex assemblage and its apparatuses and operators, meanwhile, continue their enabling work (upon which the commonly textualisable matter depends); these apparatuses and operators and artists will have begun that work weeks, months and years, indeed, prior to that moment of heightened meeting. Theatre's full artistry at work, similarly, has been engaged for a considerable period of time prior to the moments of performance encounter; and time, from this perspective, may also clarify the problem of textualisation of theatricality: I have suggested, as though in passing, that the textualisation of professional theatre-making tends to be produced *after* spectating, and to be triggered by the foregrounding, *in the event*, of certain aspects of live human performance which I have effectively described as irresistible, able both to bind spectators in to an intersubjective play, and to cause the erasure, in so doing, of other *work* vital to theatre production.

From the point of view of time, then, the *theatrical real itself* is calculated upon and anticipates a present moment or sequence of present moments of real encounter, *in the event*; it is present-event focused, but otherwise it prepares its project in the lead-up to that present event. Spectator textual production, in complete contrast, is necessarily produced as an *after-image*: it post-figures not "performance itself", but performance perceptions mediated by a spectator-other. Its textual production post-"*figures*", quite literally, in the sense that the textualisation, in the case

of theatre's event, is both metaphoric and obedient to an older rhetoric. It is metaphoric, in that words are given as substitute for theatre operations which, however, they tend to be unable to name as such. Meanwhile, an older rhetorical tradition causes spectator-writers to reduce, reposition, and *substitute possible-wordings* (and their apparatuses) for theatre's workings, and seeks to invest these substitutive strategies with a certain persuasive authority. It "rehearses" these apparatuses, "re-staging" performance details, drawing however on the perspective, the attentivity, and the individuality of the person of the spectator, as well as on the orders of the latter's encounter with *mise en scene*. It draws, in addition, on the logic of the clause, the clarity of noun+definite article ("the performer", "the director", "the body", "the deeper message..."), as well as on one or another logics of textuality, which regulate the identification of subjects, their naming, and their "replay". "Cordelia refuses...", a critic might so easily write, overlooking, as s/he does so, the simple fact that the only human Actor speaking and seeming to refuse was the performer.

Such textualisation overlooks, at the same time, the more complex fact of theatricality, which is that as the performer spoke, so too "speaks" *mise en scene*, interpreted generally as the director's intervention. But *mise en scene*, as others have pointed out, is a slippery term, not least because it can include everything specific to the production, plus a stab at the identity and indeed the "intentions" of the *metteur en scene* her or himself. In his "Typologies of Performance Analysis", from *Theatre Research International* Vol 2, no. 1, Christopher Balme points to different understandings of *mise en scene* where each, however, is informed by the notion that *mise en scene* is readerly or writerly, rather than scenographic in its own terms.

In Balme's account of the notions of *mise en scene* propagated in - for example - the performance analytical writing of Patrice Pavis and Hans-Thies Lehmann, apparently different understandings of *mise en scene* tend to emerge from these two writers' different conceptions of theatre production, yet in both instances *mise en scene* continues to be identified as an outcome of a pre-existing dramatic script. In the Pavis tradition, strongly influenced by his own work on Brecht, that script 'itself' is given as causal of *mise en scene*; in Lehmann, in contrast, theatre systems themselves, "such as light and space, construct metaphorical representations not of the text, but of the directorial reading of the text" (my emphasis). Balme himself suggests that Lehmann's way of seeing *mise en scene* tends toward the scenographic, where a visual and not a written component "is paramount"; yet neither Pavis nor Lehmann can extricate his account of *mise en scene* from the textualist and textualising tradition within which each was trained.

The term "reading of the text" remains problematic, from this point of view, precisely because it participates in the logic of the writerly-readerly "textual turn" and its "semiological rearticulations", dominant in the last decades of the twentieth century. Can we imagine, in its place, a genuinely scenographic and company-specific *mise en scene*, which invents itself in the workshop or rehearsal processes, responding to emergent premises specific to the logics of theatre production and the factors contingent upon the workshop situation and its participants themselves, to insights emerging "on the ground" and "in the event", with a production date in view?

Such a re-imagining would replace the notion of the textually pre-determined and textually-controlled *mise en scene*, which involves a dominant figure and her or his already-determined "reading" and "textualisation" of the stage and of scenic action. In the case of such a re-imagining, that performer's speaking would be viewed as a matter both of her own invention and artistry, and as one fragment of, framed within, the director's imagining and conjuring. Here it would be driven not so much by "text", as by the event-charged meeting between script and the specifics and singularities of the production company at work within the disciplinary logics of production specific to contemporary theatre.

In this theatre circumstance, then, dramatic character - "Cordelia", in the example given - is a conceit, an agreement, a site where actions multiply; an imagining, a commonsensical

shorthand, a contract, an invention - but not a material real. What is theatrically real, instead, is this instance of multiple articulation, which challenges all easy interpretations conjugated upon the basis of the fiction that "Cordelia" is "already-human", subject of actions-in- the-world. What might it take, for some of us concerned with theatricality itself, for this particular perspective to be propagated in the university - and at what cost to literary studies?

I have said that what "Cordelia" 'is', in these circumstances, is "not a material real". What we do also need to acknowledge is that "Cordelia" is widely worded, commonsensically, as though "she" were "already-human", with all of the material, as well as less material implications specific to the ways in which "we" currently understand (by which I mean, in part, we narrativise) the human. This is not a minor matter, of insignificant implication. According to some writers, it is precisely theatre's habitual but curious use of real human subjects within the artwork, as a major part of its articulation (and, indeed, the fact that these are themselves simultaneously professional practitioners, with rights and claims to ownership, and so on) that presents particular difficulties to thought and to consequent wording. These curious circumstances do not apply in the same way either to literature, or to painting, or even to film. While film, like theatre, tends to be expressionist, in the sense that it works largely through human representation, film production draws on image-stuff, after-image, recorded traces of the real-ly absent human performer, which it must attempt to reinvest with the conventional filmic trappings of presence; whereas live theatre works necessarily in terms of an ethics of the present human real. When we return to the seduction (but also the ethical problematic) of the live to which I have briefly referred, to the contradictory power of theatre's foregrounding of the real-human, then it does need to be observed that relatively little published in Performance Studies texts, in the past 20 years, has dealt appropriately in writing with the ethical rather than the seductive implications, or the artistry, of that encounter (15). The theatre real, in contrast, cannot avoid, and has not avoided it.

From these sorts of perspectives, then, the textual conditioning of the live theatrical has tended, in the university, to have failed to deal with theatre's actuality, theatre's times, theatre's events, and it has failed, amongst these, to deal with the full range of theatre-professional Actors and actions. The most peculiar quality of the live event in the professional sphere, together with the particulars of each practitioner-participant's experience, have tended to be erased in mainstream publishing, which has been concerned, more generally, with representation and the social and psychological represented. The widespread consequence has been that what is given as an account "of performance" is actually an attempt at an account of performance's *effects*, perceived by a spectator. The theatre semiotics which some of us have practised since the late 1970s, has, in these sorts of terms, tended to mistake *effects* (spectator perceptions after the event) for *causes* (practitioner-combinatory actions, rehearsed and rehearsed again before and in the event). Yet - as I have begun to show - these two are far from commensurable. The textual condition of theatricality, from this perspective, tends to be revealed to be one aspect of the *gentle arts (and outcomes) of spectating*.

### ***3.Lessons from Writing***

What are some of the implications of my assertion that the conventions of textualisation which largely apply in theatre and performance studies in the British University and beyond, are specific to the gentle arts of spectating, and secondly that such textualisation is obedient to and indeed produced through the use of "apparatuses" derived from the literary and linguistic theoretical traditions?

Speaking here as an expert spectator, trained in literary theory and discourse analysis, but having had the great good fortune to establish postgraduate courses in university sector institutions specialising in theatre training for the performance professions, I am proposing a perspective which is necessarily fissured: it includes professional-theatre-"insider" knowledges,

together with the suggestion that as spectators we might need to learn to look differently at what we have been encouraged, by much of the publishing in the field/s, to see as "performance theory-and-practice".

My indicative observation, with regard to the spectator-problematic I have begun to outline, was that a spectator can only see what a spectator *can* see, *in the time of the event*, and that she can only word what she has seen in terms of the percepts and concepts available to her *after that event* which she has made her own (her position is implicated in the performance-making decisions made before she takes her place). Making it her own, she will seem to "replay" it at will, where however that "it" has already been transformed through various "operations" in the event of her ongoing engagement. That engagement is "performance-*dis*-eased", to the extent that ongoing spectatorial-productivity tends to distance itself from the logics of practice and processes of invention specific to performance-making practices. It is *dis*-eased, to the extent that the knowledge-status of certain complex performance-making action formations is omitted or erased from these sorts of textualising engagements.

The logics of practice (16) erased from conventional wordings are specifically disciplinary, and range across all areas and apparatuses established within the professional working theatre represented above (Fig.4). They individually and collectively require a range of different types of mastery in the professional practitioner, and are unavailable to spectating - except as *effect*; and the processes of invention, as far as I am able to tell, emerge in the circumstances - the times and spaces - specific to performance-making by professional practitioners, with inventiveness in mind and a production deadline in view. These processes of invention are similarly unavailable to spectating, to the extent that the hesitancy, anxiety, sudden certainty, insights, uptake of the contingent and use of disciplinary intuition, which are specific to them, necessarily proceed via transformation, in terms of negotiations within the disciplinary logics of practice, if they are to become vital performance material.

In this third "fold" of my presentation, I want to dwell briefly on the peculiar practices of spectating, and secondly to revisit albeit very briefly some notorious writings about practice which were published in the final decades of the 20thC. Let me start then by noting that "spectator rights" in the (post-WWII) later 20thC, and the apparently irresistible rise of spectating as a (democratic) "creative" act" in the 1980s, were a response in large part to an array of post-WWII forces which are too complex for us to discuss here, except to say, perhaps, that they had something to do with demystification and with an attempt at democratisation of access to cultural practices. In these sorts of terms, the notion that a spectator might be the professional artist's creative equal also had its "knowledge-political" usefulness in the post-1968 period of the 20thC. This was a period characterised by the expansion of the university in general, and by the aspiration in many to the critical-theoretical analysis of the social codes and conventions "of the fathers".

In the same period, the tradition of disciplinary mastery gave way in many contexts (but not all) to interdisciplinary studies. By the late 1970s/early 1980s, following directions taken in sociology and social anthropology, studies in *performance in and of the everyday* (in which terms the pedestrian or "man in the street" was viewed as the poetician of his own life (17), rather than as the victim of repressive regimes), assumed considerable importance, *not* in the theatre, so much as in Performance Studies in the university.

By way of contrast, and following the turn of the century, my focus, as I have already suggested, is explicitly on the professional and disciplinary, rather than Michel de Certeau's pedestrian, everyday and anonymous "arts of making-do". I should want to argue meanwhile that attempts at analysis of what have been called "performances in or of everyday life" have required of some of us - usefully as far as I am concerned - that we attempt to clarify precisely what we mean by singularity and signature practices in the performance disciplines and professions. One aspect of this enquiry is plainly ethical, concerned with an ethics of practice in general, and with

an ethics of arts-professional practices more generally. A second aspect requires that we return with some urgency to questions of judgement - in Bourdieu's wording - of taste and value (18).

These concerns have emerged in part from the sense in arts professionals and those who train them, that an aesthetics of everyday "making do" is significantly different from, cannot produce and does not enable us to grasp, what is specific to disciplinary excellence in the arts professions, and what as a consequence needs to be included in any higher education learning and teaching programme which makes any claims at all with regard to professional development. For the moment, I want to observe firstly that renewed - and in some cases *new* - enquiry, in the British university, into performance-disciplinarity and the professional, marks a particular historical as well as a "knowledge-political" shift. This shift needs in part be viewed as a consequence of the impact of a number of forces, and I should want to argue that its implications cannot be grasped except in these terms. As I have hinted, some of these are linked to the question of performance training, versus performance studies, within the postgraduate sphere of the British university.

Secondly, however, questions of disciplinarity also follow on from a later 20thC concern, in the university and related sites, with *inter*disciplinarity; with the links which can be proposed between certain sorts of practice, their enabling contexts of production, together with the frames of intelligibility with which these engage; with the established and developing agendas of critical and cultural theory, and the ways in which these have constituted their "objects of analysis" in the late 20thC. Interdisciplinarity, it must be observed, cannot guarantee, and may work against, the aspiration to disciplinarity as a matter of professional mastery. (I have looked elsewhere (19) at the residual and self-applauding "iconoclastic" aspirations of some university-based teachers of performance studies, who were themselves caught up in some of the fervour of late 1960s and early 1970s European student revolt (and may indeed continue to this day to misrecognize the nature of their own professional-pedagogic engagement).)

Against this sort of backdrop, it should begin to be clear that questions of disciplinary mastery in creative and performing arts within the university, including the question of the nature of the relationship of those disciplinary practices to writing, continue at the beginning of the 21stC to be both "dramatic" and necessarily political. Some of the bases for this ongoing "knowledge-political drama" are late 20thC "art-historical", and were highlighted by the art-critical writer, Hal Foster in his 1996 *Return of the Real* (20). In that text, Foster sought to identify that moment in the 1970s "when theoretical production became as important as artistic production".

Other issues with regard to mixed-mode practices and disciplinary criteria are, as I have already hinted, a matter of the intrusion of the "everyday-real" (of "banality" and of the so-called "arts of making-do") into the university-based arts conceptual and practical: but these questions are also linked to always stretched resources, to accepted modes of engagement in the university, and to questions of research productivity and ease of dissemination. Such issues are to some extent highlighted by Jon McKenzie in his *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (21), which is concerned in part with coincidences and differences between performance theory as a field of enquiry in the university, and the discourses and related practices within what is now called "performance-management" and performance audit in big business.

Meanwhile, however - and still on the subject of disciplinarity - my colleague Peter Osborne in his *Philosophy in Cultural Theory* (22) has identified a shift in the 1990s, away from the self-assertedly "radical"/"subversive"/"liminal" interventions in the arts in the late 1960s and 1970s, which were informed by the assertion that disciplinary mastery might be eliminated from the artwork. Osborne notes that this sort of intervention, viewed from the end of the 20thC, had actually served the opposite end - that is, the "ironic historical function... [which was] to have reasserted the *ineliminability of the aesthetic* as a necessary element of the artwork, via [what can now be seen as the] "failed negation" of the aesthetic" (102) which the self-appointed 'radical' 1970s and 1980s critique had pursued.

Now, with regard to the status of the artwork, I have tended to use the terms "professional" and "disciplinary" as though they were interchangeable. It might be appropriate at this point to look at the differences between them: by "professional", I am referring simply to those practitioners whose work is tested and validated outside of the university, and on the basis of which the practitioner concerned earns her or his livelihood, in whole or in part. I am perfectly happy to assume the notion that professional also means, in part, produced within and conditioned by the demands of quite specific *arts-marketplaces*, amongst which I include those regulated to some degree by arts-funding bodies. In my use of the term "disciplinary", I am attempting to reinsert, into performance studies, an understanding which has more readily been accepted in dance and music performance: that is, that inventive and innovative work is in part commensurable with, and certainly dependent upon, disciplinary mastery, precisely because that invention depends upon the grounding/competence that disciplinary mastery provides.

Performance Studies in the university, to the extent that the agenda it announced in the final decades of the 20thC was "radical", or "cutting-edge", or "subversive", has tended to overlook - *discursively* - the means to production of a key factor in performance efficacy. That is, the ability to draw and hold the attention of an audience over an extended period of time, in such a way that a "signature" attaches to one or another aspect of the endeavour. Signature is singularising; even performance art or "live art" artists, who openly confront disciplinary mastery, continue to market their work on the strength of their singular skills in drawing, holding, working and retaining the allegiance of an audience. It is that quality of singularity and signature, and of particular modes of evaluation, which have informed action choices, which permit us to identify some of these practices *as professional*, as a matter of owned intellectual property and symbolic capital; on whose basis, in part at least, a number of livelihoods are guaranteed. My own interest lies in work characterised by disciplinary mastery, which innovates within that framework.

Hence I am more interested, from this point of view, in the work of DV8 ("physical theatre"), Theatre de Complicite, and Ariane Mnouchkine's Théâtre du Soleil, than I am in some of the work produced through and in terms specific to the conventional Performance Studies agenda. This does not mean, however, that the work of the former does not confront performance convention: in the case of the earlier work of DV8 (for example, "Enter Achilles") the company managed to address both mainstream dance and dance theatre audiences, while engaging in what I should also want to identify as *critical meta-practice*: that is, it engages simultaneously in the constitution of a fiction, and in the analysis, through juxtaposition and assimilation, of both naturalistic and highly skilled "dance" performance. From this point of view, what I need to add, because of my reference to Lloyd Newsom's critical metapractice, is that his own *theoretical* engagement, in that work, is wholly actional, operating within an oral as well as a disciplinary economy and a professional marketplace, and no less theoretical (23) for that.

That is, his choreography theorises through acute observation, contemplation, speculation, reflexion, and signature-marked, disciplinary delivery. I shall come back to this notion of the performance-theoretical as mixed-mode action, not least in order to note that this particular theoretical engagement by the professional choreographer is pursued, as far as performance-making is concerned, prior to and effectively, at that time, *without recourse to textualisation/discursivisation*. And this for the simplest of reasons, which is that he has had no need of these modes of engagement: the production processes themselves *are his actional-theoretic*s.

But let's take care here: that the choreographer's professional, disciplinary engagement is *itself* performance-theoretical does not mean that it is "readable", except for those amongst us for whom "theoretical" defaults to writing; for those amongst us who are complicit, that is to say, in what has been called the "textual turn", specific to many instances of later 20thC analysis, in the university, of so-called "critical-analytical" engagements with mixed-mode art practices. In

other words, the work is only metaphorically "*readable*" for those for whom reading, like writing, is not just the dominant code, but the preferred, even *default* option. Reading and writing dominate Performance Studies in the university as "scriptural economy", in de Certeau's terms (24). Yet literacy, others have pointed out (25), is both historically specific *and* it is not dominant within the oral economy of expert practice. In historical terms, the *theor*, in Ancient Greece, is not a writer and reader, but rather a highly skilled "tourist", a public performer of his own oral accounts of difference. "Theoria", according to Gregory Ulmer, was best understood, in that context, to mean *curiosity*. Let me insist here on the importance of curiosity, both to the disciplinary practitioner, and to my own spectating: my own inability to exhaust the performance moment captured by Fig. 3, above, has less to do with a Lacanian seduction, than with an ongoing and inexhaustible curiosity, which no explanatory myth is able, nor will be able, to satisfy. Let me call what is at work here a knot: it *works* a site of constitutive engagement, invested with curiosity but no resolution, which Mnouchkine has tied, not only in the detail of the *mise en scene*, but in the science of her casting.

In these sorts of terms, what writing-productive apparatuses might we want to bring to the task of producing an adequate "performance writing"? I am supposing that we bring, generally, what we have been trained to bring, with more or less insight, more or less skill in selecting and combining elements obtained from this inheritance, with lesser or greater inventiveness in their combination. In these sorts of terms, what I want to identify, on my own behalf, is a *crisis* for writing, in relation to the interpretative apparatuses which dominated analysis in the final three decades of the 20thC. Hal Foster, looking back, in 1996, at some of the fervent discursive production of these decades - in which his own writing, like mine, participated - might seem to be rueful in setting out what he and others have identified as the "textual turn" of that period, which reactivated late 19th/early 20thC modes of analysis (in this case, Saussurean semiology) as an apparent basis for and means to interrogate a mixed bag of cultural practices, "habits of mind" and habits of wording. The textual or textualising turn, Hal Foster pointed out, sought to refashion "much art and criticism *on the model of the text*".

Its smallest victories, in the case of those of us who are concerned with performance, are announced wherever reference is made to a "performance *text*", to a "*text of the mise en scene*"; to performance "signifiers"; to the "*readability of performance*"; to the "*discourse of the mise en scene*". These sorts of metaphoric (and imaginary) captures, I suggested earlier, have seemed particularly useful in the case of the widespread expansion of the practices of *spectator studies*, despite the observation made by Lyotard in the 1970s (26), which was that wherever text, uniform and homogeneous, can seem to be substituted for the complexity and heterogeneity of professional performance, whatever was specific to that performance *as performance* can be neatly dispensed with. The awful materiality revealed in Figs.1-4, above, can be erased from performance writing, which would seem, under the heading of spectator studies, to have better areas of concern. In the mid-1990s I identified these "better" preoccupations (27) as the "new critical orthodoxies" of spectator studies; but their grip in the university does not seem to me to have diminished in the intervening years. Under the thrall of the textual turn, which the "new critical orthodoxies" promote, certain areas of critical interest to performance practitioners are left off the analytical agenda: these include questions (and theories) of composition, of signature practice; of the relationship between percept and performance concept; of the importance of the contingent register of performance-making, and of the operations of professional intuition within the performance-disciplinary frame. As I have signalled earlier in this presentation, the question of the artistry of the performer across the performing arts, in comparison with that of choreographer or theatre director, is underengaged wherever performance is textualised; so, too, is that of intellectual property-ownership in the context of collaborative practices. Meanwhile, few of us in Performance Studies are able to elaborate the precise bases for the judgements of taste and value which we make on a daily basis, in the workshop or in the theatre.

What has been the reach of the textual turn in the university, where our concern is with what I

have called performance as "mixed-mode meta-practice"? Rather than functioning merely as an analytical tool, some have argued, the textual turn incorporated a particular "concern for the role of meanings in the social organization of power" (28), initially within specific contexts of application. Its application to a progressively wider field in the 1970s and 1980s, to include art practices and artefacts, was part of an extension of "the field of relevant objects and practices *to totality*". "[W]hat once began as an uneven articulation of different disciplinary approaches to the social study of meaning", Osborne argued at the turn of the century, little by little "acquired a unitary, transdisciplinary theoretical medium - textuality".

"As a result", he pointed out, its initial enquiry was transformed into a question of semiological "re-articulation", which had the further concern specific to the post-1968 period, which was identified as the attempt to "disrupt and rebuild chains of signifiers", and through them to effect transformations with regard to the "'positionalities' constitutive of social identities". Elements of this attempt, including the self-proclaimedly subversive performance engagement celebrating limit-forms and liminalities, according to Jon McKenzies' account in *Perform or Else* (29), were effectively institutionalised in Performance Studies in the university in the final years of the 20thC, with the consequences I have begun to outline. Now, my own suggestion is that this "semiological re-articulation", derived from a late 19th/early 20thC Saussurean linguistics, assumes a particular intensity in two sites: the first is the interface zone produced between the university and its dominant codes, on the one hand, and on the other, professional art-making and its outcomes, wherever the latter is brought into the university itself. The second, more particular to the dramatico-theatrical tradition, emerges wherever it is suggested that the dramatico-theatrical is calculated on the relationship between what is or can be written and spoken, and what is "*un*"-written or spoken, but indexically-shown.

In both cases and sites, I have equally noted elsewhere (30) that it has been widely and commonsensically assumed that the "theoretical" is specific to one side of these fissured sites, and the "practical" to the other - something which continues to be asserted by many of my colleagues, suggesting that the power of division, naming and territorialization, even amongst those who consider their work to provide challenges to dominant symbolic forms, retains its conventional force; that it is, indeed habitual. I would point out here that indeed there is no such "*thing*" as "theory", as distinct from "theoretical practices", many of which bear the signatures of "main players" within the textual-analytical fields of practice. The second site entails mainstream spectator studies of theatre performance in the university (which I should also want to characterise as abject, to the extent that they aspire to a performance-practical mastery which is not taught, which cannot be *afforded*, in more than one sense of the latter term).

I should add, with regard to my own position, that I have arrived at it slowly and with difficulty. It is this difficulty that has led me to a further observation which is that the auto-critical performance-*writing* which emerges here, is necessarily uneasy in tenor, halting, uncertain both of performance's subject, and of how that subject might be predicated. My writing in this context, as I have indicated elsewhere, is effectively *dis*-eased, at precisely those moments when one of my primary objectives is to enable expert practitioners to trace the relationship of their own expert performance-making and spectating practices through the history of that writing.

## ***4. In Place of a Conclusion***

When Peter Osborne called for a new trajectory to be established, running from Kant via Peirce through the writings of the late 1920s and 1930s of Walter Benjamin to those of Deleuze (with or without Guattari), he has what might at first seem to be a surprise or two to reveal. In order to identify one or two of those surprises, I need to pick up the threads of something which might seem to be woven into my present discourse, if you shift slightly to view it from another position.

The dry and dusty writing of the late 19thC American astronomer, mathematician and logician, Charles Peirce, who also found time, in one of his "day jobs", to "father semiotics", as some commentators so nicely put it, is relatively speaking under-represented in critical and cultural theoretical writing, in spite of Deleuze and Guattari's observation, appearing in French in 1980, that the Peircian pragmatics was "not a complement to logic, syntax, or semantics" but, "on the contrary", "the fundamental element upon which all the rest depend"[\(31\)](#).

The major Peircian contribution quoted in the context of theatre analysis, in the late 1970s and early 1980s [\(32\)](#), would seem to have been amputated from the account he gave, in 1897, of the sign or *representamen*, as something which stands to somebody or something in some respect or capacity. In addition, as many of you are undoubtedly aware, Peirce distinguished between three "sign types" - and I shall retain the term for a moment despite the problems it seems to me to have caused - which are the icon, index and symbol. What Peirce also attempted, and which is unmatched in the Saussurean model, was to tie semiosis, via the specificity of the Interpretant, to the contingencies of specific users, user-contexts, and uses.

In Osborne's "millennial" reading of Peirce, he finds "the bases for a more adequate overall conception of the relations between semantics and existential-pragmatic forms". "It is here", he adds, "that Peirce's work suggests itself as a basis for an alternative philosophical trajectory", and for the sort of semiotic cultural analysis which I have hinted is essential as soon as we identify our position between writing and professional performance disciplines and their "objects". Yet "Peirce's writings", as Osborne attests, have "only a sporadic presence" in cultural theory, "with little enduring resonance within it".

For my part, to return to the Peircian textualisation and its nouns ("sign", "icon", "index", and so on), I want to signal an ongoing concern with some of the implications of nominalism - just such a use of nouns, in what turns out to be an aspiration to divide up and name parts of (or little territories within) the continuum. The British linguist Michael Halliday once described the tendency toward use of nouns in place of process words as an attempt to impose a synoptic order on the dynamic and chaotic [\(33\)](#). Peirce, as late 19thC scientist with a keen interest in habit, convention, classification and naming, attempted to distinguish between, by naming them (as though they might thereby be fixed longer in time and space) three "types of signs", on the basis of their relationship with what were held to be, by convention, their objects.

Now, it would be foolish of me to fail to acknowledge the popular uptake of the term "the sign", its neat appeal to commonsense and habit; yet, with all due respect to late 19thC scientific aspirations, I remain wholly persuaded that there "is no such 'thing' as 'a sign'". Why this enduring popularity? My argument is that as long as the nominalised and apparently unitised "the sign" can seem to be able to stand-in for "the word", and can seem in this to hint at a text about-to-happen, then "the sign" will retain its interest for those condemned to a predominantly *textual* economy. If there is no such "thing" as "the sign", nor then, is there "an icon", or "an index", although there may indeed be iconic, indexical or symbolic signifying *processes*, whenever and wherever there is agreement between parties to that contract as to the usefulness or appropriateness of proceeding as though that were the case. In place of "a sign", let's identify *a site*, which may also be a meeting place, where *something happens* - semiosis - (or does not), for one or another perceiver (amongst whom let us not forget "the [omniattentive] performer").

From this perspective, where semiosis is an act, and an event - indeed a virtual contract - we might need to identify, in place of writing and reading, diverse *sites* of semiotic engagement, at none of which, for all that, the perceiver engaged in signifying processes has any need of textualisation; may remain at the levels of curiosity, recognition of patterns, or diagrams, or schematic accounts already familiar in that schematic identity; observation of a familiar operation, surprise, wonderment. These are all instances of (a Peircian) semiotic (iconic and indexical) engagement - which operate, on performance's behalf, with no necessary recourse to

textualisation. And this is the case even where they might nonetheless seem, in their complexity, to *point one or another spectator to* (Peirce's indexicality) a place or pattern in a pre-existing written formation, such as that provided by the Freudian theory of dreams. Or, at least, they have no need to engage with writing, unless and until those of us who read and write for a living take hold of them in a professional, writing-productive context and economy, to one or another ends.

## Endnotes

- [1.](#) See, for example, his *S/Z*, first published in French in 1970, by *Editions du seuil*, and in R. Miller's English-language translation by Hill and Wang, New York, in 1974.
- [2.](#) Photography for Figures 1-3 is by M. Laurent, from *Les Atrides: Iphigénie à Aulis* and *Agamemnon*, by Théâtre du Soleil, mise en scene by Ariane Mnouchkine; published by Théâtre du Soleil, 1992, Paris.
- [3.](#) The term "performative" is overused in the field, often simply as an adjectival form relating to the noun "performance". I am using the term here in a way derived from the Austinian coining, to signal performance elements which *cause something* (because the theatrical circumstances are effectively ritualised) *to occur* or be produced in/by (some) spectators in the theatre event. The performative power of performance work can thereby be distinguished from the power of "representation", which conventionally refers us *back*, from perception, to something supposed to pre-exist or exist externally to what is perceived. A study of *re*-presentation links the present and presented *back*, or *out*; a study of the performative, in performance, focuses on performance as action and potential interaction; hence in the performance circumstance it is *present-and-future* in its orientation to spectating. An interesting account of the operation of the performative in photographic portraiture is given by P. Phelan in her *Unmarked*, Routledge: London and New York, 1993.
- [4.](#) See for example N. K. Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London, 1999.
- [5.](#) Badiou's work on ethics is worth entertaining in this context.
- [6.](#) The term is Barthes' and comes from his *L'Obvie et l'obtus*, Editions du seuil, Paris 1982, translated by R. Howard as *The Responsibility of Forms*, Blackwell: London 1986.
- [7.](#) Knot theory interested Jacques Lacan; my simpler use here echoes that of the theatre practitioner and writer, Eugenio Barba, for whom the knot *as knot* is pleasurable. See for example E. Barba and N. Savarese, *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer*, trans. R. Fowler, Routledge: London and New York, 1991.
- [8.](#) In his *Reading the Figural, or, Philosophy After the New Media*, Duke University Press, 2001, D. Rodowick uses the term "constellational" in his attempt to apply J-F. Lyotard's "figural" to film and film-making. My sense is that his use here is "Peircian" (Charles Peirce) in that his "constellational" is schematic, a recognisable pattern or incipient pattern, hence Peirce's iconic function.
- [9.](#) This notion of the schema as "spatio-temporal relations that embody or realize some purely conceptual relations" comes from G. Deleuze, *La Philosophie critique de Kant*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1963, and is taken up in Umberto Eco's *Kant and the Platypus*, trans. A. McEwen, Secker & Warburg: London, 1999.
- [10.](#) In one notorious account of symbolic or schematic hypotyposis, de Man describes it in terms of a figuration, "which makes present, to the senses, something which is out of their

reach, not just because it does not happen to be there but because it consists, in whole or in part, of elements too abstract for sensory representation" (*On Metaphor*, ed. Sheldon Sacks, University of Chicago Press, 1979).

[11.](#) In my *A Semiotics of the Dramatic Text*, Macmillan: London 1994, I signal the differences between *ana*-lysis and *cata*-lysis: the first dissolves into significant parts; the second not only combines, but causes the individually-identifiable parts to act upon each other, in an up-building process producing a whole greater than and different from the sum of its parts.

[12.](#) I draw here on Deleuze's useful reconfiguration of Foucault's writing (*Foucault*, trans. S. Hand, Athlone Press: London, 1988) in which the former recalls Foucault's distinction between what is lit - hence visible - and what is luminous (pp.47-69).

[13.](#) This is G. Ulmer's term, from his *Teletheory*, Routledge: New York & London, 1989. Ulmer identifies the explanatory myth as one aspect, or function, of "theory".

[14.](#) The diagram is from *Le Petit Larousse Illustré, Dictionnaire Encyclopédique*, Larousse, Paris, 1996, p.1005.

[15.](#) Given its late-20thC history, I use the term "seduction" with some misgiving. Can we use the term without engaging in what Ulmer (1989) has called the "hermeneutics of suspicion"?

[16.](#) I have borrowed the term from P. Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1977.

[17.](#) M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. S. Rendall, University of California Press: Berkeley and London, 1984.

[18.](#) P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. R. Nice, Routledge: London & New York, 1984.

[19.](#) S. Melrose, 'Restaging "Theory" in the Postgraduate Performance Studies Workshop', *New Theatre Quarterly*, Vol. XV, Part 1, 1999. J. McKenzie makes a similar point, more forcefully, in his *Perform...Or Else*, Routledge: London and New York, 2000.

[20.](#) H. Foster, *The Return of the Real*, MIT Press: Massachusetts and London, 1999.

[21.](#) J. McKenzie - see note 19, above.

[22.](#) P. Osborne, *Philosophy in Cultural Theory*, Routledge: London and New York, 2000.

[23.](#) Ulmer points out (*Heuretics: The Logic of Invention*, Johns Hopkins, 1994) that the etymology of the term "theory" signals the importance to it of curiosity, observation, speculation, reflection and performance, in periods prior to the "technologizing of the word" (note 25, below) in and by writing. The "theor", operating in an oral and performance-based economy, without recourse to writing, visited and returned from distant parts, performed a ritual or two, and reported back verbally, in a public display of pomp and ceremony. That "theory", in commonsensical terms, widely defaults today to certain registers of writing does not seem to me to provide sufficient bases for our refusing to see in, for example, inventive choreography, a theoretical-schematics, arrived at through expert choreographic practice, and invented on those bases, without recourse to complex registers of writing. What that choreographic-theoretic *theorises* is potentially contemporary dance practice; dance creativity; work on the human body, and on the perspectives provided by spectating; dance-thematics, and the dancer-choreographic interface. In other words, the list is long, complex, and practice-dependent.

[24.](#) M. de Certeau, *ibid.*

[25.](#) W. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, Methuen: London, 1982.

[26.](#) J-F. Lyotard, "The Tooth, the Palm", *Sub-Stance*, 15, 1976.

[27.](#) S. Melrose, *ibid*.

[28.](#) P. Osborne, *ibid*.

[29.](#) J. McKenzie, *ibid* (see note 19 above).

[30.](#) See my "Please Adjust Your Set", at <http://www.sfmelrose.u-net.com>

[31.](#) G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. B. Massumi, Univ. of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1987, p.85.

[32.](#) The most influential English-language text was K. Elam's *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* for Methuen, London, 1982, now reprinted by Routledge.

[33.](#) M. A. K. Halliday, "Language and the Order of Nature", in N. Fabb et al (eds), *The Linguistics of Writing*, Manchester University Press: Manchester, 1987.

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