On Tourism

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**FORTHCOMING ISSUES**

Issues 2(3) and 3(1) of Performance Research will be entitled *On Refuge* and *On America* and will appear in the Winter of 1997 and Spring of 1998.

*On Refuge*: performance has ever been nomadic. Many artists have found themselves politically, culturally and financially exiled from institutions, have chosen or been forced to migrate, or deliberately to situate themselves outside accepted structures and sites. *On Refuge* examines how those conditions affect the work and considers how contemporary performance constitutes the conditions for its own production—and its own survival. The issue will explore ideas about home and exile, site, location and migration—both of artists themselves and of the forms at play in performance today.

*On America* will respond to the powerful presence in contemporary culture of aesthetic forms and political strategies derived from North America. Counterpointing *Letters from Europe*, the issue will address the use and abuse of images of and from North America, the deconstruction in performance theory and practice of North American art, film and performance, and the presentation of America as genre and fiction. With contributions from theatre-makers, artists, theorists and critics outside North America, as well as those working on the cultural and aesthetic fringes within the Americas, the issue will debate the influence of North American cultural products and practices, providing a forum for debate over cultural hegemony and displacement, identity and aesthetic practice.

**ESSAY COMPETITION**

In order to encourage new writing and new writers Performance Research is establishing an annual writing prize competition. The winning essay will be published annually in the Spring issue of the journal. The competition is open to anyone who has not published previously in a peer reviewed journal and is aimed at emerging writers, artists and graduates. Submissions can be made in the writer's preferred language.

Full details of the competition can be obtained from Clancy Pegg, Administrator, Performance Research, Market Road, Cardiff, CF5 1QE, UK. The closing date for the 1998 competition will be 1 September 1998.

The essay need not be linked to the journal's specific theme but should address contemporary practices or contemporary investigations of performance practice and its history. The essays will be judged by a select committee drawn from the journal's Editorial and International Advisory Boards.

**SUBMISSIONS**

Performance Research is a peer reviewed arts journal published three times a year which addresses contemporary performance research and practice internationally. It aims to promote a cross-disciplinary exchange of ideas; making connections between theatre, dance, music, time-based and live art. The editors are interested in receiving submissions...
and proposals from artists, independent writers, critics and academics working in these fields and in other disciplines. We encourage proposals using visual, graphic and photographic forms, including photo essays, original artwork for the page and mixed media submissions as well as substantial articles and reviews. There is no payment for articles except in the case of commissions for which funding may be sought. It is the responsibility of authors to seek permissions for all visual material.

Proposals may be submitted on one sheet of A4 containing an abstract, proposed word count and description. Unsolicited articles may be submitted for consideration by email, on disk or double spaced in hard copy. Detailed guidelines for preparing text will be sent either on request or on acceptance for publication. Proposals are considered at least nine months before publication.

Proposals and articles, including book reviews, should be sent to:

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**Preface**


*On Tourism* is an issue born largely from the proceedings of a conference. 'Points of Contact: Performance, Tourism and Identity' was the sixth project in a continuing series of international conferences staged by the Centre for Performance Research. No ordinary conference however, more a festival of lectures, performances, installations and outings where all participants were promised 'an unusual journey exploring performances at the intersection of tourism and identity, theory and practice'. We would like here to extend our thanks to the conference organizers and all the participants whose work could not be included in this issue but who helped to make it such a special occasion.

This issue will be followed by *On Refuge* which is dedicated to tourism's reverse sides—to home and the politics of locality, and to the involuntary voyages of millions of people who travel the globe, often in the opposite direction from the tourists.

Whilst acknowledging debts of gratitude we would like to record our thanks to Centre for Performance Research and Dartington College of Arts for their financial support and assistance for the journal, and to De Montfort University, Leicester who have recently confirmed their continued investment in our enterprise and which directly enables us to employ the unsung heroine of all our efforts, known and appreciated by all our contributors, our journal administrator, Clancy Pegg.

In thinking about the future we spent a two-day 'editors' retreat' last month, reviewing our progress and the journal's position, hopes and aspiration. We are determined that the journal should continue to be a vehicle for new ways of recording, re-presenting and analysing contemporary performance, and that it should in itself be a site for experiment. We wish to encourage a greater dialogue between practitioners and scholars and we have resolved to instigate practical projects beyond the printed page (short courses, round table discussions, conferences and gatherings) that will, hopefully, generate material for Performance Research. In short we want the journal to play an active role in what's going on out there, not just to be at the 'cutting edge' but also the steel which sharpens.

Ric Allsopp, Richard Gough and Claire MacDonald, editors (August 1997).
Our journey began in Aberystwyth, a small university town and seaside resort in West Wales, where every year, when the students have deserted the town for their summer break, the tourists move in. On a sunny morning in early September 1996, one such group of travellers mounted two coaches which were waiting to take them on a journey round the scenic beauties and historic sites of the Welsh countryside; on board, an international gathering of performance artists, theatre theorists, cultural anthropologists and experts in tourism. We had all come to Wales for the itinerant 'Points of Contact: Performance, Tourism and Identity' conference, organized by the Centre for Performance Research. The conference brochure had promised an 'unusual journey exploring performance at the intersection of tourism and identity, theory and practice'. The staging of the conference as a package holiday did indeed intersect the barrier we usually erect between the practice of tourism and its critical reflection in theory. The tourist was no longer Evelyn Waugh's 'the other fellow'; we found ourselves performing the identity of the tourist 'against our better judgment'. The world, or that bit of it which we call Wales, was floating past our coach window as on an over-sized cinema screen. We occasionally interrupted our voyage to disembark at 'places of special interest', set like theatrical stages amidst the filmic scenery: a disused slate mine where otherwise out-of-work miners performed a past that had become history; an old manor where otherwise out-of-work actors performed a history that had become heritage; a museum village where buildings from every region of Wales had been painstakingly reconstructed in an attempt to rescue authenticity; and a fantasy village where every architectural style of this world had been plundered in an attempt to defy it. What we acquired in knowledge about the local culture was what it chose to display. But was there anything behind the scenes and screens on which the performances of tourism were enacted for us?

This fifth issue of Performance Research is a souvenir brought home from that journey. It includes eight contributions arising from and responding to the conference in Wales, complemented by articles which reverberate with similar concerns: those of display, representation, site, identity formation and political intervention.

How could one map that area of 'intersection' where tourism, performance and identity meet? Does not tourism contradict both concepts? Does it not turn vibrant local performances into 'dead tourist theatre' (Marcel Mauss), and destroy authentic identities? Is not the nomadic and unsettling nature of contemporary performance antithetical to the superficial and safety-seeking practice of tourism? Conventionally, tourism is firmly positioned in our modern world view as the commodified and exploitative opposite of 'good travel'. However, metaphors of travel and tourism have proliferated recently in cultural criticism.* They appear in the same historical moment that performance and performativity have become new critical tropes: itinerant identities, nomadic criticism, travelling theory and the tourist-as-theorist parallel those of performative subjectivity, the play of writing, performing theory and the critic-as-performer. The notion of 'culture as travel' has emerged alongside that of 'culture as performance' to destabilize the fixed, and ethnocentric, categories of traditional theories on culture. And through the temporary and displaced, performing and travelling cultures of contemporary ethnography wanders the 'tourist', playing the rôle of de-essentialized postmodern subjectivity, in the company of Benjamin's 'flâneur', Kristeva's 'stranger' and Deleuze's 'nomad'. Yet the notion that we are 'all always already tourists', as Rustom Bharucha pointed out at the conference, still contradicts the reality of millions of people (as does the notion of identity as one of mere performance). The triadic relationship of tourism, performance and identity continues to exceed its epistemological reappraisal and sets us amidst the reality of tourism and its ongoing inscription into the inequalities of race, gender, class and culture.

The contributions to this issue suggest various points of departure for an expedition into the relationship of performance, tourism and identity.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett focuses on journeys to the foreign country that is our past, or, in the jargon of the industry, our 'heritage'. When she poignantly speaks about the 'resurrection theatre of the heritage industry', she alludes to two implications that the widespread use of theatrical practice in the staging of heritage have: the 'afterlife' such

reenactments breathe into dead and obsolete cultural practices; and the resurrection of defunct and outdated hyperrealist theatre practices which find a new lease of life in heritage tourism. In discussing the politics of representation at work in these practices, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues that all heritage performance is deeply implicated in the construction of what it claims to 'truthfully' represent.

Thus tourism and tourist performances also play a vital role in the construction of cultural identities. Many performances of cultural identity today take place within the intercultural framework of tourism. It is as such a cross-cultural encounter in and through performance that tourism first caught the eye of performance studies, a young discipline that was drawing its inspiration from anthropology. The relations of power manifest in the encounters of tourism and their consequences for the status of 'authenticity' and identity have become the main issues of critical debate in the field. Ron Jenkins touches on the question of power and performance in his discussion of traditional temple performances in Bali, which have devised ways of putting the inevitable tourist's presence into play by incorporating it into the fabric of the performance. A similar performative negotiation of identity and cultural exchange is the topic of folklorist Dorothy Noyes. Analysing collective performance at a Catalan folk festival, Noyes identifies different performative strategies for dealing with tourism, which she traces back to conflicting notions of local identity.

Noyes also reflects upon her own authorial performance of 'critic-as-traveller', which becomes the point of departure for the travel-diaries of Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Elena Siemens. Gómez-Peña's account of his voyage 'from Chiapas to Wales' is a variation on the well-known theme of the artist's journey, which gains a new dimension when the artist is a performer whose work has been a sharp critique of both tourism and its travel companion, ethnography. Walking through her native Moscow in search of its theatres, Elena Siemens performs what she calls, with de Certeau, the wanderer's attempt to 'write the city' with her body. Gómez-Peña and Siemens both personify a different type of itinerant identity, the border crosser and the urban flâneur, yet their travel diaries share a sense of alienation of the familiar, a rupturing of usual modes of perception that may be typical of all experiences of travel.

The experience of travel and its relation to subjectivity also occupies one of the leading sociologists of tourism, Dean MacCannell, in his investigation into the world of virtual travel. Such travel has extended and commodified what tourism and theatre have in common: the mode of virtuality. Whereas conventional tourism and theatre, however, still rely on a dialectic between the 'virtual' and the everyday 'real' as the basis for their representational economy, MacCannell argues that travels through computer-generated environments break with the everyday real 'to create pure fantasies that are not dependent on their connections to life'. MacCannell's observations on the implications of Virtual Reality for the status of place, subjectivity, agency and the constitution of reality reverberate with many issues at stake in the current debate on performance, not least in his suggestion of an artistic alternative.

Another alternative model for approaching place which takes into account the complexity of its cultural and historical reality is introduced by the collaboration between performer Mike Pearson and archaeologist Michael Shanks on their visits to sites and landscapes in Wales. In their multivocal 're-interpenetration' of discourses and spatial practices, the scientific discipline of archaeology opens itself to the aesthetic by reading a site through performances of poetry and memory, whilst the performative takes over the detailed recording of history and politics usually ascribed to science.

Pearson and Shanks share their search for a different kind of 'writing' of experience, which may expand on both the conventions of travel writing and those of performance analysis, with a number of other contributions in this issue that use travel diaries, storytelling, photographs and postcards. Rustom Bharucha chooses the form of oral history to reflect on the narratives of cultural tourism in India in his story about an actual performance event. Though the immediacy of his delivery at the 'Performance, Tourism and Identity' conference is inevitably lost in the transcript, the article retains its strength through its merging of performative storytelling and theoretical reflection. Epic, tangential and ironic, Bharucha's very telling of a story of missed opportunity becomes in itself an act of political intervention into the highly conflictive scene of Indian politics.

The potential of theatre for political intervention is addressed in the concluding group of essays in this issue. Richard Schechner's article on 'Believed-in theatre' is an exploration of what may be called the 'real-effect' in contemporary theatre: the the-atricalization of personal memories, local stories and everyday-life material from which this theatre draws its political force. Schechner discusses a wide and diverse range of theatrical practices to reveal the scope of the
recent reassertion of categories such as 'authenticity', 'experience', 'reality' and 'presence' in theatre in spite of their undoing in critical theory. Schechner's writings on the aesthetics and politics of North American 'community-based theatre' are complemented by two articles on an example of a European form of 'community theatre' which combines a commitment to oppositional politics with material drawn from the canon of European dramatic literature through which the everyday-political is investigated: that of Ariane Mnouchkine and the Théâtre du Soleil. David Williams's short history of the company and Susan Melrose's review of Tartuffe both suggest a reading of the work against the grain of recent criticism of its depoliticization. They locate the work's political stance in the decided 'localness' of its theatrical form. This localness may also offer a locus of resistance to the global industry that is tourism, a location from which to intervene into the global scenes of travel and displacement at the end of the twentieth century.

The artist's prepared pages we have commissioned explore the role of the visual as the dominant mode through which tourism engages with its objects. Coco Fusco and Nao Bustamante play with the desiring, exoticizing and eroticizing gaze of the tourist. Their photo-essay comments on the various forms of 'consumption' which 'feed' tourism: those of food, sex and of the 'other', which Fusco and Bustamante relate to their effect on women of colour. Mary Lemley's images of the sites visited or passed during the 'Performance, Tourism and Identity' conference here help to put Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's remarks 'in their place'. They are complex memory performances, each not merely representing a scene but itself becoming part of the scenery depicted.

Lemley's 'postcards' from the conference bring us full circle. We would like to thank all the contributors whose dedication, patience and generosity have helped to put On Tourism 'on the road'.

Heike Roms and Richard Gough, Issue Editors, On Tourism

Afterlives Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

This is a reworked transcript of the keynote given at the 'Performance, Tourism and Identity' Conference in Wales. September 1996.
In August 1996 I spent a week's holiday in Wales. Judie Christie, Trisha Rhodes and Adam Hayward from Centre for Performance Research were my hosts and guides. They took me to places I had never visited before. All of these places were the sites chosen for the 'Performance, Tourism and Identity' conference planned for the following month. I took photographs as I explored each place as a tourist. Later, at home in London, I selected 100 photographs out of my 200 odd, and set about making a small postcard-size watercolour of each one. When I returned to Wales for the conference, I began placing each watercolour within the site where the picture was taken originally. It was like trying to return what was in the frame to its own vanishing point.

I took a photograph, I made a painting, then returned the painting back to the world its image was derived from. The conference delegates passed them on their sojourn around Wales; the paintings were out there looking for their identity.

The photographs represent this journey. The first photograph is from the visit in August. The second photograph is the place in which the watercolour was returned. The third is a close-up of the small painting.

I did not tell anyone about the paintings during the conference, if they did not notice or ask. On the last day I showed slides of the original photographs along with slides of the paintings. When almost everyone had left after the close of the conference, I overheard this conversation at Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff. 

'There's a tiny picture of Chapter sticking to the wall just outside, do you know anything about it?'

'What is it?'

'I don't know.'

'Why don't you go and get it?'
'OK…'. She goes off and gets the picture. She brings it back and all three examine it closely.

'Is it a photocopy?'

'No, but it might be a print.' They all look again even closer, at least six inches from their eyes. One of them tilts the picture in the light back and forth at eye level, they all squint and crane their necks. 'It's definitely a pencil drawing, look how the pencil lines glint in the light.'

'Yes.'

'How do we know if it's real?'

'I'll take a rubber to it…but I just couldn't. I like it.'

'Yes it's really very good.'

'How funny, let's keep it.'

I am standing five feet away. Do I tell them? Nah.

MARY LEMLEY 1997

• Portmeirion, August 1996.

• Portmeirion, September 1996. Watercolour in landscape.

• Portmeirion, September 1996. Watercolour close-up.
'Where history comes alive!' This is the promise of Llancaiach Fawr Manor, which invites visitors to 'step back in time to the year 1645'. That we did. Our conference itinerary took us not only back to the seventeenth century, but also down to recently exhausted mines below the earth's surface and through villages buried beneath new forests. When a way of life disappears with the mining economy that once sustained it or is literally wiped out by the forestation enterprise that replaces it, tourism is ready to step in. The formula for revitalizing the economy of a depressed region is the resurrection theatre of the heritage industry. While tourist attractions may seem like oases of time out, they are implicated in a larger political economy of transnational flows of money, people and symbolic capital. How does this work in Wales?

- Campws Penglais, August 1996.
- Campws Penglais, September 1996.
- Campws Penglais, September 1996.

Not only in developing countries is tourism often the largest industry and earner of foreign capital. Developed countries experiencing a decline of their agricultural and industrial economies also turn to tourism. Llechwedd Slate Caverns, like other mining attractions in Wales, speak to structural changes in the economy, specifically the decline of heavy industry, manufacture, agriculture and what are called the energy industries. These sites are also witnesses to relatively high unemployment. The shift seen here parallels transitions elsewhere to a service-based economy. Tourism is, among other things, a service industry. Most of the money in tourism is in transportation and accommodation. When the industry measures itself, it counts nights, not days, because nights represent accommodation and money spent on lodging represents a large proportion of tourist spending.
Tourism 2000, the strategy document for Wales issued by the Welsh Tourist Board in 1994—every country seems to be producing a tourism policy document for the year 2000—reports that tourism here currently accounts for about 9 per cent of the economy or 1.5 billion pounds. An impediment to the expansion of tourism, according to this document, is the fragmented character of the industry. Fragmentation is also a positive feature, for it generally indicates a preponderance of small operators and a low ratio of tourists to locals—that is, a more local style of tourism, with more tourist money staying where it is spent. A second feature of tourism in Wales is that the domestic market leads, which means more car and day trips, and lower spending by those tourists. International tourists buy long haul airfares, spend more nights in hotels, and generally spend more per day, but profits are likely to leave the region as they flow through the vertical integration of multinational transportation and lodging industries. The proposal to increase international tourism is intended to generate more revenue from fewer people, one formula for what is called 'sustainable tourism'. Diversification of the amenity, which is how the industry speaks of its product, is also a way to reduce the strain on popular sites, spread the industry more evenly over the region and stimulate growth. Thirdly, cultural tourism accounts for two-thirds of the industry in Wales. A 1994 survey identified 426 known visitor attractions, of which museums make up 37 per cent and historic sites make up 27 per cent, an emphasis characteristic of the United Kingdom more generally. Trailing behind are countryside, railways, craft and leisure (sports, amusement parks, commercial entertainment). There is a push to develop environmental tourism, eco-tourism and athletic encounters with nature, all of them involving interfaces (rafting, abseiling, climbing, kayaking, etc.) more profitable than scenic views enjoyed free of charge. Adventure tourism is also a way to compete for a younger market. Finally, there is business-related tourism. That's us. Conferences bring visitors from afar and usually include opportunities for sightseeing and shopping.

Tourism is an export industry. Whereas other export industries move the goods to the consumer, tourism brings the consumer to the site. It does this by producing the local for export. Some types of tourism, like Club Med and Disneyworld, are largely independent of the places where they are located. Others are strongly predicated on 'hereness'. While they could be recreated
anywhere, which is the appeal of theme parks, sites of hereness must be consumed on the spot—precisely here and nowhere else for their full effect. Something is lost when they are experienced as dislocated recreations. Virtually all the places on our conference itinerary are deeply connected to the very place in which they are found. In the case of the Amgueddfa Werin Cymru Sain Ffagan Museum of Welsh Life St Fagans, an open air museum, all of Wales, so to speak, has been brought to one place. At Portmeirion, architectural elements from hither and yon have found their final resting place in an idiosyncratic assemblage. Tourisms of hereness can be taken as barometers and operate as instruments of local and national self-understanding.


The first step in using tourism to advance the project of national identity is to put Wales on the map. Many places on the ground are not on the map. Policy makers say that 'the industry must create a stronger identity for the Welsh tourist product abroad'. Brands of tourism, to a greater extent than brands of biscuits or buttons, figure prominently in larger identity formations. Tourism 2000 is explicit on this point: 'Wales is a distinctive country with its own language, culture and heritage, rather than just another region of Britain. It is often said that the culture of Wales is more of an asset in overseas markets than it is in the domestic market.' This asymmetry in the value of Wales—its natural resources, labour and culture—did not start with tourism, though tourism tends to reduce it to one of impression management: 'the image is indistinct and sometimes poor. The image of Wales in the larger international tourism market lacks a clear identity. Wales is not seen as a separate country with its own heritage and cultural traditions. Or it is not known at all. Or visitors come with a vision of heavy industry and coal, or not a positive image.' As this statement suggests—and as our conference itinerary confirms—identity is not simply a marketing issue, as in image, brand name and identity of the tourist product. Nor is identity simply a Welsh claim to the territory and borders of Wales. Identity is all of these and more. Tourism is implicated in identity issues through a process of differentiation. Dean MacCannell has discussed this process in his classic work, The Tourist (MacCannell 1976). Not only does tourism figure in the differentiation of local spots within a global space, but also tourism produces a mobile meeting place—what Edward M. Bruner (1996) calls border zones, what Dean MacCannell (1992) calls empty meeting grounds, and what Guillermo Gómez-Peña performs as the border. The differentiations that are performed in the global space of tourism are vital to the formation and deployment of local identities.

Heritage tourism in Wales shows this very clearly. Tourism 2000, under the heading 'Culture and Heritage', proposes to use the 'distinctive cultural language' of Wales and its 'unique identity and sense of place' to 'reinforce the image of Wales as a distinct and different destination for visitors'. The point is repeated: Wales is to be promoted 'as a separate and different country offering a uniquely Welsh holiday experience'. Distinctive, unique, distinct, different, separate. There is more at stake here than marketing. Such exercises in self-presentation go beyond tourism. Even the tourism planners are quick to recognize that 'the Welsh language and the cultural traditions of Wales are vital to the future of Wales as a country. The Welsh Tourist Board believes that the retention of a linguistic and cultural identity of Wales is also important in a tourism context especially for the development of overseas markets.' This approach runs counter to the received wisdom that holds tourism responsible for eroding difference, homogenizing culture, franchising a limited number of cultural icons, and producing ersatz places, though the appeal to identity does not preclude such outcomes. Most importantly, exercises in self-presentation inside and outside the tourism industry are deeply implicated in one another. It is not simply a matter of being one thing to ourselves and something else to others. First, tourism may be the only place where certain cultural
traditions are performed. They may have ceased to be performed in any other context, and tourism in a sense becomes a museum for them. Indeed, tourism often speaks of itself as a museum-Turkey as the largest open air museum in the world, and the ocean floor off the Bikini Islands as the museum of the dawn of the atomic age. Secondly, the performances of identity that we see in heritage productions are amplified through tourism because tourism is also a broadcast medium. Not only does the industry use mass media to market its product to a wide audience, but tourism also brings masses of people to the sites themselves. Performances of identity at these sites are in turn amplified through tourism—they are repeated, canonized, clarified and seen and recorded by a flow of visitors. Thirdly, tourism can be catalytic in the elaboration of heritage in local contexts, even when tourists are not there. Several papers presented at the conference make just this point, for example, the work of Dorothy Noyes in Catalonia and Ron Jenkins in Bali. The Welsh Tourist Board is counting on this effect as well, though they realize that the commercialization of Welshness for tourists could undermine the intensifying effect of tourism on awareness and appreciation of Welshness in a local context among local people: 'We consider that on balance tourism is of significant benefit to the cause of maintaining Welsh cultural and linguistic identity' and 'We further believe that pride and interest in this living heritage can be strengthened through tourism'. In this spirit, bilingual signage (in Welsh and English) has as one of its purposes 'to help create in the mind of the visitor a sense of place'. These signs tell you in more ways than one precisely where you are and where you are not. Overriding the specification of this town or street is the message that you are in Wales, not England.

• Cardiff, August 1996.

• Cardiff, September 1996. Watercolour in landscape.

A key instrument of localization is the process of historical recovery. Economies that have died stage their return as exhibitions of themselves, as heritage. *Tourism 2000* speaks of this process as 'Living Heritage'. Living heritage, to my
way of thinking, is an oxymoron. Why is it necessary to specify 'living'? Why not just heritage? If there is living heritage, there must be dead heritage. The reason that living must be specified is because the very term 'heritage' signifies death, whether actual or imminent. 'Heritage', the term and concept, endows the dead and the dying with a second life, an afterlife, through the instrumentalities of exhibition and performance. It is in this sense that heritage productions are 'resurrection theatre'.

• Cardiff, September 1996. Watercolour close-up.

As I have argued elsewhere (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998), heritage is a mode of cultural production, a point that is obscured by the discourse of discovery and recovery. The brochures proclaim that history is waiting for you. Yet while they speak in a language of recuperation, regeneration, restitution, restoration, recreation, the transvaluation of the obsolete, mistaken, outmoded, dead and defunct produces something new. We may 'step back in time to the year 1645', but where do we then find ourselves? In a place where the year is always 1645 and history repeats itself annually. These are repetitions with full knowledge of all that has happened since 1645, a prophetic capacity that the actors at the site must work hard to suppress, and that structures the visitor's experience.

Indeed, the very term 'historic' can be taken as an indication of obsolescence. In Palmerston North, a town in New Zealand, there is a little yellow arrow marked 'Historic Telephone Box'. Follow the arrow and you will find a telephone box sitting in front of Harcourts, a real estate office. The box is freshly painted red and a plaque from the city identifies it as an 'historic telephone box' of 1920s vintage. Real estate listings are posted on the inside of the glass. The sign on the real estate agency declares, 'Harcourts, in business since 1888', not 'historic real estate agency'. Harcourts,

which is older than the telephone box, is not historic. In other words, the telephone box is finished, Harcourts is still going. The term 'historic' references obsolescence, not age.
Policy statements and marketing discourse tend to conflate heritage and culture, there by eliding several notions of culture. If culture as lived practice refers to our everyday world, it is culture as dead practice that becomes the 'living heritage' of tourism. Culture in these senses is to be distinguished from the culture industry, which includes museums, art galleries, film, and various kinds of commercial entertainments, not the least of which is cultural tourism. How does a way of life become heritage? Five years ago the local population of Cairns, the jewel in the crown of Australia's Gold Coast, was 70,000. Today it is more than 120,000, with tourists visiting at the rate of 500,000 a year. Long-term residents mourn the loss of 'the real Cairns', which is the first step in converting a way of life into heritage.

The second step is theatrical mediation—reenactments, role-playing, audio tours, dioramas, panoramas, cycloramas and other kinds of installation. Much that is familiar from theatre is deployed in some fashion within the tourism industry. Indeed, the industry is a kind of museum of theatre practice, even as it innovates new variations and forms. While museums set out to preserve their collect-ions, they may also preserve archaic modes of installation, whether for lack of funds or other reasons. With enough time, museums and their visitors may come to appreciate the value of these 'historic' installations—the Ackley dioramas at the Milwaukee Public Museum and the American Museum of Natural History in New York, Sir John Soane's Museum in London, the Mitter Museum of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia and the Wagner Free Institute of Science, also in Philadelphia.

The third step is 'adding value'. Like the terms 'friendly fire' and 'living heritage', 'Value added' is a soft term for a hard fact. The term 'value added' is perhaps most familiar as a kind of tax. Heritage, the concept and the designation, adds value to the ways of life, industries, technologies, things and persons who, for any number of reasons, have lost value—or never had value. To speak of adding value is to specify value that is not inherent. The term is also a code word for high priced. Death leaves a mess. Castles, forts, ruins, abandoned mines, empty buildings, depleted fisheries, waning economies litter the landscape. Devising ways to 'add value' encourages the elaborations we have come to associate with tourism—from the differentiations of classes of service on airlines and the perks and premiums of package tours to the historic houses that generate more revenue as heritage than they did in their former lives. More tourists will pass through Ellis Island, the immigration processing centre in New York, than did immigrants during the peak period of mass immigration at the turn of the century. If value is not inherent, if value is added rather than simply restored, recovered or discovered, what is the nature of the value that is added? Heritage product-ions are defined by the value of 'pastness'. Rest assured that if Harcourts went out of business, they would not be celebrating their 'heritage', at least not right away. The value of pastness is not a value that can be assumed. Much that has passed is 'good riddance'. Pastness as a value has to be produced. It also needs to be shown and performed, which brings the value of exhibition to the fore—castles, palaces, forts and mines must be endowed with exhibition value.

On display, they exhibit the value of difference. Whether induced by the market or grounded in historically contested identities, difference is what makes it possible to put Wales on the tourist map. Competition with other destinations often figures difference as precedence—places make claims to the indigenous, primordial, and imperial; to the first, oldest, and biggest; to singularity of any kind, whether the best or the worst. Pastness, exhibition, difference and precedence are among the values that heritage adds.

Why is heritage better adapted to tourism than the lifeworld itself? After all, travel promises to take you somewhere that is essentially unmediated, but delivers you to ever more highly mediated sites. Those mediations are how value gets added to what is otherwise just a beach, mountain or abandoned mine. The tourist industry cannot charge for the lifeworld, nature or a mine gone bust because these are what the industry calls 'free and inherent resources'. For this reason alone, they are technically not part of the industry, though often part of the amenity—the atmosphere or style of a place. Heritage is one way to bring them into the industry. What tourism does, what it promises and what it values, is that which lies outside itself. However, the industry's economy requires that it bring free and inherent resources inside itself. This gives rise to a fundamental dilemma. The lifeworld is low density—too much dead space and down time between high points—whereas tourism promises high density experiences. The organized tour pledges to pack the best
into the shortest time for the least money—in other words, to achieve the highest ratio of attraction to logistics, and in the case of mass tourism, the 'most bang for the buck'.

The lifeworld is low density. The highlights are not clearly marked or necessarily close together. Strangers lack the insider knowledge to get to them quickly and efficiently, if at all. The lifeworld is also easily saturated. Saturation contributes to the problem of sustainability, an issue that the most visited historic towns in the United Kingdom understand all too well. Three million guests visit 30,000 hosts at Windsor, where the ratio is 100 to 1, and even higher in the peak season. The locals are so resentful that residents in areas such as Bath have been known to turn hose pipes on open-topped buses. While this does not yet seem to be a problem in Wales, there might well come a day when towns that have been overrun with tourists will become uninhabitable.

Tourism 2000 proposes to avoid this problem by developing attractions that can accommodate 500,000 visitors a year. However, the infrastructure for accommodating such flows generally dominates the experience of high visitation sites because of the high ratio of infrastructure to attraction. Recognizing that heritage is an intermittent presence on the contemporary landscape, the Welsh Tourist Board also plans to create heritage regions by linking sites together thematically and marketing them together. Increasingly these sites are depending on distinctive forms of theatrical mediation—immersive, environmental, improvisatory—to convey their stories. Not only are they linked to form a thematic heritage region or trail, but also they come to resemble one another for this very reason.

The theatrical mediation that animates these sites is part of the history of heritage production in its own right. This can be seen with special clarity in Plymouth, Massachusetts. In the town of Plymouth today, the history of the heritage production is even more fully visible than the Pilgrim history these productions commemorate. There are historic buildings, plaques, walking tours, museums of artifacts, wax museums, archaeological sites, commemorative events, souvenir shops, thematized restaurants and the recreated, village—in sum, the town and its environs are a museum of heritage performance practices.

Plimoth Plantation, located on the outskirts of Plymouth, is the most fully realized mediation of pilgrim 'heritage'. This site holds to the principle of first-person interpretation even more strictly than what we experienced at Llancaiach Fawr Manor. It also holds the line more firmly between pilgrims and visitors. Visitors are not as a rule asked to play pilgrims, whereas at Llancaiach Fawr

- Cardiff, August 1996.
- Cardiff, September 1996. Watercolour in landscape.
- Cardiff, September 1996. Watercolour close-up.
Manor, 'if you fancy yourself as "Colonel" Prichard you can try on his armour and discover what it was like to carry over 70lbs of weaponry into battle. Children can dress up in period costume and take a turn in the stocks'. Llancaiach Fawr Manor takes an existing building and the year 1645 as its point of departure, while at Plimoth Plantation, where the year is always 1626, the village is recreated on the basis of archaeological evidence, using entirely new materials, but traditional tools and techniques.

Plimoth Plantation is but the most recent interpretive treatment of a site whose primary touchstone was literally a rock, Plymouth Rock, thought to mark the place where the pilgrims first set foot. What's to be done with a rock? Standing at that spot, with little more than a plaque to distinguish this rock from any other, visitors look out over the ocean and are left to themselves to visualize the historical events this site is meant to commemorate. A little portico was eventually added to protect the rock from those inclined to chip off souvenirs. The portico and plaque exemplify what Dean MacCannell (1976) calls site sacralization, a process that involves naming, framing, enshrinement and reproduction. This attraction—it is a very plain, very big rock—is mute. It is incapable of conveying anything about 'the pilgrim experience', which is the *sine qua non* of the recreated pilgrim village. Nor does the little neoclassical portico, whose role is the enshrinement and protection of a relic, help in this regard. Other than reverence and quiet contemplation, there are no protocols for what to do, besides standing along the edge of the portico and staring at the rock. The assumption in years past was that any visitors attracted to the site already knew the story, whether through its frequent retelling as part of the national founding story or through history books and tourist guides. The minimalism of this approach—its patently untheatrical character, the absence of mimesis or illusion, the literalism of the rock—is consistent with a Puritan sensibility.

If earlier types of heritage performance were responses to a rock, the recreated village is a response to a hole—the hole that was left after archaeologists excavated the pilgrim settlement.

At Plimoth Plantation, the settlement is literally recreated and peopled in a spirit of archaeological optimism. Given the remains and the documents and archaeology's inferential methods, the creators of Plimoth Plantation restore a whole
from the fragments. Nothing could be further from the theatre/archaeology that Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks performed during the conference at Esgair Fraith and Plas Tany Bwlch. Wedding poststructuralist archaeology with postmodern performance, their theatre/archaeology builds on the poetics of fragments and gaps, rather than on materializing a virtual world of the past. At Plimoth Plantation, archaeological actualities, the excavated fragments, are staged in the museum, while the virtual pilgrim world is recreated in the village. Both the museum and the village are optimistic statements about what can be found, known, shown and experienced. Both involve theatrical mediations, the museum operating in the tradition of object theatre, the village in the mode of environmental and improvisatory performance.

- Llechwedd Slate Caverns, August 1996.

It is not by accident that one of the most influential exhibition conceptualizers of our time was first a theatre director. Jeshajahu Weinberg, former director of the Beth Hatefutsoth/Museum of the Diaspora in Tel Aviv and of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, was for many years the director of the Cameri Theatre in Tel Aviv. I once asked him for his definition of the museum, knowing that his museums are predicated on concept and installation, not on collections. They feature models, dioramas, light boxes, reconstructions, casts, replicas, diagrams, maps, charts and multimedia. They do not put much stock in original artifacts. His answer was that for him a museum is a story told in three-dimensional space. On its face, this statement does not distinguish museum from theatre. Or rather, this statement points to their convergence. Following Carol Duncan's (1995) proposition that a defining feature of the museum is the ceremonial walk through its galleries, I would argue that it is precisely the movement of
spectators through space that distinguishes museums (and many tourist attractions) from theatres. To make an even finer distinction, things in museums stand still, while visitors move. Forms of tourism in which both the attraction and the visitor move—as at Plimoth Plantation and Llancaiach Fawr Manor—are closer to environmental theatre.

Heritage productions are defined not only by the way they configure space and movement, but also by how they organize time. Historical recreations activate three different clocks. The effects are unexpected, difficult to control and possible sources of delight in their own right. First, there is the stopped clock of the historical moment chosen for recreation—1627 and 1645 in the cases discussed here. Secondly, there is the heritage clock. While heritage sites stop the historical clock, the heritage clock keeps ticking, one reason why it is difficult to synchronize these two clocks. The historical moment, the designated year, is sustained through repetition. The heritage production is sustained through reversal. The older the heritage installation, the less historically accurate. For this reason, it is necessary to arrest its movement, to turn the clock back, not once but perpetually.


Just how this works became apparent to me when I asked permission to reproduce a photograph that I had taken of Plimoth Plantation about fifteen years ago. The person responding to my request told me that my photograph was wrong. How could my photograph be wrong? She explained that the chimneys were from the wrong period. I explained that those chimneys were there when I took the picture. 'Yes, she responded, but they have been removed. What's more, she continued, Plimoth was seven years old in 1627, whereas Plimoth Plantation is now 25 years old. As a result, when the site closes for the winter, the staff tears buildings down, schedules house-raisings during the tourist season, and prematurely ages the buildings so they will look seven years old, just as they were in the year 1627. At this site, history stands still while heritage continues to age. What looks like a logistical problem is a more profound problem of synchronizing the site's clocks.


The third clock is the one that visitors bring to the site—the time of their lives, the time out of a vacation. The term time machine and the discourse of time travel applied by heritage productions are misleading here. The imperatives of marketing promise a seamless experience: 'Step over the threshold of Llancaiach (pronounced glan kayack) Fawr and travel back over 350 years to a time of great unrest and Civil War in Wales' and 'Follow in the footsteps of King Charles I …if you visit on August 5 you can meet the King himself and experience the bustling excitement of the servants as they prepare to entertain their royal master'. Enter the world of 1627, encounter the pilgrims, be carried away and forget that you ever lived in any other place or time. Have a 'pilgrim experience'. But the success of such sites is precisely in their failure as the perfect time machine. What actually happens is more interesting than what is intended. Visitors try to get the historical reenactors to break frame, just as we did at Llancaiach Fawr Manor, when we grilled the servants of 'Colonel' Edward Prichard about modern smoke detectors on the ceiling of the seventeenth-century building. The servant said she could not see what we said we could see, a ploy that obviated any further conversation on the matter. At Plimoth Plantation, the pilgrims express consternation at the strange machines that visitors bring with them from faraway places—their cameras and cellular phones—and respond with disbelief or attributions of magic and sorcery or accusations of consorting with the devil. They struggle to stay in character all the time. Visitors watch to see if the pilgrims will tear the fabric of time and emerge as 1997 persons, even if only for a flash. This
little game is a way to touch and test the historical membrane so carefully fashioned by the recreation.

The third clock also operates as a challenge to forgetting. In order to recreate 1627 or 1645, the actors have to 'forget' everything that happened thereafter. It is the act of forgetting that creates the necessary gap between themselves and the visitor. In that gap we become prophets because we can see the three centuries that followed, while the actors are supposed to know nothing beyond the year in which they live in perpetuity. While this is not what was envisioned by a time machine, it holds even more possibilities for understanding the theatre of afterlife called heritage.

• Cardiff, August 1996.

It is in that theatre that we explored the relationships between performance, tourism and identity in this very special place called Wales.

• Cardiff, September 1996. Watercolour in landscape.

REFERENCES


• Holden, Deborah (1994) 'When all the fun is getting there', *New Zealand Herald*, 30 August.


• Cardiff, September 1996. Watercolour in landscape.

**NOTES**

1 A living history museum near Cardiff, set in the time of the English Civil War, with guides playing house servants, dressed in period costume and speaking the language of seventeenth-century Britain.

2 'Performance, Tourism and Identity' Conference, Wales, September 1996, organized by the Centre for Performance Research.

3 The slate mine at Blaenau Ffestiniog offers various tours, amongst them the 'Deep Mine Tour' which lowers visitors to one of its deepest parts where ten *son et lumière* sequences depict the working and social life of Victorian slate miners.

4 The museum near Cardiff, one of the biggest open-air museums in Europe, tells the history of Wales with a collection of buildings salvaged from all over the country, amongst them farmhouses and cottages, barns, a chapel, a school, a tollhouse and a cockfighting arena, stores with real goods on sale and a tannery, a pottery, a bakehouse, a smithy and three mills where craftspeople demonstrate the original methods of their trade.

5 Portmeirion was built from 1925 to 1972 by Sir Clough Williams-Ellis in his attempt to design the 'ideal village', using parts of endangered and dismantled buildings from all over Britain and abroad to create an eclectic, Italianate architectural folly.

6 See MacCannell and Gómez-Peña, both this issue.
7 See Noyes and Jenkins, both this issue.

8 See Pearson and Shanks, this issue.
Virtual Reality's Place

Dean MacCannell

Tourism is the only industry Hollywood studio executives are afraid of.

(A young screenwriter in Los Angeles, 1995)


BETWEEN TOURISM AND THE MOVIES

What could be the grounds of fear of tourism on the part of someone who sells fantasy? Begin with what the movies share with sightseeing—namely a troubled relationship with a real milieu: with actual geographic and social places, with the 'landscape', made to function as a backdrop to fictional action. Sightseeing, in its original set-up, brought the viewers to distant places. The movies bring distant places to the viewers. A popular type of tour in Japan today links the two by offering 'Audrey Hepburn's Europe' or 'Gary Cooper's American West' etc. The tourists review images from the movies (Hepburn in front of the Trevi Fountain, Cooper at Palm Desert, etc.) and the tour operator promises to take them there. Yet, governed by a rule of presence, sightseeing may begin with mediated experience—an image from a poster, a guidebook, the National Geographic, a scene from a movie—but it can never end there. The basic rule of sightseeing is that mediated experience, any off-sight representation, is not substitutable for being-in-the-presence of the Real Thing. Tourists arrive literally at the same place as the movies, but directly in the presence of the 'scene', the 'background', the putative 'reality' that binds together the dramatic action of fantasy. This is the reason why Hollywood executives fear only the tourist industry. And this is why movies that are primarily intended to be 'entertainment' continue to be set in one of two 'places': (1) in a travelogue that reinforces every stereotypical viewpoint of a well-known place; or (2) in 'any-place-whatever', rigorously designed to block even guessing games about where it might actually be. (Often it is Canadian cities and landscapes that are called upon by Hollywood to serve as generic 'place' on film.)

Virtual Reality is the logical next step beyond tourism and the movies. It begins between tourism and the movies, borrowing from each of these earlier forms their conventions of 'realism' and their ways of displacing desire. This paper is about different ways of constructing the scenes of human experience, focusing on some recent efforts to totalize the background of human action in computer simulations.* In the nexus of sightseeing and virtual travel, the status of place has been made highly ambiguous by the construction of virtual places both outside (e.g. New York in Las Vegas) and inside the computer. In its concluding sections, this paper will suggest a different approach to the construction of place and experience as an alternative to the models proffered by builders of computer-based and theme park virtual environments.

* See, for example, Brian R.Gardner's discussion in 1993:94–5.

Perhaps because the 'thereness' of its background is among the most taken-for-granted aspects of the meaning of any action, it is the background, or the scene, of fantasy that has been subject to the most careful attention by the architects of virtual experience. The rule of 'realism' is to modify backgrounds enough to produce meaning without changing them so much as to call attention to the fact that they are being manipulated. Light and dark, wind, rain, lightning, bright sun, as well as the deployment of objects in space, the condition of the objects, whether they are broken or new: every micro-detail contributes to the 'feel' of represented environments. Already there is substantial commentary in Virtual Reality (VR) manuals on adapting film strategies for representing backgrounds to virtual environments. And
with good reason. *Film noir*, for example, reached deeply into the viewers' consciousness by linking subjectivity as much to the presentation of the scene of the action as to the action itself.* The diffident relationship of Virtual Reality to the subject, *any* subject (the programmer, the user), makes the behaviour of the virtual landscape, its agency, believability and responsiveness, and/or lack thereof, as close as VR gets to 'subjectivity'.

*See Joan Copjec 1993.

In establishing an opposition between 'authentic' tourism on the one side and the movies, theme parks and virtual travel on the other, I do not mean to suggest that the act of sightseeing is unmediated. All the events and objects in the world that are designated as 'authentic attractions' (e.g. the Liberty Bell, the Tower of London, etc.) are presented so as to produce certain impressions and preclude others. They have been marked, lit, restored, around moral/aesthetic equations. Still, sightseeing is constrained by much the same representational framework as ordinary experience. It is subject to manipulation of thought and feeling, and the sightseer may form an impression that is not necessarily mistaken, but not intended either. Manipulation and misprision occur in sightseeing, in art, at the movies, in Virtual Reality and in life. But in sightseeing and life, there is no forced perspective, gravity control, jump cuts, slowing down or speeding up of time, or instantaneous moves between cities or galaxies. Or there didn't used to be. Virtual sightseeing laminates montage, and the kinds of experiences provided to a viewer through multiple cameras with zoom lenses, to ordinary experience.

**VIRTUAL REALITY**

One of the interesting features of writing about Virtual Reality is that the authors are not content simply to describe its virtues and shortcomings. In addition, they make a series of claims against ordinary experience. The political theory of the everyday as articulated by the proponents of Virtual Reality is a worthy subfield of study in the ongoing struggle to define the postmodern subject. It is evident that the builders of virtual environments do not want to reproduce ordinary, everyday places and experience, far from it. All they want to reproduce is the feeling of being-there.

Here, the term Virtual Reality will be used in the narrowest way to refer to experiences provided by a group of technologies that link a computer to its user via motion sensors attached to the body, and shield the user from visual, aural and other stimuli except as provided by the computer through a helmet or an 'eyephone'. The key element in this group of technologies is 'automatic head position tracking', which allows the wearer of an eyephone to scan a computer-generated landscape in a quasi-natural way, as if the subject were moving inside the computer graphic. Originally conceived as a way of simulating high-risk situations (e.g. flight, battlefield or surgical emergencies) for training purposes, the domain of virtual experience and Virtual Reality is expanding and colonizing tourism in particular at a rapid rate. Now it is possible to 'travel' to all the world's great attractions and experience them not just as a sightseer might, but by being able to hover and fly over and through them, and to see things inaccessible to mere tourists.

The makers of VR technologies deal with the illusion of presence in some detail. The author of a technical manual explains:

Most people who have experienced different virtual environment systems state that they felt either 'part of a synthetic experience' or...'immersed in the experience'. It is important to realize that these two states are completely different and imply different degrees of presence.... A breakdown in the sensation of virtual presence occurs when the person feels tired or when the weight of the head-mounted display becomes uncomfortable. Unnatural movement or lags in the virtual environment can also lead to conflicts in the feeling of presence, but if the participant is stimulated with visual and auditory information of high fidelity and is allowed to interact with objects in the virtual environment, the feeling of presence can be very powerful.

(Kalawsky 1993:80–1)

Susceptibility to the illusion or the feeling of presence then depends on the quality of the machine and its program,
it depends equally on the desire of the subject. Kalawsky remarks that:

[rapid immersion occurs] for a viewer watching a nature programme of extreme beauty and realizing he could never visit the actual area, his interests make him feel he is a part of the scene. He wishes he were there.

(Kalawsky 1993:80–1)

There is in this and other similar accounts an unavowed relationship to religious, especially Christian, spirituality. Jaron Lanier, described by *I–800 Magazine* as 'the reigning mouthpiece of VR wisdom', claims that Virtual Reality is nothing less than 'the first new reality since Adam and Eve'.* As the theoreticians of VR attempt to describe human desire, they elaborate a compromised, meta-touristic moral philosophy: a desire to get outside of one's ordinary, everyday reality, to go where one cannot or must not go, a desire for an impossible presence that is so strong that the desiring subject is willing to sacrifice presence to the illusion of presence. Thus, one of the highest achievements of symbolic logic is represented as post-symbolic; the most controlling and centralized consciousness so far devised, in the form of the 'Program', is represented as 'post-patriarchal; and the future is represented as a return to the deep spirituality of the past. Jaron Lanier avows that 'Virtual Reality will bring back a sense of the shared mystical altered sense of reality that is so important to basically every other civilization and culture prior to big patriarchal power'.* One might question this philosophy and its attendant spirituality and the action, political and dramatic, that is linked to it. The builders of virtual environments invoke 'impossible' desires and claim to be able to satisfy them. Doug Trumbal, a virtuoso builder of virtual environments for the entertainment industry, remarks to a BBC camera: 'You want to go to Mars, to the bottom of the sea, to the top of Mount Everest, but these are all things that none of us will ever do, so we'll get there via some hyper cyber experience' (BBC 1996: The Tourist). Pimentel and Teixeira pitch future applications, specifically entry into a Van Gogh landscape:

*Quoted in Isabella Sharp 1991:68.

*Quoted in Isabella Sharp 1991:25. The contradictions in the rhetoric of Virtual Reality, especially as articulated by Lanier, are discussed by Stuart Moulthrop 1993. Moulthrop comments that VR produces 'a space whose inhabitants are given the illusion of cosmic power while they remain entirely under the influence of their host machine—which brings us back to the salient irony of cyberspace, or post-symbolism's debt to the symbol' (Moulthrop 1993:83).

Close your eyes and…imagine the brilliant yellow of a Van Gogh field. Walk around in the field; move your feet amid the luminous colours and see the trees churning in the distance. Can you recall the thin black line of a crow flying overhead in a cobalt blue sky? Does being in the field bring back some of the special feelings that seeing the real art creates? Imagine how much more intense those feelings would be if you could put on a pair of VR goggles and actually go for a walk through a Van Gogh countryside and meet the artist—possibly even become the artist!

(Pimentel and Teixeira 1993:239)

According to Pimentel and Teixeira,

Virtual reality can be used to translate information (mental or symbolic) into experiences that people can explore in the same kind of purposeful play that Einstein experienced in his thoughts.

(Pimentel and Teixeira 1993:17)

It is to painfully obvious that some Oedipal connections to the past continue to inhabit Virtual Reality's unconscious.

**THE DIALECTIC OF ORDINARY EXPERIENCE AND ITS**
In previous representational frameworks—dance, stories, painting, stage drama, the movies, plastic arts, religious pageantry, tourist displays—there has been a dialectic between ordinary everyday experience and representation of that experience. Earlier representational forms have drawn upon everyday occurrences and settings, and everyday life, for its part, has been influenced by its dramatic and other representations. There are real-life heroes and villains. There are dramatically enacted heroes and villains. And there are people in everyday life who try with varying degrees of success to emulate staged and enacted heroism and villainy. One suspects that the dialectic of the quotidian and its dramatization is as old as the human use of language or gesture for communication, as old as the symbolic order itself, and indispensable to the elaboration of the symbolic.

Statements about what reality is (or ought to be) increasingly define postmodern political positions. Within the emerging array of such positions, statements about reality's place made by the proponents of Virtual Reality are beginning to constitute an extreme politics. This politics is based on a denial of the dialectic of ordinary versus represented experience. What is admitted from ordinary experience are (1) a phenomenology of sensations and (2) what used to be called the illusion of immanence or presence. *Everyday experience is otherwise deemed to be essentially uninteresting.*

*See, for example, Sartre 1966:5, 23 and 131.*

Reality has always been too small…. [A]n 'interactive fantasy machine' is only the most recent manifestation of the age-old desire to make our fantasies palpable—our insatiable need to exercise our imagination, judgment, and spirits in worlds, situations, and personae that are different from our everyday lives.

(Brenda Laurel in *Computers as Theater*, quoted in Pimentel and Teixeira 1993:19)

And the scenes of ordinary experience are said to be too full of detail to facilitate the enjoyment of a seamless virtual experience. Brian Gardner states:

[Y]ou can remove certain kinds of detail from an image and people cannot perceive the difference…. [I]t is not necessarily better to throw more graphics techniques, more rendering power, or more artificial intelligence into a scene. These are not necessarily going to give us a better artificial world. The quantity of what goes into your artificial world is not what makes it better or more interesting.

(Gardner 1993:106)

Mark Bolas, an expert programmer of virtual environments, summarizes as follows:

I don't know what to call it to differentiate it but there and elsewhere. I found that no matter how good the world, you could only get so far to there. The more abstract, the more elsewhere the world, the more people felt 'in there' than anything else. I feel that elsewhere represents the true nature of the VR medium.

(Quoted in Pimentel and Teixeira 1993:152)

There appear to be three components to the politics of Virtual Reality: (1) a critique of everyday life: we are said to be trapped in dull, uneventful situations, and to dream dreams that are impossible to realize; (2) an undermining of confidence in the ability humans might have to break the boredom of ordinary experience and entertain themselves; (3) the promise of transport elsewhere by fantasy specialists. Setting aside the substantial religious and other political resources this position draws from, it is time to examine its assumptions about the absence of drama in everyday life.*

*Nazi theoreticians in the 1930s made the same assertions about the humdrum quality of the workaday world*
and promised excitement, not in electronic fantasy, but in the form of huge staged sporting events, political rallies and a linkage of the psyche to the power of the state. See the chapter on 'The desire to be postmodern' in MacCannell 1992.

ORDINARY EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE

In what is still the most masterful account of it, Erving Goffman (1974) suggests that everyday life is situated in two 'primary frameworks' of interpretation: (1) the natural, as if events simply occur following natural laws and are not a part of someone's intentional interference; and (2) the social, as if events are governed by a set of behavioural norms, which are followed by the natives if not by the visitor, and matters of character, tact, beauty, taste, etc., are determined by alignment and misalignment to behavioural norms.*

*The following summarizes and builds upon Goffman's chapter on 'Primary frameworks' in Goffman 1974:21 ff.

These two 'primary frameworks' give rise to a series of dramatic and aesthetic possibilities that can and do occur outside of and independent from commercialized entertainments. In fact, as already suggested in the previous discussion of the dialectic of life and art, entertainment draws substantial inspiration from these everyday dramatic possibilities.

1 Astonishment

Assumptions about the natural or social order of things are often dramatically challenged by events. A cow gives birth to a two-headed calf; a statue of the Virgin bursts into tears; a drummer in a rock band is consumed by apparent spontaneous combustion; a European learns of a religious sect in South India where the women can have as many husbands and lovers as they wish—and the men are never jealous; Martians land. Primary frameworks are tested daily by objects and events that require a 'suspension of belief' even when one is confronted by direct evidence, as in 'I saw it with my own eyes, but I still don't believe it'. The 'suspension of disbelief', required by the entertainment framework, is a pale shadow of the terrifying indifference of the world to its own rules.

2 Awe and Disgust

We are no longer in the realm of the paranormal and inexplicable. Rather, it is the performance that, positively or negatively, dramatically exceeds expectations for human or natural capabilities: the thousand-pound man whose apartment must be destroyed to remove him from it for his funeral; the petite woman who finds the strength to lift an automobile off a trapped child; snake-handlers, knife-throwers, skateboard stunts, dogs that walk on their front legs. Awesome performances can and do cross the line into entertainment, but their entertainment value is contingent upon the understanding that they also occur under ordinary circumstances—that they are not mere illusion.

3 Loss of Control

Purposeful or accidental flirtation with some personal, social or natural edge is the source of much drama in everyday life. This would include deviations, screw-ups and dramatic escapes from their consequentiality—or the opposite. Goffman points out that loss of control always occurs in ordinary learning, and is necessary to learning: e.g. hits and near misses with automobiles somewhat out of the control of their youthful drivers; the sailor just qualified to master the ship running it up on the rocks (1974:32). Some individuals seek out fateful situations which they cannot fully control and appear to need fateful drama in their lives: highstakes gamblers, rock climbers, drug takers, etc.
4 Meaningful Accidents, Poetic Justice and Injustice

Parapraxis at the level of the collective is encountered when everyday life provides a steady supply of dramatic incidents, happenstance and quirky twists of fate: the nasty neighbour's house catches fire, a life-guard drowns. Such occurrences reveal the depth and suppleness of the symbolic order; that accident does not guarantee meaninglessness.

5 Tension surrounding Risks of Contamination

The human body, its needs, excreta, and special preserves, sex, spit, snot, semen, urine, faeces, the toilet, undergarments, used sheets, inject constant tension into everyday life. Everyone who has a body constantly risks contaminating others, contamination by others and self-contamination. An enormous ritual complex has been built up in everyday life against corruption, stain and taint. The painfully shy may extend cautiousness in this regard to the point that they avoid touch even by a gaze. And dramatic tension is further increased because certain pleasures can be experienced only during periods when concerns about contamination have been suspended. To these examples might be added the nerd fear of simply going up to another person and starting a conversation. Encounters on the internet, including 'sexual' encounters, go far in removing the body from situations it was once thought to be essential to.

Viewed from Goffman's perspective, or Marx's, or Freud's, everyday life is rich in resources for dramatic and other arts. Millions of large and small comedies and tragedies are enacted daily. Everyday life is the original ground of all drama, all entertainment, all history. The contradiction at the heart of commercialized entertainment is just this. In order for entertainment to be a dramatic and aesthetic success, it must model itself closely on the organization of everyday life. In order for it to succeed commercially, it must deny its origins in everyday drama, promising excitement, romance, suspense, intense pleasure, etc., in opposition to grinding, humdrum, boring, repetitious, everyday existence. The proponents of Virtual Reality are trying to change the ground rules of dramatic and aesthetic success by making a clean break with everyday reality, to create pure fantasies that are not dependent on their connections to life.

NEW STRATEGIES OF CONTAINMENT OF HUMAN ENJOYMENT

Interestingly, the drive to commodify all human enjoyment does not begin with the construction of coin-in-the-slot virtual worlds. It begins with the construction of Disneyland in 1953 and the mob's turnover of the Las Vegas casinos to international hotel chains in the 1970s. During the last decades, one of the largest global movements of capital has been the investment in tourism by the entertainment industry. The movement of capital marks the end of tourism's first phase, which was based on a search for authenticity, and the beginning of its second, postmodern phase, which is based on the commodification of the tourist experience.

The tourist industry, as it became the world's largest industry during the 1970s, could only have been viewed by big capital and by the entertainment moguls as hugely irrational. Tourists could still plan their own itineraries, place themselves at even the unmarked scenes of historical crimes and miracles and before the great monuments and disasters of nature and culture. They could attempt to apprehend connections of drama to place and life without the intervention of commercially marketed fantasy. They might bring images from literature, the movies, even travel advertising with them in their heads or fanny packs. But once there, they dispositions against the evidence of their senses. Potentially, their own imagination could be set in motion by something about the site itself. Perhaps they could imagine heroism without seeing the face of John Wayne. Perhaps they could imagine tomorrow without visiting Tomorrowland. Perhaps not.

*N. American for 'bumbag': a small bag or pouch worn on a belt around the waist.

The drive of tourism today—the industry, not necessarily the tourists—is to correct this market 'irrationality', to re-contain sightseeing as entertainment and as manufactured fantasy, and especially to break any connection between the act of sightseeing and the specificity of place. This drive is accompanied by an aggressive denial of the drama of
everyday life except as refracted through the 'Soaps' and afternoon talk shows. And it is manifest in a series of new sociocultural forms—physical and mental environments and landscapes wholly shaped by entertainment ideology that arrogates to itself the right to construct every impression of culture, nature and history. Tourism's first phase already contained the seeds of its own destruction. Every one of the following forms, employed by Virtual Reality, originated in touristic representation before postmodernity and before VR.

1 Decoys

The *Oxford Dictionary* defines 'decoy' as 'a pond or pool with arms covered with networks [designed to] could check their preallure or entice wild ducks by the use of cunning deceitful attractions'. By decoy, I mean a restricted-access, large-scale (though usually not full-scale) architectural copy of an authentic attraction. The tourists are the 'ducks'. The prototypes here, at the end of tourism's first phase and the beginning of its second, are the Disney Rivers of the World Ride and the Disney Matterhorn. These Disney decoys have a nice pre-Baudrillard feel to them. They were intended to attract tourist dollars by displacing the fame of the authentic attraction on to the copy. They are constructed around a kernel of nostalgia for originals and for the 'truth' of travel to the actual Nile, Amazon, etc. But even with these very unpostmodern tendencies, they share with the other new forms, including Virtual Reality, a quality of representation. They are designed to deliver a conventionalized sense of the experience of the Amazon, the Nile, etc.

2 Screen Memories

According to Freud, a screen memory is substituted for the memory of a trauma and is recognizable because the subject is *inside* the memory. As opposed to other kinds of memory in which the objects and events are deployed around the subject, which remains invisible to itself, in the screen memory the subject is there in the scene, visible to itself. In this context, by *screen memory* I mean to designate the type of attraction pioneered at Universal Studios where the tourists are put into the middle of a scene (usually it is a disaster scene) from a popular film. The prototype of this kind of experience was the popular tourist conceit 'I am sitting where George Washington sat' or 'I am following in the footsteps of Jesus'. Only now it is 'I am standing where the actor who played Jesus stood' or 'I am following in the footsteps of James Bond'.

In suggesting 'screen memory', I want to retain the full specificity of Freud's original definition and not to be accused of a scandalous turn of phrase. The Universal Studios' guide intones (this is a quote): 'You are an actor in Ron Howard's *Back Draft* in the middle of the chemical warehouse fire.' How else could one possibly remember being consumed by flames? This is a rapidly evolving form, from the *Back to the Future* ride at Universal to hotel suites modelled precisely on the settings of famous movie love scenes. One of its most disturbing manifestations is the recently added Toontown attraction at Disneyland where the visitors are enticed into a village modelled on a scaled-up *mise-en-scène* of Disney and Warner cartoons—the chimneys dangle out of the roofs at precarious angles, the house walls bulge and all the cartoon alarm clocks, tea kettles and fat petit-bourgeois furniture from the 1930s are there, painted in cartoon colours.

3 'Rides'

Everywhere in the new pleasure environments are 'rides' that are circular, or mainly stationary, modelled on the 'thrill rides' of old amusement parks, i.e. they are rides-to-nowhere. Some of the new rides-to-nowhere are proto VR devices involving kinetic effects achieved by shaking the seats while projecting moving images on to a hemispherical screen surrounding the riders. People who take the Universal *Back to the Future* ride claim that when they break through the clock and the objects in the film begin to come at them at an increasing rate of speed, they actually 'feel' physical acceleration even though they are not moving. The riders are going nowhere fast. The builders of hyper-kinetic rides using modified flight simulators, spherical screens and three-dimensional sound theorize that four minutes of the kind of sensory overload they provide is about all the average human being can tolerate. Some rides refer to an earlier epoch of tourism where the process of getting to the destination and home again was as much a part of the travel experience
as the attractions themselves. The conveyances used by tourists had the status of local attractions in their own right—rickshaw, elephant, donkey, steam train, river boat, etc. The London bus, the New York cab and the San Francisco cable car still retain some aura of local specificity. As tourist destinations are increasingly built up from screen memories and copies of authentic attractions, and as travel between them becomes increasingly generic, a sense of travel is displaced into the ride.

4 Total Fabrications

In the United States, the current dominant trend in urban in-fill, redevelopment and new town construction is called 'New Urbanism'. New Urbanism is a series of design and landscape architecture precepts that result in a retro-feel: houses with front porches, village squares, etc. Its decorative affectations are from the era immediately pre-automobile; its ideal is Disney's 'Mainstreet USA'. In these new town and urban redevelopment projects, everyday life itself is displaced into forms that make more than passing reference to other times and other places. Michael Sorkin has written about this in his book Variations on a Theme Park (1992). Bill Gates, Steven Spielberg and several other investors have applied the principles of New Urbanism in their real-estate venture in Los Angeles, a housing development called Playa Vista to be built on a reclaimed wetlands near their new studio, Dream Works. Playa Vista is proposed as a twenty-first-century company town of work-live artist spaces for actors, animators, programmers and other 'dream-workers'. Its neighbourhoods are to be themed—Tangiers, Rome, nineteenth-century Ohio, etc.—and pre-designed to function also as the backlot for Dream Works. Street life and necessary neighbourhood services will function as instant movie sets. People used to have to leave home to be tourists. The residents of Playa Vista will be tourists on their own front porches and something more. They may also act as 'extras' in Dream Works movie productions when they walk their kids to school or go down to get their coffee and croissant in the morning.

A place where total fabrication has reached a high level of development is Las Vegas (after the hotel chains bought the casinos from the mob). The Luxor Hotel is an Egyptian pyramid with a navigable water feature called 'The Nile' flowing through its lobby and full-scale models of the tomb and treasures of Tutankhamen in its basement. The newest casino hotels are New York, New York, which reproduces the characteristic silhouette of the New York skyline when viewed from middle distance, and The Paris Experience. On their lower levels, both places feature the kinds of shops, restaurants, etc., found in their namesake cities. Treasure Island Casino features eight daily liveaction battles between a full-scale British frigate and a pirate ship. There are cannonades, sword fights, plank-walking and a great deal of overacting on the part of the players who lip-synch their parts to a hugely effective sound system. The battle always ends the same way, with the British ship torn asunder and sinking to the bottom of the man-made lagoon, only to reassemble itself by a system of hydraulics and pulleys, ready to sail out of the mists in the next programme. Caesar's Palace Casino offers its visitors an opportunity to step 'outside' and get away from the jangle and crass décor of the game machines and tables. In this case, 'outside' is a completely enclosed and air-conditioned mall with a plastic ceiling designed to appear as a beautiful sky. The shops are up-scale and there are 'Roman' fountains, some with live actor figures. Even the division of time into day and night can be fabricated. The lights behind the plastic sky are programmed: it is 'noon' at the top of the hour, 'midnight' at the half-hour and crepuscular in between.

The humble origins of total fabrications are in the historic reconstructions of everyday life in the Pilgrim's Plymouth or Colonial Williamsburg, where actors in authentic costumes mingle with the tourists in the restored early settlements, playing the parts of early English colonists in America. * These kinds of thoroughgoing reconstructions of life elsewhere or in another epoch are still a popular type of tourist attraction world-wide. The visitors can mingle among the actor-guides and discuss and compare beliefs, jobs, everyday problems, but not necessarily rent a house and move in.

*See Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, this issue, Richard Schechner, this issue.

5 Travels in Virtual Reality

The production of surplus computing power in the past decade has made possible experimental and now commercial
virtual travel machines. These new machines may open the way to a new plane of experience as their proponents claim. The users are, in effect, swimming, flying, strolling, or racing around inside a computer program designed to accommodate them. While, in theory, the virtual travellers could go anywhere, in practice they still travel in cartoon worlds and in sterile architecture—boxes of varying height set on uniform grids. The other motile inhabitants of Virtual Reality are disproportionate snakes, worms, prehistoric lizards, and flying saucers that move so fast they appear only as points of light with speed trails. As has already been discussed, proponents of Virtual Reality have discovered that photographic realism does not translate well into VR. When subjectivity is transported through the computer screen, there is simply too much confusing information to be assimilated unless non-essential elements are erased, and essential ones made into easily recognized symbolic versions of themselves. Virtual travel draws imagery from and flexibly incorporates all of the foregoing strategies of containment of the tourist imagination: decoys, 'rides', screen memories and total fabrication.

Thus tourism opens the way for the complete incorporation of itself, and whatever residual connection it may have had to ordinary experience, into Virtual Reality. In the last sections of this paper, I will attempt to examine theoretical and aesthetic alternatives to the swallowing of human experience by commercial substitutes for it. In venturing forth in this way, I am especially concerned not to proffer a return to older dramatic equations.

ART'S PLACE

For the past two years, I have worked with a group of San Francisco-based artists on a series of projects that question the status of the attraction and the work of art in the age of virtual travel. The group includes Victor Mario Zaballa, Juliet Flower MacCannell, Bernie Lubell, Ann Chamberlain, Josefa Vaughan and sometimes others. We have done a performance piece, You Are Here (You Think), for Headlands Center for the Arts, July 1994; done an installation, Beside Yourself, at New Langton Arts, July-August 1996; and proposed a process for a major redesign of a local museum of science and technology. The piece I will comment on here is Bernie Lubell and Paul de Marinis's Dry Rain Peddling: A Virtual Metaphor, installed at Intersection for the Arts in San Francisco, October-November 1993. It is the construction of a 'scene', 'place' or background for nostalgic pseudo-memory. The mock seriousness of Lubell's documentary narrative, and the subtitle A Virtual Metaphor, suggest that the artists are consciously setting themselves up in a kind of bemused, detached relationship to the other makers of virtual environments. Dry Rain Peddling occupies a large (50×100 feet) upstairs gallery. On a surface, literal level, it is a clever effort to reproduce the experience of sitting in a rickety rocking chair on a tinroofed porch during a thunderstorm. No water or recorded sound is used in the installation, which self-consciously employs very low technology. The energy must be supplied by the visitors riding two stationary bicycles made entirely from wood. Power is transmitted from the bicycle wheel to an overhead pulley and clutch, also made entirely of wood, via a long, loose, cloth belt. The belt is knotted together and looks as if it couldn't possibly function to transmit power without breaking or slipping off the pulleys, but it does work. High overhead, a thick rope loosely connects the two pulley-clutch mechanisms, so that when either of the two bicycles is peddled, a chaotic wave-form is set up along the rope. In the centre of the room, the rope passes through a device which, when it is agitated by movements of the rope, 'plays' about twenty sticks dangling from it down to a corrugated tin roof. The sound of the tap-dancing of the sticks on the roof is indistinguishable from the sound of rain, or at least our memories of the sound of rain. The intensity varies with the speed of the bicycle rider(s), but the periodicity is always chaotic.

Thunder and lightning are produced in another part of the room where the visitors can pull a wooden lever operating a system of eccentrics that flex two large metal sheets. The same lever triggers a series of linked photo-flash units that fire either simultaneously or at slightly different moments determined by their reset speeds. Beneath the tin roof sits a bucket to catch 'leaks' and a strange wooden chair with a rocker on one side and spring-loaded legs on the other. The springs squeak and give the chair slightly uneven resistance and an almost imperceptible twisting motion as if it is on a dilapidated porch. It takes three or four people effectively to produce the experience—to ride the bikes, sit under the roof and work the thunder generator.

What is the difference between Dry Rain Peddling and the other virtual environments described above? Certainly they share many of the same aims of deriving fun from illusion. Some formal differences are immediately obvious. In the
other virtual experiences, the mechanisms of illusion are hidden. *Dry Rain* not only exposes all of its 'tricks', it makes an aesthetic of them. Other virtual experiences are designed to be enjoyed by individuals who may relate to the program or the guide, but not necessarily to each other, except through the mediation of the program. *Dry Rain* requires co-operation between visitors to operate it.

When both are viewed from the perspective of everyday life, some deeper differences come to the surface. The virtual experiences supplied by commercialized entertainment tend to simplify and understate reality. *Dry Rain* makes no effort to gloss over the fragile complexity of an everyday experience.

**ANOTHER PLACE TO BEGIN**

The setting, or the scene, of human action is never neutral. The instant an act becomes meaningful or evokes a feeling, the scene of the action becomes autonomously consistent or inconsistent with the act, with the act's meaning or feeling. The scene has a power of its own that action cannot represent. *Dry Rain* represents not rain and not action, to reveal the power and the autonomy of the scene of human feelings. Virtual Reality in the form of commercialized entertainment holds itself accountable for its representation of scenes of human action, for creating environments that the players can use as a stage for narrative that is partially under their control. But as it creates these scenes, VR annihilates their autonomous power, first by abstracting them, then by constituting them as mere backdrop for any-action-whatsoever, limited only by the program. Of course these backdrops are 'mysterious', or 'ethereal', or 'darkly dangerous', etc., but they are programmed using conventional cues. They are given meaning, they are not free to mean on their own.

It is impossible to give too much emphasis to this distinction because it constitutes a current battleground for humanity. The outcome of this battle will determine whether we collectively are able to think of the not-me, the scene, the other, as real, or as program. The psychic costs of dealing with the real are very high, much higher than dealing with programmed reality, or Virtual Reality. Pure background, meaningless forest fragments of green, an array of jagged angular city spots of dark and light behind the little stage-set or programmed scene—this is the ground of implacable unmotivated horror; 'pure horror' as Slavoj Zizek is fond of saying. According to Deleuze 'pure background' is the same as 'without-background'. By this, I think, he means there is nothing behind it and we do not control it either. Partial recognition here is the basis of the drive to clear-cut the forest or the poor neighbourhoods of the city—the psychoanalytic, not the economic basis. Deleuze continues:

> [W]ithout-background [is] composed of unformed matter, sketches or fragments, crossed by non-formal functions, acts or energy dynamisms which do not even refer to the constituted subjects. Here the characters are like animals: the fashionable gentleman a bird of prey, the lover a goat, the poor man a hyena.

(Deleuze 1986:123)

Deleuze is not referencing the kind of drama in which the rich are symbolically represented as birds of prey. He is referring to situations in which the animal in the human is ineluctably revealed. The entire background transforms. (Perhaps it is nothing more than a spot on an x-ray.) A playwright or programmer cannot make the transformation occur or stop it from occurring. It happens. It is real. It is precisely this real, the real that resists fantasy or symbolization absolutely, which is never permitted to appear in commercialized Virtual Reality.

How can it appear? Here is where the artists are way out ahead of the fantasy merchants. They know that the real is neither in the symbol or the image, nor is it in the stuff to which symbols and images refer, which, after all, is just more symbols and images. *Dry Rain* is about the gap between representations, their objects, and their effects. Commercial Virtual Reality attempts to overcome, or to fill, this gap falsely; that is, to annihilate reality and appropriate it for fantasy, and then to pretend that it remains reality.

Art that is worthy of the name does not commit this error. Bernie Lubell very carefully states that 'being the rain is not the same as experiencing it—but both forms of participation are possible here'. *Dry Rain* is committed to upholding the
integrity of the gap as separation. It celebrates the real of rain and its own image and production of it as two distinct orders. It attempts to answer the question: 'Can we desire otherness as real, the real of nature, for example, without also desiring to incorporate it, program it, metabolize it, make it not other but a part of ourselves, nothing beyond our symbol or fantasy of it?' According to some forms of contemporary art, yes we can. According to the drive behind the construction of virtual experiences so far, no we cannot. Virtual Reality is the death drive as entertainment.

REFERENCES


Taming the Tourists: Balinese Temple Clowns Preserve Their Village Traditions

Ron Jenkins and I Nyoman Catra


'Gumi Grubug!' wailed the bare-chested septuagenarian clown in a gravel-voiced burst of comic lamentation. 'The world is besieged by plague! We have to keep our guard up.'

Cavorting in an outdoor temple courtyard under a canopy of palm trees and stars, the ragtag comedian used slapstick
and bawdy jokes to enliven a midnight performance of *Calonarong* in the Balinese village of Singapadu. *Calonarong* is a sacred story performed regularly in Bali as part of a ceremony of ritual cleansing. The plot involves the purging of plague in a fifteenth-century Balinese village, but there was a contemporary double-meaning to the clown's commentary. His character in the play is searching for *leyaks*, the followers of the witch Calonarong who uses black magic to spread the plague, but in the course of tracking down the leyaks he and his cohorts keep bumping into tourists. These twentieth-century visitors, watching the performance in the summer of 1996 along with the Balinese villagers, became the butt of numerous improvised jokes, suggesting that they might be the plague-bearing intruders against whom the villagers must keep up their guard.

A moment before lamenting that this land was overrun by plague the clown had ridiculed a tourist with a video recorder by sticking his face into the camera lens. When a fellow performer asked him what he was doing, the clown replied, 'Looking for leyaks.'

As the play progresses, the clown, played by a local farmer named Retug, continues to tease the dozen or so westerners who have joined several hundred villagers in full temple regalia to watch the sacred spectacle. Retug points at the tourists when referring to the leyaks, thrusts sticks in front of their camera lenses, and even pokes at the breasts of one of the female westerners. During these comic improvisations the cross-cultural game of objectification is reversed and the western bearers of cameras and video recorders become for a moment the objects of the spectacle, providing exotic entertainment for the villagers they had come to capture on film. The mockery is executed gently enough to make the tourists comfortable, but firmly enough to let them know who is in charge. This strategy of comic containment is remarkably similar to the tactics described by the clown when he brags of his skill in subduing the dangerous leyaks who unleash the plague in the fifteenth-century story. He does not run away from the supernaturally powerful creatures, nor does he attack them directly. He simply 'tames' them. The Balinese word for 'tame' (*se*) is repeated dozens of times in his comic banter:

RETUG: I am the Kelihan (village leader) who tames the leyak…

RAPEG: Are they all tamed? Are the leyaks tamed?

RETUG: hey are tamed. That way we won't have to be enemies with the leyaks. *(The Kelihan can keep on living, because he has tamed the leyaks.)*

RAPEG: Some people die, because they don't tame the leyaks, isn't that right?

RETUG: Right, because if you meet the leyak and make an enemy of the leyak, how can you get the egg of the leyak. *(He pulls a ping-pong ball from his pocket to represent a leyak egg.)*

RAPEG *(laughing)*: Heh, heh,

RETUG: What do you mean, 'Heh heh'?

RAPEG: If we tame the leyaks, they will give us their eggs.

RETUG: Yes, they will give us their eggs.

Using an imported ping-pong ball to represent the egg of the leyak is a variation on a joke that is frequently repeated by the temple clowns of Bali. Tourists are regularly depicted as flocks of ducks who waddle out to the villages pecking for food and go back to their beachfront hotels to deposit their eggs. The eggs of the tourist, of course, are metaphors for the money spent by westerners when they come to Bali. The island's economy has flourished with the advent of tourism, but the invasion by the West is considered by some to be a plague that threatens the integrity of Bali's traditional arts and religious ceremonies. The relationship between the clown and the tourists in Singapadu's traditional *Calonarong* performance is representative of the complex equilibrium that has been established between tourists and the Balinese who have tamed them. The westerners are welcome, as long as they mind their manners, and deposit their eggs before leaving.
Having been kept in their place by the joking of the clowns, the tourists in Singapadu did nothing to disrupt the dance of exorcism that traditionally closes the performance of *Calonarong*. When the dance ends, they dutifully rode their jeeps and motor-cycles out of the village, as if they had been purged by the ceremony's power to drive out destructive influences.

The skills displayed in manipulating a handful of tourists in Singapadu are mirrored regularly throughout the island whenever westerners attend performances. Like leyaks, tourists can be dangerous. 'Some people die because they don't tame the leyaks,' warns Retug's companion. Failure to tame the tourists will not result in literal death, but could threaten the spiritual life of the traditional ceremonies that are at the core of the island's unique Hindu/Buddhist culture. The Balinese have developed numerous strategies for rendering foreigners harmless. The collective ingenuity of the inhabitants of Ubud is particularly noteworthy in this respect, because that village's reputation and location draw hundreds of foreigners to its temple ceremonies. The logistics of tourist-taming in this situation become more complicated, but the tactics are equally successful.

The evening that *Calonarong* was scheduled in Ubud, the courtyard of the temple of the dead was so crowded with tourists that it seemed that there would be no room left for the Balinese. Backpacks and jeans outnumbered traditional sarongs and flower-laden offerings, but the Balinese in charge seemed unconcerned. The gamelan orchestra of metal gongs and xylophones began to play around eight o'clock, and a succession of traditional dancers paraded through the dancing space for several hours. None of these dances had any relation to the *Calonarong* ceremony, but the tourists recognized the costumes and choreography that many of them had seen in commercial performances that are given at regularly scheduled times for the convenience of tourists. The logic behind these tourist dances is to give the foreigners a taste of Balinese performances like Legong and Barong in a setting where they will not disrupt the religious context of the dances.

Now the more adventurous and persistent tourists were mobbing a temple performance, and the Balinese were catering for their curiosity by providing them with a series of set-pieces that amounted to the 'greatest hits' of Balinese choreography. The Balinese paid little attention to these standard dances, knowing that the more spiritually charged performance of *Calonarong* would begin later. After a few hours of this decoy performance the tourists began to grow tired and go home, satisfied that they had seen an 'authentic' Balinese temple dance. Gradually Balinese spectators began taking the place of the tourists in the temple courtyard until there was close to a fifty-fifty split between them. The front rows were still occupied by the foreigners, but this changed when a large group of performers entered the acting space from behind the temple gates and, when they finished dancing, sat down in front of the tourists, transforming themselves from actors to spectators at the same time as they distanced the outsiders from the main event. One tourist had found a good vantage point by leaning against a sacred temple wall. This was tolerated during the prelude for tourists, but now he was told to move. 'You can't stay there any more,' admonished a temple official. 'The real dancing is going to start.' Among the Balinese, the difference between the magically charged sacred performance and the decoy performance for the tourists was clearly delineated.

By the time the most sacred masks were brought into the performance space (well after midnight) there were only around a dozen tourists left in the crowd of spectators. The atmosphere had changed completely. The Balinese spectators watched with a fierce and emotionally charged sense of concentration. The dancer wearing the mask of the demon witch Rangda went into a trance, gesticulating wildly and howling through white fangs that lined the mask's mouth. When the creature ran outside the temple gates, the audience followed in a frenzy. They all rushed up a hill to the cemetery near the temple. The actor playing Rangda was possessed, flailing his limbs and shouting high-pitched cries that pierced the murmurings of the crowd. It was nearly three a.m. Spectators pointed in the distance towards floating wisps of light they believed to be the supernatural beings called leyaks. Eventually the possessed actor collapsed and had to be carried back to the temple, where the ceremony of exorcism continued.

By the time the ritual had been completed, almost all the tourists were gone, and the ones who remained were so marginalized from the proceedings that there was no threat of disruption. Once again the tourists had been 'tamed' without their realizing it. No one told them to leave, even though it was clear that the ceremony could not be completed while they dominated the courtyard spaces. Instead, the taming of the tourists had been achieved passively, hospitably; entertained by exotic dancers, they were lulled into an illusory sense of satisfaction that sent them home happy long before the crucial elements of the ceremony were performed. Once the tamed tourists had docilely played
their parts and gone home to sleep, the Balinese performance of exorcism and trance unfolded without interference as it had done for hundreds of years.

The effortless and uninterrupted enactment of the Calonarong ritual was particularly impressive in Ubud, which has become famous in Bali as the destination for thousands of tourists in search of the island's traditional art-forms. The people of Ubud have discovered shrewd ways of delivering these art-forms to the tourists while preserving the integrity of their traditions for themselves.

The tourist-taming strategy executed so deftly by the clowns in Singapadu and the entire village of Ubud is actually rooted in government policy. The island's leaders have developed a programme of cultural preservation that relies on the establishment of 'pockets of tourism'. These pockets of tourism are designed to give foreigners access to a representative sampling of Balinese traditions in a controlled environment. Ubud is one of the central pockets of tourism as are beach resort areas like Sanur and Kuta. (Beaches are considered undesirable for housing by the Balinese because of their proximity to the evil spirits of the sea, so they are happy to cede these spiritually unclean spaces to the tourists—as long as they leave their 'eggs'.)

The premise behind the creation of 'pockets of tourism' is that most foreigners will frequent the regularly scheduled and easily accessible performances that are held there and leave the sacred ceremonies undisturbed. The two-tiered strategy is extraordinarily effective, and while foreigners are never turned away from performances outside the 'pockets of tourism', the difficulty of finding such performances limits the audience of outsiders to a small and unobtrusive band, who are further 'tamied' by being asked to wear traditional Balinese clothing. In effect the Balinese have discovered that the best way to tame the tourists is to keep them in their pockets. Some villages outside the central 'pockets of tourism' have developed special performance events during which tourists are brought in by tour guides in buses. These travellers pay their money, participate in the performance and are immediately bussed out of town, to minimize their disruptive influence on the regular activities of the village. In these more remote areas, special attention is given to creating the illusion that the tourists are penetrating the 'real' Bali. In one village that stages a weekly Calonarong performance, the tourist audience is invited to stay after the show to watch the villagers pray in the temple. Dozens of women bring offerings of flowers and fruit to the temple shrines, and their worship becomes part of the performance. In fact, there is nothing inauthentic about the ceremony. The women are praying real prayers, in front of real shrines, adorned with real offerings, but they are doing all this with the hope that it will sate the tourists' appetite for 'Balinese culture' at the same time that it finances future tourist-free performances that will be held according to the religious calendar and not the bus schedule.

The most elaborate and self-conscious example of tourist-taming occurs every Thursday in Mengwi when bus-loads of Italian tourists arrive in couples to participate in what they are told is a Balinese wedding ceremony. They disembark in the courtyard of a regional palace where the locals dress them up in traditional Balinese costumes and makeup. The tourist couples are then led down the main street of the town in a firelit procession accompanied by a marching gamelan orchestra. The villagers of Mengwi line the streets to take photos and gawk at the tourists, completely reversing the circumstances that prevail at most Balinese processions, where tourists jostle each other for the best photo and video angles. Completely oblivious to the meaning and context of their actions, the tourists are taken to a clearing in the palace grounds where a priest leads them through a step-by-step re-enactment of a Balinese wedding ceremony. The tourist couples, bulging out of their ill-fitting ceremonial garb, follow their instructions like well-trained circus animals and finish the evening with a traditional banquet for which they pay handsomely. Having left their 'eggs' behind, the tourists return to their beachfront hotels to share the seaside with the evil spirits that dwell there.

Tourist decoy events like this are staged at intervals throughout the island, whether regularly or irregularly. While the tourists are exposed to genuine aspects of Balinese culture in pleasurable settings, their disruptive influence on the village ceremonies is minimized. They have been tamed by the island inhabitants in a manner that mirrors the Balinese response to all potentially destructive forces in their world. Whether dangers take the form of leyaks, volcanoes, or bluejean-clad adventurers from abroad, the Balinese believe in the importance of propitiating, befriending, placating and ultimately taming the agents of danger.

The Balinese cosmology places humans in a world that is constantly besieged by invisible forces of good and evil. It is
the responsibility of Balinese individuals and village communities to balance these forces against one another in a state of dynamic equilibrium. In the famous battle between the dragonlike Barong (representing forces of positive energy) and the witchlike Rangda (representing forces of negative energy) neither combatant is ever permitted to win. Performed yearly in every village temple, their struggle always ends in a draw, acknowledging that good and evil cannot exist without one another. The Balinese struggle between its heritage of traditional culture and the forces of westernization that threaten to swallow it up is waged on similar terms. Tourists and western values are as essential to the evolution of Balinese culture as are Rangda, Calonarong and the leyaks practicing black magic who serve them. The 'tamed' tourists are now as much a part of the Balinese landscape as the traditional trance dances and temple ceremonies, their presence a sign of the culture's vitality and resilience in the face of threats to its survival.
chisme\textsuperscript{an}...

chambe\textsuperscript{an}...
se quieren...

y suenan...
se mían...
A year ago, we decided to create a performance that dealt with Latin women, food and sex. We started from our own stories. Nao is from an immigrant farm-worker family that was involved in the Chicano political struggles of the 1960s and 1970s. She grew up in the San Joaquin Valley of California, a region that at one time produced more fruit and vegetables than any other in the world. Coca's family is from Cuba, a country that gained a reputation in the 1950s as an international whorehouse, and which, in response to its present economic crisis, has reverted to sex tourism as a strategy of survival. In the course of writing Stuff, Coca travelled to Cuba to interview women in this burgeoning industry (see her 'Hustling for dollars: sex tourism in Cuba', Ms. Magazine September/October 1996). Then we both went to Chiapas, the centre of indigenous culture tourism in Mexico, and the site of the 1994 Zapatista insurrection. We spent several weeks in conversation with women and children whose livelihoods are linked to their daily contact with foreigners. Stuff is our look at the cultural myths that link Latin women and food to the erotic in the western popular

Stuff

Coco Fusco and Nao Bustamante
imagination. We weave our way through multilingual sex guides, fast-food menus, bawdy border humour, and much more. In the course of the performance, we mingle with audience members, treating them to a meal, a host of rituals and exotic legends, an occasional rumba and at least one Spanish lesson as part of our satirical look at relations between north and south. Our spoof, however, is not without a serious side. Latin American literature is full of references to cannibalism—as the European colonial's fear of the indigenous 'other' as a cannibal; as a trope for Europe and America's ravaging of Latin America's resources; and finally, as the symbolic revenge of the colonized who feed off the colonial. If food here serves as a metaphor for sex, then eating represents consumption in its crudest form. We are dealing with how cultural consumption in our current moment involves the trafficking of that which is most dear to us all—our identities, our ml-ths and our bodies. Stuff is our commentary on how globalization and its accompanying versions of 'cultural tourism' are actually affecting women of colour both in the Third World, and in Europe and North America, where hundreds of thousands of Latin women are currently migrating to satisfy consumer desires for 'a bit of the other'.

When 'Eternal India' Meets the YPO

Rustom Bharucha


This is the transcript of a talk given by Rustom Bharucha at the 'Performance, Tourism and Identity' conference in Wales in September 1996. The author acknowledges with thanks the Calcutta office of the British Council for their assistance in his participation at the conference.

This is a story about cultural tourism in India, located within the immediate context of a unique performance event. All the characters and events in this story, I should emphasize, are real, even though they may seem to be fictional, if not
totally bizarre. I have been struck by the surreality of the 'real' in documenting the collision of contexts that has made this narrative possible. I trust that my interruptions in contextualizing the ruptures in the narrative will not prevent me from telling you a story.

Earlier this year (February 1996) there was a rumour circulating among some of my performer friends that there was going to be a very exclusive, 'invitees-only', workshop leading to a cultural spectacle entitled The Woman in Us to be staged in Bombay. A very intriguing title: who, after all, is this woman in us? Would 'she' be the same in me as she would be in you? Would the 'us' include women? Given the problematic implications of this title, it's not surprising that this exclusive workshop was not being organized by a women's group, but by a cultural organization called Sarthi, which is said to be committed to 'artists in need'—artists from the rural, tribal and folk sectors of Indian performance. Under the rubric of The Woman in Us Sarthi wanted to explore something like the 'feminine principle' in the arts by bringing together 150–200 performers from the length and breadth of India and from all the Indian performing arts traditions: including the most renowned gurus, balladeers, folk performers, ritual and tribal artists, acrobats, gymnasts, magicians—in short, a panorama of India's cultural diversity.

Now, I was very intrigued about this event. The only problem was that I hadn't been invited to The Woman in Us. And there's a reason for this. I generally keep my distance from organizations like Sarthi. Why? Because they tend to be associated with cultural impresarios. Sarthi literally means 'charioteer'. The charioteer in this particular case is a man called Rajeev Sethi who came to prominence in India during Indira Gandhi's reign of culture. He was one of the first designers responsible for what we call 'Festivals of India'. I have written about this festival-culture in the context of the 'invention of tradition'—a very insidious phenomenon by which performers from different parts of India are transported, very arbitrarily, by government agencies to the capital, Delhi, where their performative skills are decontextualized, reassembled and synthesized to form packages: packages of Indian culture, signifying India's unity in the midst of diversity. These cultural packages are then exported to foreign capitals in different parts of the world—displayed over there, consumed over there. But with very little thought given to what happens to these performers when they return home. So, given this phenomenon, you can understand why I've kept my distance from both Sarthi and Sethi. But I wanted to enter this mega-spectacle. Why? Because we never see such spectacles in India. They are generally produced outside of India, in Paris or in Tokyo or wherever. We never really get to see 150–200 leading performers of India sharing the same space. Never. It's too big a scale. So I had to find a way of getting myself invited through the back door.

But who's paying for all this? This is where the YPO enters the narrative. What is the YPO? It sounds like some extra-terrestrial force—a description that isn't too far off the mark because the YPO represents a global organization. And like most global organizations, it tends to be here, there and everywhere, in no one fixed location. The YPO literally stands for...be prepared...the Young Presidents Organization. It is made up of young and not-so-young presidents who happen to be at the very top of corporations and big-business houses in all parts of the world. And I imagine they get very lonely being right there at the top. So they form a very exclusive men's club—needless to say the YPs are all male—and this men's club meets four times a year in four different parts of the world to hold—not a conference or a seminar or a convention—but (hold your breath) a 'university'. The University of Presidents is not only mobile, it is also extremely packaged (from registration to graduation, it lasts for a week), and unlike ordinary universities facing the budget crunch and the very real threat of closure, this university has no financial problem, located as it is within the confines of a five-star hotel.

Super-executive tourists like the YPs need something more than sightseeing and local colour. They want not just any spectacle, but the greatest show on earth. So, to spell out the agenda, The Woman in Us is going to be staged as the formal inauguration of the University of Presidents in Bombay. The YPs are coming to India for the first time and that's very big news. Bombay is a most appropriate choice for the 'University'. It's in Bombay that India's industrial capital is concentrated. It's in Bombay that you have the highest real-estate prices in the world, higher sometimes than in Tokyo. It's also in Bombay that you have the largest, most squalid slums in the world, but of course the YPs know nothing about them. Perhaps the YPs don't even know that Bombay is no longer called Bombay. Bombay is now called Mumbai. Mumbai is the Marathi word for Bombay and this is one of the milder changes that have been instituted by the extremist Hindu communalist party, the Shiv Sena. The Shiv Sena party is run by a man called Bal Thackeray who was a cartoonist once upon a time and consequently has retained a sense of humour. A very dark sense of humour. He
describes himself as a 'remote-controlled Chief Minister' who is not technically in government. He's out of government which means that he can get away with anything. He can legitimize the worst communal riots we've had in India since independence. This Bal Thackeray is mainly known for targeting minorities—primarily Muslims, who have been hounded and terrorized; he's had pogroms directed against their slums, and now he's got his eyes on 'illegal' Bangladeshi immigrants. We're dealing with fascism here and we can draw many links between fascism and big business. But this collusion is far too serious for the YPs because they're in India to have a good time.

But where in Mumbai will The Woman in Us regale the YPs? Now this is where we have to credit Mr Rajeev Sethi with a certain—what public relations people call—'genius'. He could have got any location. He's got the contacts. He could have done The Woman in Us as a spectacle at the Taj Mahal. He could have done it on the banks of the Ganga in Benares where Peter Brook had wanted to do the Mahabharata. These are very obvious choices. Instead, Sethi chooses a 'way-out' location—and this is what makes it so interesting—he chooses a place called Mukesh Mills. Mukesh Mills is about as exotic as Smith's Bakery. A very ordinary place, an abandoned, derelict ruin of a place. A lot of warehouses and a really run-down factory on part of the docks of Mumbai overlooking a very panoramic view of the Arabian Sea. It's a gritty space, not a sight that tourists go to. And in the midst of these ruins Sethi has created the most amazing—you can't call it a set—it's an incredible architectural spectacle; with a labyrinth of platforms and a grid of hundreds of spotlights. And, of course, for an auspicious aura he's got the deity Ardhanarishwara, which is Lord Shiva in his half-male, half-female form; a very male androgyne but an androgyne none the less, and therefore seemingly appropriate to the ambivalent subtext of The Woman in Us. But—this is going to come as a rude shock to you—even before we reach Mukesh Mills, The Woman in Us has been censored as the title of the event. (This is an interruption worthy of Salman Rushdie.) It appears that one of the Indian YPs is a devoted follower of a mataji, a holy woman, in whom he believes. She's an international, jet-setting mataji, you've probably seen her portrait in many European towns and in California, where she specializes in healing lost souls. Now, this international, jet-setting mataji detects a homosexual subtext in The Woman in Us and will have none of it! So she says 'Get rid of it!' And Rajeev Sethi is of course very quick with ideas, and he comes up with two other titles just like that—he's a genius. First choice—be prepared—The Peacock's Egg. There is some nebulous mythological story behind The Peacock's Egg but I'd prefer to read it as a yearning for male pregnancy The second choice is so discreet that it can't offend anybody. It's called The Hidden River, which is so hidden that it can mean anything you want it to. So The Woman in Us has become The Hidden River all of a sudden. But this creates no problem. The master text of the event is in the hands of Mr Sethi and he controls the meaning. The performers are merely there to fill in the slots.

Let me try and schematize a few things that are very necessary in cultural spectacles.

First, management of time. This is very important in tourism. I know there are new explorations of time taking place in the more—you could call it—esoteric dimensions of tourism in countries like Australia where people explore solitude on very long trails which seem to go on for ever. But generally, when you're dealing with super-executive tourists like the YPs, time is very essential. There is one command from the YPO management—the show must last exactly one and a half hours. That's the limit. Whatever you do, you've got to finish it within one and a half hours. Now that's a big problem when you have 150–200 performers. Moreover, in India, at the best of times, we live in several times, and these times get even more accentuated when you are working with traditional performers. For example, if you are dealing with a performance tradition like Kuttiyattam from Kerala, one episode can be and is performed over eight hours. One performer, a daily eight-hour performance, for twenty-one days at a stretch. That's what you're dealing with. The art of Kuttiyattam lies in this dilation of time. Now if you tell this great guru, 'Sir, can you make it eight minutes… six and a half, Guru…one and a half…' you are sort of bargaining. There's obviously going to be some real confusion here. There is no process of creative negotiation. There is no dialogue—it's like asking a great opera star to do an aria in just a minute.

Challenge two in a cultural spectacle is finding the balance between the sacred and the profane; the exotic and the familiar; the feeling of 'My god, this is just way out' and 'I feel at home here'. You have to get both of these things right. If you veer too much in one direction the spectacle won't work. Now in India we have no problem with the 'sacred', the 'other-worldly', the 'eternal'. We have hundreds of ways of producing these things authentically. We have slokas, mantras, incense, watering the tulsi plant, floor drawings, etc. No problem. The problem is with the integration of the worldly, the interactive. I don't know about your experience of tourism but when I'm a tourist, I have always noticed that there is a space in any cultural spectacle that generally opens towards the end of the performance when the
tourist enters the performance frame. There is an implicit understanding between the performers, the tourists, the tour manager, the hotel manager, that this is a space where 'you' can become one of 'us'. And this generally involves some kind of improvised horseplay. You could be watching a classical dance and then, at some point, a very ostentatious tourist gets up and wanders into the performance area, where he engages in a risqué kind of interplay with the dancer, which can sometimes involve cross-dressing. And that's the time when most of the tourists laugh and squeal and take their photographs because, I think, these are the most coveted mementoes—when they return home they can say 'Oh, look at Harry in a hula skirt'. The domestication of the exotic is very important for cultural tourism.

What does Rajeev Sethi have in mind for this? In *The Hidden River*, the audience participation has already been choreographed and built into the action. The head representatives of the YPO are all dressed in identical silk designer outfits. The master plan is that during the finale with the 150–200 performers, these head YPs just can't resist joining in. So they spontaneously jump on to the platform, grab one of the folk performers and engage in what we call *chakli*, an Indian children's game which involves holding each other's hands and going round and round. Infantile, childlike abandon is what is expected of the YPs. The head YP is ready for this display of frolic and innocence, but as he puts it candidly: 'Do I have to take off my shoes?' The eternal problem of 'eternal India': all those beautiful temples, but those dirty floors. But you can't enter a temple with your shoes on because you'd be defiling sacred ground. In *The Hidden River* every single inch of the performance area is sacred; that's the *raison d'être* of 'eternal India'—it has to be sacred. Now if you get on to the stage for audience participation with your shoes on, the space is no longer sacred, the show falls apart. So how do you negotiate this? How do you allow the tourists to enter the sacred without inconveniencing them too much? I think that these are the negotiations of tourism that are most profound.

On a more serious note, while all this is going on, I notice a process of dehumanization is taking place. All these wonderful performers, most of them from rural areas, very poor backgrounds, so energized in the workshop, with bravura displays of their extraordinary skills, are suddenly beginning to look faceless, displaced, frightened. They are made to sit in one area like obedient children. They want to please the sahibs but they don't really know what's going on. There lies the power of the master-minds controlling cultural tourism. The script is never shared. It is assumed.

Let me provide a glimpse of this dehumanization. It's two o'clock in the morning, we're having a terrible rehearsal, nothing is working out—you know what those rehearsals can be like. I'm watching this Rajasthani child-performer. He's in his full robes, turban, decoratively clad—but he's a very sad-looking child, he's a very tired child—understandably so because it's two o'clock in the morning; his nose is running and he's got a bad cough. Somebody yells from the other end of the stage and this child sort of jerks into a dance. Like clockwork, he moves his hips in a captivating dance with a smile and a flow of movement that can only be described as *chamatkar*. The dance is abruptly stopped, and he's reprimanded for his late cue. The child leaves the stage. A horrible moment to watch, a very violent moment. I'm left with two thoughts that I want to share with you.

What are the implications of decontextualizing this much fetishized 'extra-daily' energy of the non-western, fictional body which Eugenio Barba and other performance theorists have talked about so much? There is a 'fictional body', we have to accept that. It's captivating, it's got energy, it's got freshness, it's got vitality. But what are the implications when you decontextualize this 'body' from the daily circumstances of the performer's life? Are these realities of no consequence? What does that 'extra-daily' energy mean to the performer himself, and how does it get consumed—and by whom? Under which circumstances? What is the relationship of 'energy' not just to the gods or to the body, but to labour and poverty, the daily grind of everyday life which is the condition of most Third World performers? These are questions that I think we cannot stop probing because they have yet to be fully confronted.

I think that on a harsher note I would ask—and I remember the fatigue of that child, the fact that he had no choice here—is this not another case of an unconscious, maybe very mild, disguised form of child labour? And I use that word very consciously because Sarthi, apart from being a performers' organization, is also a humanitarian organization. In collaboration with the Théâtre du Soleil, which is its biggest partner in Europe, it has started fellowship schemes for deserving artists under the categories of *Ankur* ('seed') and *Bargad* ('banyan tree'). It has fought battles against the Beggary Act, for example, so that street performers can no longer be arrested. So Sarthi has got this humanitarian commitment. But what is really going on here in the actual interaction of performance, which is what I think we have to deal with, in the actual process of doing theatre? There is no translation (all transitions between the items of the performance are voiced in English); there is no negotiation; the performer has no control over the master-text of the
performance. What are we really doing? We are just using artists and reducing them to skills. And that is exactly what I think the Indian Government euphemistically describes as 'Human Resource Development'. In India, we have a Ministry of Human Resource Development, and the Department of Culture comes under that rubric.

Opening night. There are some incredible transformations taking place around the site which have nothing to do with *The Hidden River*. The kitchen staff of the Oberoi has arrived in droves with tandoors and banquet tables and chandeliers and a red carpet. And—you won't believe it—suddenly in the midst of the ruins appears a Taj Mahal of a toilet! You see this white gleaming toilet, with elegant urinals and shining faucets and an attendant who is trained to say 'Good evening, sir' and hand you a serviette, with which you can wipe your hands, and then you throw it into the waste bin which is conveniently placed there. It's a dream come true for all the tourists who are visiting the Third World. Their biggest fear is, let's face it, those dirty toilets. 'How are we going to go? Have you got enough toilet paper with you?' Well, here there's no reason to fear: all the sanitary needs of the YPO have been taken care of on a grand scale.

Showtime. The YPs and their wives arrive on barges across the Arabian Sea, and they are greeted with champagne. They are a beautiful, elegant lot of people—poised, travelled, and super-executive—not the kind of people, I think, we are likely to meet on our journeys. Not ugly, plebeian tourists. We are dealing with elegance, high culture, and a lot of money. They settle down to watch the show. They have got exactly one and a half hours. That's very important, they've got many other things to do. The show starts... It doesn't move. It's stuck. It gets slower and slower and it's a crashing bore. It's lumbering. It's embarrassing. An hour and a half passes and we are not even a third through the spectacle. Panic. 'Now what are we going to do?' One of the YPs follows Rajeev Sethi round the labyrinthine platforms, and he collars him at one point. There's a very hurried discussion, Sethi flies into action. I don't know what's going on, there seems to be a whisper campaign among the performers—and then, with a crescendo of deafening sound, the show jump-cuts into the finale. This is absolutely bizarre: the show was going on with some very slow and classical gestures, and suddenly it goes 'bang'—and from one third of the show we go straight into the finale. The audience awakes from its seeming somnolence. The head YPs, looking very ethnic in matching silk fabric, jump onstage and do their *chakli*, with everybody going round and round. There is absolute mayhem, nothing is co-ordinated, every instrument is out of sync, the talas are going berserk, the srutis are shrieking, and the show comes to a thunderously embarrassing and abrupt end.

It's time for the speeches, which is what inaugurations are ultimately all about. The head Indian YP comes forward very importantly, he opens his mouth and, at that very moment, there's a fuse and all the mikes go dead. Whereupon Rajeev Sethi, who has now become like the genius in a state of disarray, comes on to the stage and tells the audience in a very hoarse voice, 'It's all your fault, there are too many mobile phones here' and flounces off! After all, what is a YP without his mobile phone. It's his extra limb, you know. So there are at least 200 mobile phones in Mukesh Mills and the poor Indian power supply can't cope with this extra infusion of global energy. This does not stop our Indian YP representative from orating about India's march to the twenty-first century, in the rhetoric of Rajiv Gandhi, and about our new economic policy, liberalization, globalization, etc. To my utter horror he proceeds in the same breath to quote the epigraph from my book *Theatre and the World* where I have quoted Gandhi's famous statement 'I want the windows of my house to be open wide but I do not want to be blown off my feet'. There is not a hint of irony, so that Gandhi is perfectly appropriated in the rhetoric of global capitalism.

Anyway, it's banquet time and I could continue with the trivialities... But there is another interruption which is the point of this story. Mukesh Mills didn't just become a ruin overnight; it didn't just burn down accidentally—Mukesh Mills was sabotaged by its actual owners so that the premises could be used for Hindi film shoots. In the last eight years the hundreds of workers of Mukesh Mills have not been compensated for their arbitrary redundancy, and they continue to live in quarters around the mills. These workers, needless to say, haven't been invited to the YPO party but they decide that this is an ideal opportunity in which to make their agenda felt. So, very shrewdly and with great dignity, they decide to barricade Mukesh Mills. They lock the front door, they line up outside—maybe three or four hundred of them—and no one can get out. The YPs finish banqueting, they go to the toilet; the limousines are lined up, the airconditioned coaches are waiting, it's time to say goodbye. Sorry, you can't get out. What about the barges? Sorry, but the tide has come in. The laws of nature work against the interests of global capital. No helicopters, not included in the budget. Unforeseen circumstances. So, you're stuck, friends.
Now, this is a real interruption which nobody could have predicted. The story could end here, but the sad thing is that in all this confusion, there's a group of people who are totally forgotten—the actors. That often happens in theatre. And the actors, as you may understand, don't feel very happy. They have taken nothing less than four to six hours to put on their make-up. The gurus didn't short-change any of their rituals for their abbreviated performances, they took it as seriously as they would have taken a normal show, preparing for six hours, and the folk performers didn't take any less. The whole ritual of dressing and preparing for a performance is very important and done with great care. So, it's not a very happy feeling when you don't get a chance to perform. Apologies have been made by Sethi in a panchayat-like forum, and they have been accepted by the actors but something rankles in their hearts and hurts them. Time is passing; one hour, two hours, three hours. The children are very hungry, there's no food offered to them. No food? There's a banquet out there! Sorry, YPs don't dine with actors. Food is coming, don't worry, it's good Indian food and it's coming in a truck. But the truck can't come in because, sorry, the workers are out there. So the actors are without anything, they're hungry, waiting for their food.

I guess that's where 'I'll stop the story—on three possible endings. On a note of, shall we say, humiliation and absence of self-respect—with the hungry actors. On a more tense note, with impatient foreign YPs and very red-faced Indian YPs, still prepared to believe that globalization is 'on', despite a few infrastructural problems. And maybe on a more positive note with the workers outside at the door who are there to remind all of us, whatever part of the world we come from, that the working class is not yet dead. And that there are all kinds of emergent political identities in countries like India, and an increasingly articulate, oppressed class of people who will interrupt, infiltrate and necessarily disrupt the narratives from which they have been excluded. And the hope lies right there in that interruption.

Performing a Visit: Archaeologies of the Contemporary Past

Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks


People visit places. Proposed here is an integration of approaches to place, one originating in performance, the other in archaeology. Archaeology is a major means of dealing with site histories and material traces, a key component of tourist heritages. Performance, and experimental site-specific theatre, is a powerful vehicle for integrating, into 'deep maps', informations generated by diverse practices, from archaeology to poetry through travelogue, genealogy, journalism and memoir. The focus here is upon experiences of place and the politics of landscape in contemporary Wales—forest plantations burying old landcsapes, and valleys drowned by reservoirs serving English conurbations. The question is addressed—how may place be documented, how are sites to be worked with? The storyteller-guide is a performative figure who can enable the interconnectedness that is the experience of material place, incorporating informations, the factual and the fictive. Running through this nexus are the forms of archaeological time and ruin, memory, sensuous knowing and the creativity of a cultural poetics.

1798, ON THE EVE OF BASTILLE DAY, 13 JULY

LAND, IN WALES

The Wordsworths were visiting the River Wye above Tintern Abbey in the Welsh Marshes. The place, for them a heterotopia, was the occasion for a presentation of a romantic theory of excursion and ruin (Wordsworth 1973).

In Wales, land is disappeared. Over the past sixty years places in Wales have been removed from maps, through flooded valleys, the creation of reservoirs, the sequestration of military ranges, through afforestation and open-cast mining.
In 1936 the Air Ministry commenced the construction of a bombing school at Penyberth in the Welsh-speaking heartland of

The Wordsworths had been here five years before. The visit precipitates memory and reflections upon the associations it engenders, careful exploration of relations between self and what was, between self and that which is other. Such evocation and association involve the work of imagination upon experiences and relations with natural, objective things.
The 'natural' world of objects is

the mighty world

Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create, And what perceive; well pleased to recognise In nature and the language of the sense The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse, The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul Of all my moral being.

( Wordsworth 1973: II. 106–11)

Here is a creative union of person or self and object or nature. We half create as well as perceive nature because senses are not wholly passive but highly selective. Choice of what is perceived amounts to a kind of creation; it is guided by memory, searching

the Lleyn Peninsula. This meant the destruction of a house mentioned in sixteenth-century poetry, a resting place for pilgrims en route to Bardsey, the Isle of Saints. In the early 1950s, the Forestry Commission began to plant vast and sterile plantations of cash-crop conifers on large tracts of upland Wales. In the early 1960s, work began on a number of reservoirs to provide water for the burgeoning populations of Liverpool and Birmingham. In the early 1970s, the exclusive enclaves of nuclear power stations began to dot the landscape. And in the 1980s, the radical surgery of open-cast mining began to leave milky scars, white spaces on the Ordnance Survey maps of the south.

Each episode of loss involved the removal of population and the destruction of communities, And each in turn inspired political response, campaigns of civil disobedience, the foundation of organizations of opposition. For they function as inciting incidents, these late phenomena of England's colonial experiment in Wales. They masquerade as 'common sense', as 'economic sense', as 'for the common good'. But as Saunders Lewis, the playwright and academic, said at his trial for arson in Caernarfon in 1936: 'the destruction of Penyberth House is, in the view of the most competent of Welsh observers, typical and symbolic', planned by 'bureaucrats in the Air Ministry to whom Wales is a region on the map, who know nothing at all of the culture and language they are seeking to destroy' (Lewis 1983:118, 124–5).

This is never simply a matter of the loss of land and soil. It is always a matter of homeland and native soil. As Saunders Lewis continued: 'the development of the bombing range in Lleyn into the inevitable arsenal it will become will destroy this essential home of Welsh culture, idiom and literature. You cannot calculate in figures the irreparable loss of a language, of purity of idiom, of a home of literature, of a tradition of rural Welsh civilization stretching back fourteen hundred years' (Lewis 1983:124–5).

For him, land and culture are intimately intertwined. For him, place, language and identity are inextricably bound. Not surprising then that the poetic response should be as virulent as the political one. Of the afforestation around his ancestral home near Lampeter, Gwenallt, the Catholic poet who best captured the tensions between rural and industrial Wales, writes, in Welsh:

Near Rhydcymerau

On the land of Esgair-ceir and the fields of Tir-bach

They have planted the saplings
to be trees of the third war…

for continuities in the linking of earlier and later experiences of things. But this creativity is also the natural and empirical anchor of 'purest thoughts'. It is a principle of reciprocity between self and object world.

So Wordsworth hears humanity in nature:

To look on nature, not as in the hour Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes The still.sad music of humanity,
And the unity is a disturbing one:

a sense sublime Of something far more deeply interfused, Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, And the round ocean and the living air, And the blue sky, and in the mind of man: A motion and a spirit. That impels All thinking things, all objects of all thought, And rolls through all things.

And by this time there's nothing there but trees Impertinent roots suck dry the old soil: Trees where neighbourhood was, And a forest that once was farmland. Where was verse-writing and scripture

Is the South's bastardized English. The fox barks where once cried lambs and children And there, in the dark midst, Is the den of the English minotaur; And on the trees, as if on crosses, The bones of poets, deacons, ministers and teachers of

Sunday school,

Bleach in the sun,

And the rain washes them, and the winds lick them.

What is lost here is not land but the lived experience of land—all that turns site into place and occupancy into identity, a continuity of experience that finds expression in a particular language and that is preserved in a particular oral and literary tradition. Walter Brueggemann has written: 'place is space in which important
Things are not fixed but shifting and flowing in a creative communion between self and otherness.

What has happened to his memories of standing by the River Wye? He has felt the forms of scene: the 'soft inland murmur' (ibid.: l. 4), 'plots of cottage ground' (l. 11), 'hedge-rows, little lines of sportive wood run wild' (ll. 15–16): forms felt and restored, renewed in 'purer mind' (l. 29). These are not accurate images, simply pleasurable snap-shot memories of the picturesque. They involve feelings of 'unremembered pleasure' (l. 31). These are feelings and moods which cannot be put into words. And they bring to him an aspect more sublime; that blessed mood In which the burthen of the mystery, In which the heavy and the weary weight Of all this unintelligible world, Is lightened.

(Wordsworth 1973: II. 37–41)

The strangeness, otherness and unintelligibility of the object world become sensible:
We see into the life of things.

(ibid.: l.49)

'Tintern Abbey' holds that simple picturing or representation are inadequate models of memory or experience. There is more to reality, objects and experiences than what can be captured by reason's dissection of the empirical. This is revealed in Wordsworth's consideration of the temporal gap between his two visits to this place. Memory selects and elaborates, working on associations and evocations, following connections. This poetic work has been part of the changes he has undergone since the first visit. So the experiential loss of the past, its ruin, is converted by the imagination and by reason or thought, contemplation, into poetic gain:

That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more, And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts Have followed; for such loss, I would believe, Abundant recompense.

(Wordsworth 1973: II.83–8)

The gain is one of reconstructing the past, renovation; it lives on, changed.

Nature and its objects can haunt. Things, times and experiences evoke harmonies and associations other than what they are; things are in motion: vectors, trajectories and enfoldings. Wordsworth calls this the sublime: the otherness, the independence of the object world, its fundamental mystery which can never be captured (it is 'heavy' and 'unintelligible'), yet which at the same time is sensible, perceived and thought. Haunting; evocation; the ineffable
remainder even after scrupulous description; mystery; independence: these are the life of things, discovered in loss or ruin.

1942

David Davies died at Esgair Fraith—'Speckled Ridge'—in 1942. He was 100 years old. For the last sixteen years of his life he had lived alone. Towards the end, he had begun to smell a bit, as old men inevitably do—of pigs, sweat, leather, piss—even

words have been spoken which have established identity, defined vocation and envisioned destiny. Place is space in which vows have been exchanged, promises have been made and demands have been issued' (quoted in Lilburne 1989:26). Welsh philosopher J.R. Jones (1966) has coined the term interpenetration to describe the way in which language and land function to connect time, place and cultural inheritance—in his words 'to create a people'. As Ned Thomas has said (1991:35): 'a thought in Welsh has innumerable and untraceable connections with the thought of past centuries, with the scenery even.'

And these places are silenced. What is lost here, literally and symbolically, are those locales where Welsh discourse is generated: symbolically because the Welsh sense of place is enshrined in a series of cognitive maps surrounding home and neighbourhood where particular discrete 'ways of telling' are engendered. These include y filltir sqwar—the 'square mile' of

though he continued to order his life as she would have wanted. He washed in an enamel bowl on the table and shaved in a fragment of broken mirror on the window sill. And to the end, he worked—as a blacksmith and finally as a cobbler. There: where memory says the bellows once stood; where you can still find pieces of discarded shoe-leather, rusty hob-nails…

He had been, was, a 'pioneer'. He brought his family here in 1881. He was already 40. He came with all the energies
and enthusiasms of a middle-aged man, fuelled by years of frustration and disappointment: 'If not now, then never.' 'To begin again, to wipe the slate clean.' 'A second chance, to get it right this time.' And his traces are all around us. It's he who built those walls, who roofed those sheds, who improved that land, who extended this house, who was proud enough to erect a date-stone marking 1904, the year the Wright brothers made their first flight and Scott made his first visit to the Antarctic.

In later years, idly scratching a pig's ear with a hazel twig, he remembered the shock of his first visit: how squalid the yard, a few chickens scratching in the dirt; how derelict the few buildings, their thatched roofs decaying and rotten. He remembered: how worn she had looked, aged beyond her years, although she was only 27; how defiantly she had described herself as 'Rachel Jones, Head, Single, Farmer, 35 acres' on the title deeds; how awful had been the squint in the child's eyes, the turn in her lip. He remembered the rumours: that they had disguised the birth, pretending the child was a god-daughter, then later a niece, feigning difficulty with the language to the census recorders. That this Rachel Anne was in fact daughter to Rachel, herself daughter to John Jones, first occupant of Esgair Fraith; that she was the result of 'courting in bed', the old Welsh custom which lingered in the backward uplands. That after custom she had placed the wood of nine different trees under her pillow to make him come. That John Jones, Moelfryn, had arrived with a ladder, crawled in through the bedroom window and lain with her. That she was 15 years old. And he remembered too hints of something more terrible, whispers of less than natural union. For truly she was a strange-

LAND, PLACE AND THE IMAGINARY

How are these places to be taken up? We mention Gaston Bachelard's notion of eulogized space and the metaphorical effects of place upon the imagination (Bachelard 1964). Yi-Fu Tuan's neologism geopiety (1976:11 f.) not only embraces attachment to place but hints at the sacred nature of the contract, borne out in Wales by a relationship of almost religious proportions and evidenced by the biblical place-names scattered across the Welsh landscape. J.R.Jones has observed (1966:12) that 'the weaving together of the life of man and his familiar place... cannot be broken down into abstract elements, but belongs rather to the language of poetry'.

Might not our 'sites of disappearance' resemble Michel Foucault's heterotopias (1986)? These are counter-sites in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within a culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted. For, in that they animate the political and poetic imagination in Wales, these ruins, traces, memories persist as places where meanings and identities, local, regional and national, are indeed 'represented, contested and inverted'. Their loss has been worked and reworked to illustrate Welsh cultural and linguistic decline. Even in their absence, they become akin to Pierre Nora's lieux de mémoire—those sites where social memory is constructed and presented.

A PLACE IN WALES—ESGAIR FRAITH

And then suddenly, with the felling of timber plantations, the years of recurrent drought, the demilitarization of Europe—and this with some irony—they begin to re-emerge in the landscape. These places which once were lost, now are found. Esgair Fraith in the Clywedog valley, not far from Lampeter, is such a farm. The return challenges us to revisit, to readdress, to re-enfold, to remap.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TASKS

How are we to deal with these ruins, now, rising from the stumps of felled trees? We could excavate their dereliction, record their house-plans, document broken pots, hoping to reveal how these places once were. Such archaeology is rooted in a desire for plenitude, the fullness of times lost, reversal of the mouldering decay which accompanies burial and time passing.

remembered too hints of something more terrible, whispers of less than natural union. For truly she was a strange-
looking child…

He had listened to the story of her father, already by this time half mythical: how he had dressed as a woman, had blackened his face, had gone with others to terrify incomers: to fire muskets in the night, to chant outside the Englishman's door, to smash the toll-gate outside Cwmann. How he had gone with others to build houses overnight, to get the roof on and a fire going by dawn, after custom, as proof of ownership; to squat the land, further down. How he had stood here on this bare hillside and looked at his hands and had seen the deep score-marks of the threads. How he had realized that the enclosure of this common would give him one last chance—official. How he would become John Jones, Esgair Fraith.

He had listened, from courtesy. But by now they were both wandering: she ever backwards, telling a life-story; he forwards, laying his plans. In fact, he remembered this John Jones, weaver, a 'big man' in God, who had heeded the word: 'escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.' Who had dragged his family to the mountain-top, to this place beside Nant Clywedog-isaf. Who had not

More generally under this impulse, archaeological reconstructions often aim at photographic verisimilitude—a moment arrested before the viewer, or a reconstruction ready to be photographed—mise-en-scène. Think of the number of museum displays which go to considerable expense and use every technological device to do just this. Their desire is naturalism—an adherence to the appearance of things, a replication of external features, the way things once were.

And to what end? These places like Esgair Fraith are neither so exceptional nor so old that their inscription is of particular importance. They are a fairly recent phenomenon, not more than 100 to 200 years old, the result both of squatting on the commons and of legal enclosure, particularly in the mid-nineteenth century, in response to population rise and the need to supplement the fluctuating fortunes of semi-industrial workers such as weavers and miners by homesteading.

Equally and instead we might accept the loss, while attending to Adorno and Horkheimer's admonition: 'what is needed is not the preservation of the past, but the redemption of past hopes' (1979: xv). Decay and morbidity are the condition of archaeological inquiry. It is not just that things happened in the past, but that they may even be touched, somehow, and now. Indeed this quest for sensuous knowing or corporeal knowledge is often what draws people, archaeologists and others, to the material past. The tangibility of remains of times gone offers access to what was thought lost, drawing on the energies of loss and restitution.

These places are saturated with meaning: whilst little of physical worth is at risk here, everything of cultural value is at
stake. They offer a series of challenges to those archaeologies which call themselves interpretive and romantic (Shanks 1992, 1995; Shanks and Hodder 1995), effectively to document and represent a heterotopia. They require a 'rescue archaeology', not of physical remains but of cultural identity. For any approach to them must take into account the endless narratives, the aspirations and disappointments, local and national, which have accumulated around them. It is not enough to confine them to the past, to say 'This is how they were then'...and nothing more.

In the invitation to return and revisit, these places posit fundamental questions about methodology: what is to be recorded, how and why; how is the past to be written and on whose behalf; what are the politics of interpretation and representation; how might contested interpretations of the past be embraced and presented? They may therefore be susceptible to those practices which are aware of their plurality of motive, which pay attention to the local and particular and which are suspicious of any final

realized that it was already too late; that the woollen industry had already fled to the burgeoning cities of northern England. That the best places had already gone, the other Joneses already breaking the ground at Moelfryn, marking out their circle of fields.

Who had hacked and blasted stone from the quarry with dangerous abandon, who had built house, water-mill, weaving sheds. Who enclosed a few fields for livestock, though he was never a farmer. And Jacob said unto his brethren: 'gather stones; and they gathered stones and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap.'

By now he was no longer listening though she rambled on: how they had all slaved at the looms, pulling threads, counting threads—five red, five black, five red; how the windows were always too small, a choice between wind and light; how the older children had escaped as soon as they could—to the coalfields of South Wales, to the opportunities of America; how her parents had died exhausted, knitting socks…

account of things; to practices sensual and phenomenological, which are bound to be subjective, emotional and provocative, which are as unafraid of poetry as they are of politics. Intimate to this concept of the archaeological are personal identities (always socially and culturally mediated) and their location in the material of our bodies, things owned, found, lost, lived among. Here too are affinities with memorabilia, that range of material hooks for the collage of memory. This will necessitate new and extended approaches to site including creative and technical innovation in the recording, writing and illustrating of the material past—an experimental archaeology rooted in creative reinterpretation of social fabric.

Such is the resonance of these sites that any re-encounter will be inevitably political: reawakening memories, stirring emotions, mobilizing causes. For it recovers that which was thought lost. And it is here that archaeology has a chance. It could hide behind its scientific objectivity; but it could equally reveal itself as a process of cultural production that takes the remains of the past and makes something out of them in the present. By the creative use of the various fragments of the past and in full knowledge of the interests of various communities, the
How the only thing that had prospered were the trees—beech and sycamore, hazel and ash. These he would keep. And he would plant more. Of course, he got it cheap. And the Rachels disappeared, washed away, the only two ever to be born at Esgair Frawith. It was to be his site of perfection though no plans or drawings ever guided him, only the logic of practice. Here the yard, there the waggon sheds and stables; here the machinery for cutting chaff, threshing corn, there the whim—a horse-operated turntable device which drove the machinery, an aged cob trudging endlessly in circles. And there the stands for hay ricks. One orchard and vegetable garden. One cottage garden. More trees. And lots and lots of gateways. His layout is littered with thresholds, with entrances and exits, openings and closings, insides and outsides,comings and goings, arrivals and departures, each one signalling greetings and farewells, beginnings and endings, visitations and withdrawals. He even built a junction! And for thirty years, it was all movement—horses, livestock, vehicles. And children. For they too went—Eleanor, Anne, David—to marriage, to war or perhaps to early deaths in the great flu of 1915.

And the pig idly turned its rump to the twig. Once he could have slit its throat catching the spurting blood in a tin bucket as the frothing squeal died, would have blanched the skin with boiling water in an oak trough, would have scrubbed off the bristles, would have stretched the back legs with a bar and hoisted it nose down over a beam, would have opened it from groin to neck in one slash, would have watched the glistening entrails.

Various social and political constituencies, the various contradictory interests that might lay claim to the past here, it can become a significant resource in nurturing cultural memory, in helping to develop rich and plural cultural ecologies based on alternative notions of 'heritage' and ultimately in constructing and energizing contemporary identities.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN PRACTICE?

Let us first remember that realistic representation is not only or necessarily naturalistic. Realism is a project, not a set of formal conventions. As James Clifford puts it (1988:100): 'realistic portraits, to the extent that they are "convincing" or "rich", are extended metaphors, patterns of associations that point to coherent (theoretical, aesthetic, or moral) additional meanings.' Realism involves allegory. The construction of narrative is but one aspect or possibility here. In looking at things found we make stories, relating our looking to our experiences, to connections we see and imagine.

How are we to make sense of these sites? Meaning comes from making connections and exploring contexts. This is something constructed or brought to a place by the maker and the viewer—what, after all, is a 'natural' context? It may involve considerable deviation—temporal, spatial and conceptual—away from naturalism. To understand Esgair Frawith we may need to tell a story of quite another time and place.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TIME

Begin with three categories of time in archaeology: the moment arrested or captured; date; the continuity from past through to present. To these may be added actuality—a return of what is no longer the same. Actuality is the non-arbitrary conjunction of presents: the past's present, the instant of archaeological excavation or discovery, and the time
of viewing or reading, working upon the past.

Compare the work of the archaeologist with memory. Memories live on with us, as do found things, and as we reinterpret memories and incorporate them into new stories of our life, so archaeological sites and artefacts change: the stone which was once considered a thunderbolt becomes social document or historical source of once-lost society. Memories sometimes seem to escape time in that they stay with us. We may feel too that old artefacts sometimes witness that which escapes time, the timeless,

The timeless here is not an unbounded infinity, the incomprehensibility of a quarter of a million years, but is convoluted or

spill out, would have eaten the brains first…. But by this time, he kept them as companions. And age requires so little food.

Sometimes on the path to the 'Halfway' pub he would stop beside the piles of stones which the ancient Cambrians had built, or so they said, and look down on the farms of the hillside—Plasnewydd, Ddeunant, Bryn-meiog, Bryn glas, Blaeny-waun, Pant-teg-isaf, Pant-meinog, Pant-y-ffin, Pen-cnwc and Meolfryn—on the lights of his constellation.

How he died, we've got no idea. In former times, they might have drawn his body up through the chimney, after custom. Most likely he would have been laid-out on the night before the funeral, his neighbours sitting round in the watchnight service, in the strange silence everywhere, even among the animals on the fold.

1835

It was in the middle decades of the nineteenth century that the uplands of Clwedog were enclosed and settled.

In 1835 Edgar Allan Poe wrote a strange (and ludicrous) story—Berenicë—about a man's fascination with the world around him. His oeuvre includes, of course, the detective story, and gothic horror, fascinations with that (archaeological) convergence of mystery, otherness and the macabre.

'This monomania, if I must so term it, consisted in a morbid irritability of those properties of the mind in metaphysical science termed the attentive' (Poe 1980:20). The subject of this story attends obsessively to the thing-ness of things. His cousin Berenicë is dying of a consumptive, wasting disease which erodes her beauty:

The eyes were lifeless, and lustreless, and seemingly pupilless, and I shrank involuntarily from their glassy stare to the contemplation of the thin and shrunken lips. They parted; and in a smile of peculiar meaning, the teeth of the changed Berenicë disclosed themselves slowly to my view. Would to God that I had never beheld them, or that, having done so, I had died!

(Poe 1980:23).

folded time, a folding or recycling of past moments or experiences—chiffonage. As conjuncture between the person remembering and the past event, memory crosses time (faster than light), just as the place before you now witnesses lost instants in time past.

Just like archaeological work, memory is in fact the act of memorizing. The past as memory does not exist as it was. The past has to be recalled: memory is the act of recalling from the viewpoint of a subsequent time. So too an archaeological find is meaningless unless lent a past and a future. The captured moments of the pot need a past and a present to make sense. This is done by the contextualization that takes place in interpretation: we read signs and to these we add connections made through montage and juxtaposition with text. And just as memories change, so do archaeological knowledges—thunderbolt to 'tool'.

We may add also the idea of rapturous temporality: memory holds on to the past, just as archaeology grabs time, potentially missed, now lost. In memory time stands still: there are no clocks. In the world remembered there is no bottom line, no horizon, no past-as-it-was, no ordained chronology. There are instead but enfoldings. Archaeology
shares also this art and science of assemblage. Naturalism may require chronicle: dates and linear chronology. A realistic memory (or indeed history) may need flashbacks, long-term backgrounds, reflexive reinterpretations of past events.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL POETICS

This temporality is the condition of an archaeological poetics whose method is assemblage, a rigorous attention to the empirical in making connections, following the traces. This is the work of poetry:

to bring together what life has separated or violence has torn apart. Physical pain can usually be lessened or stopped only by action. All other human pain, however, is caused by one form or another of separation. And here the act of assuagement is less direct. Poetry can repair no loss but it defies the space which separates. And it does this by its continual labour of reassembling what has been scattered…. Poetry's impulse to use metaphor, to discover resemblance, is not to make comparisons (all comparisons as such are hierarchical) or to diminish the particularity of any event; it is to discover those correspondences of which the sum total would be proof of the indivisible totality of existence.

(Berger 1984:96–7)

His cousin expires; his fascination continues. He is found to have disinterred her body, out of his senses, and extracted her teeth. She is found to have been buried alive.

Horror fiction is about such themes of morbidity, the materiality which is ourselves, the relations between our categorizations and what is left out. The living dead, from zombies to vampires. It confronts absence or the formless, explores the gap between self and other. And horror is not really about fear; it is about fascination. Strange worlds, making visible the unseen, discovery. And a desire to know, to pursue fascination, to confront the other, the imaginary which has not yet been caught and tamed by the symbolic, by genre, discourse.

WHAT TIME IS THIS PLACE?

1798, 1835, 1942, 1997. We can set dates and describe events, follow the flow of time. But archaeological time is of another order too. Imagine a grid, a matrix of people and events, times and

So if we are to map a place, the task is not some banal planning or recording of the ruin. We must surely create what William Least Heat-Moon has called deep maps to elaborate adequately the complex accumulation of narratives at these 'sites of contest'. His *PrairyErth* (1991), 'a deep map' of Chase County, combines history, travel, anthology, geography, journalism, memoir, natural history, autobiography and everything you needed to know about Kansas! Or the task is what we might term incorporation—juxtapositions and interpenetrations of the historical and the contemporary, the political and the poetic, the factual and the fictional—the discursive and the sensual.
And here the archaeological and the performative might make common cause: for the document, the equivocal, multivocal working of ruin and trace, could be constituted as real-time event. Performance itself can be a rearticulation of site: language can return as a reading on to and into them, as a re-interpenetration.

Story-telling or, perhaps better, solo performance—some equivalent of the explorer's account, the traveller's tale of strange events plotted in a geometry of time. And we may feel the distance of times long gone. But also, as Michel Serres says (1992:90), time percolates. The bubblings of time create temporal comings and goings, convergences and strange synchronicities. The ordered geometry of time may be crumpled in our poetic work which, in taking up the fragments, seeks connections and frictions—a topology of time.

sights and smells—might be our most effective rearticulation of place. Solo performance mixes useful information with the pleasure of the telling. The teller is inevitably at the centre of events. As Benjamin adds (1970:91): 'thus the traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel.' Effectively, the interpreter is foregrounded and interpretation becomes a performative practice. The monologue of the storyteller can exhibit a kind of dialogue: a high order of intertextuality, of dialogue between texts. The solo narrative can include truth and fiction, lying and appropriation: the fragmentary, the digressive, the ambiguous. Indeed it must vacillate
between the intimately familiar and the infinitely strange, if our attention is to be held: anecdotes, analects, autobiography, the description of people, places and pathologies, poetry, forensic data, quotations, lies, jokes, improvised asides, physical re-enactments, impersonation. Here there are no hierarchies of information and no correct procedures. But this 'way of telling' should not be the droning of the bar-room bore. Its point of attraction is the voice of the performer—chatting, lecturing, reciting, orating, seducing—in modulations and intensifications of speed, tone, volume, rhythm. Here in the grain of the voice is where the story comes to life.

And here too we might find employed all those modes and techniques. those discourses. which inhabit and animate those cognitive maps of a Welsh sense of place: chatting, lecturing, reciting, orating, seducing.

What such work so often elicits is other stories, and stories about stories. It catalyses personal reflection and the desire on the part of the listener to reveal her or his own experiences. It works with memory: raking up old ones, stimulating new ones. Of the afforestation of Wales, R.S.Thomas writes:

It's a population of trees
Colonising the old
Haunts of men.
I see the cheap times
Against which they grow:
Thin houses for dupes,
Pages of pale trash,
A world that has gone sour
With spruce.
(R.S.Thomas 1995:1, 30)

His words 'cheap', 'thin' and 'pale' suggest that our approaches to re-enfold, to rearticulate these places, must be 'rich', 'thick' and 'coloured' micro-archaeologies of cultural fabric.
References

Cover and Prelims


• Holden, Deborah (1994) 'When all the fun is getting there', New Zealand Herald, 30 August.


• Cardiff, September 1996. Watercolour in landscape.

NOTES

1 A living history museum near Cardiff, set in the time of the English Civil War, with guides playing house servants, dressed in period costume and speaking the language of seventeenth-century Britain.
3 The slate mine at Blaenau Ffestiniog offers various tours, amongst them the 'Deep Mine Tour' which lowers visitors to one of its deepest parts where ten son et lumière sequences depict the working and social life of Victorian slate miners.

4 The museum near Cardiff, one of the biggest open-air museums in Europe, tells the history of Wales with a collection of buildings salvaged from all over the country, amongst them farmhouses and cottages, barns, a chapel, a school, a tollhouse and a cockfighting arena, stores with real goods on sale and a tannery, a pottery, a bakehouse, a smithy and three mills where craftspeople demonstrate the original methods of their trade.

5 Portmeirion was built from 1925 to 1972 by Sir Clough Williams-Ellis in his attempt to design the 'ideal village', using parts of endangered and dismantled buildings from all over Britain and abroad to create an eclectic, Italianate architectural folly.

6 See MacCannell and Gómez-Peña, both this issue.

7 See Noyes and Jenkins, both this issue.

8 See Pearson and Shanks, this issue.


Virtual Reality's Place

Dean MacCannell

Tourism is the only industry Hollywood studio executives
are afraid of.

(A young screenwriter in Los Angeles, 1995)


BETWEEN TOURISM AND THE MOVIES

What could be the grounds of fear of tourism on the part of someone who sells fantasy? Begin with what the movies share with sightseeing—namely a troubled relationship with a real milieu: with actual geographic and social places, with the 'landscape', made to function as a backdrop to fictional action. Sightseeing, in its original set-up, brought the viewers to distant places. The movies bring distant places to the viewers. A popular type of tour in Japan today links the two by offering 'Audrey Hepburn's Europe' or 'Gary Cooper's American West' etc. The tourists review images from the movies (Hepburn in front of the Trevi Fountain, Cooper at Palm Desert, etc.) and the tour operator promises to take them there. Yet, governed by a rule of presence, sightseeing may begin with mediated experience—an image from a poster, a guidebook, the National Geographic, a scene from a movie—but it can never end there. The basic rule of sightseeing is that mediated experience, any off-sight representation, is not substitutable for being-in-the-presence of the Real Thing. Tourists arrive literally at the same place as the movies, but directly in the presence of the 'scene', the 'background', the putative 'reality' that binds together the dramatic action of fantasy. This is the reason why Hollywood executives fear only the tourist industry. And this is why movies that are primarily intended to be 'entertainment'
continue to be set in one of two 'places': (1) in a travelogue that reinforces every stereotypical viewpoint of a well-known place; or (2) in 'any-place-whatever', rigorously designed to block even guessing games about where it might actually be. (Often it is Canadian cities and landscapes that are called upon by Hollywood to serve as generic 'place' on film.)

Virtual Reality is the logical next step beyond tourism and the movies. It begins between tourism and the movies, borrowing from each of these earlier forms their conventions of 'realism' and their ways of displacing desire. This paper is about different ways of constructing the scenes of human experience, focusing on some recent efforts to totalize the background of human action in computer simulations. * In the nexus of sightseeing and virtual travel, the status of place has been made highly ambiguous by the construction of virtual places both outside (e.g. New York in Las Vegas) and inside the computer. In its concluding sections, this paper will suggest a different approach to the construction of place and experience as an alternative to the models proffered by builders of computer-based and theme park virtual environments.

* See, for example, Brian R.Gardner's discussion in 1993:94-5.

Perhaps because the 'thereness' of its background is among the most taken-for-granted aspects of the meaning of any action, it is the background, or the scene, of fantasy that has been subject to the most careful attention by the architects
of virtual experience. The rule of 'realism' is to modify backgrounds enough to produce meaning without changing them so much as to call attention to the fact that they are being manipulated. Light and dark, wind, rain, lightning, bright sun, as well as the deployment of objects in space, the condition of the objects, whether they are broken or new:

every micro-detail contributes to the 'feel' of represented environments. Already there is substantial commentary in Virtual Reality (VR) manuals on adapting film strategies for representing backgrounds to virtual environments. And with good reason. Film noir, for example, reached deeply into the viewers' consciousness by linking subjectivity as much to the presentation of the scene of the action as to the action itself. * The diffident relationship of Virtual Reality to the subject, any subject (the programmer, the user), makes the behaviour of the virtual landscape, its agency, believability and responsiveness, and/or lack thereof, as close as VR gets to 'subjectivity'.

*See Joan Copjec 1993.

In establishing an opposition between 'authentic' tourism on the one side and the movies, theme parks and virtual travel on the other, I do not mean to suggest that the act of sightseeing is unmediated. All the events and objects in the world that are designated as 'authentic attractions' (e. g. the Liberty Bell, the Tower of London, etc.) are presented so as to produce certain impressions and preclude others. They have been marked, lit, restored, around moral/aesthetic equations. Still, sightseeing is constrained by much the same representational framework as ordinary experience. It is
subject to manipulation of thought and feeling, and the sightseer may form an impression that is not necessarily mistaken, but not intended either. Manipulation and misprision occur in sightseeing, in art, at the movies, in Virtual Reality and in life. But in sightseeing and life, there is no forced perspective, gravity control, jump cuts, slowing down or speeding up of time, or instantaneous moves between cities or galaxies. Or there didn't used to be. Virtual sightseeing laminates montage, and the kinds of experiences provided to a viewer through multiple cameras with zoom lenses, to ordinary experience.

VIRTUAL REALITY

One of the interesting features of writing about Virtual Reality is that the authors are not content simply to describe its virtues and shortcomings. In addition, they make a series of claims against ordinary experience. The political theory of the everyday as articulated by the proponents of Virtual Reality is a worthy subfield of study in the ongoing struggle to define the postmodern subject. It is evident that the builders of virtual environments do not want to reproduce ordinary, everyday places and experience, far from it. All they want to reproduce is the feeling of being-there.

Here, the term Virtual Reality will be used in the narrowest way to refer to experiences provided by a group of technologies that link a computer to its user via motion sensors attached to the body, and shield the user from visual, aural and other stimuli except as provided by the computer through a helmet or an 'eyephone'. The key element in this
group of technologies is 'automatic head position tracking', which allows the wearer of an eyephone to scan a computer-generated landscape in a quasi-natural way, as if the subject were moving inside the computer graphic.

Originally conceived as a way of simulating high-risk situations (e.g. flight, battlefield or surgical emergencies) for training purposes, the domain of virtual experience and Virtual Reality is expanding and colonizing tourism in particular at a rapid rate. Now it is possible to 'travel' to all the world's great attractions and experience them not just as a sightseer might, but by being able to hover and fly over and through them, and to see things inaccessible to mere tourists.

The makers of VR technologies deal with the illusion of presence in some detail. The author of a technical manual explains:

Most people who have experienced different virtual environment systems state that they felt either 'part of a synthetic experience' or...'immersed in the experience'. It is important to realize that these two states are completely different and imply different degrees of presence... A breakdown in the sensation of virtual presence occurs when the person feels tired or when the weight of the head-mounted display becomes uncomfortable. Unnatural movement or lags in the virtual environment can also lead to conflicts in the feeling of presence, but if the participant is stimulated with visual and auditory information of high fidelity and is allowed to interact with objects in the virtual environment, the
feeling of presence can be very powerful.

(Kalawsky 1993:80-1)

Susceptibility to the illusion or the feeling of presence then depends on the quality of the machine and its program, and it depends equally on the desire of the subject. Kalawsky remarks that:

[rapid immersion occurs] for a viewer watching a nature programme of extreme beauty and realizing he could never visit the actual area, his interests make him feel he is a part of the scene. He wishes he were there.

(Kalawsky 1993:80-1)

There is in this and other similar accounts an unavowed relationship to religious, especially Christian, spirituality.

Jaron Lanier, described by 1-800 Magazine as 'the reigning mouthpiece of VR wisdom', claims that Virtual Reality is nothing less than 'the first new reality since Adam and Eve'. * As the theoreticians of VR attempt to describe human desire, they elaborate a compromised, meta-touristic moral philosophy: a desire to get outside of one's ordinary, everyday reality, to go where one cannot or must not go, a desire for an impossible presence that is so strong that the desiring subject is willing to sacrifice presence to the illusion of presence. Thus, one of the highest achievements of symbolic logic is represented as post-symbolic; the most controlling and centralized consciousness so far devised, in the form of the 'Program', is represented as 'post-patriarchal; and the future is represented as a return to the deep spirituality of the past. Jaron Lanier avows that 'Virtual
Reality will bring back a sense of the shared mystical altered sense of reality that is so important to basically every other civilization and culture prior to big patriarchal power'.

One might question this philosophy and its attendant spirituality and the action, political and dramatic, that is linked to it. The builders of virtual environments invoke 'impossible' desires and claim to be able to satisfy them. Doug Trumbal, a virtuoso builder of virtual environments for the entertainment industry, remarks to a BBC camera: 'You want to go to Mars, to the bottom of the sea, to the top of Mount Everest, but these are all things that none of us will ever do, so we'll get there via some hyper cyber experience' (BBC 1996: The Tourist). Pimentel and Teixeira pitch future applications, specifically entry into a Van Gogh landscape:

*Quoted in Isabella Sharp 1991:68.

*Quoted in Isabella Sharp 1991:25. The contradictions in the rhetoric of Virtual Reality, especially as articulated by Lanier, are discussed by Stuart Moulthrop 1993. Moulthrop comments that VR produces 'a space whose inhabitants are given the illusion of cosmic power while they remain entirely under the influence of their host machine—which brings us back to the salient irony of cyberspace, or post-symbolism's debt to the symbol' (Moulthrop 1993:83).

Close your eyes and...imagine the brilliant yellow of a Van Gogh field. Walk around in the field; move your feet amid the luminous colours and see the trees churning in the distance. Can you recall the thin black line of a crow
flying

overhead in a cobalt blue sky? Does being in the field bring back some of the special feelings that seeing the real art creates? Imagine how much more intense those feelings would be if you could put on a pair of VR goggles and actually go for a walk through a Van Gogh countryside and meet the artist—possibly even become the artist!

(Pimentel and Teixeira 1993:239)

According to Pimentel and Teixeira,

Virtual reality can be used to translate information (mental or symbolic) into experiences that people can explore in the same kind of purposeful play that Einstein experienced in his thoughts.

(Pimentel and Teixeira 1993:17)

It is to painfully obvious that some Oedipal connections to the past continue to inhabit Virtual Reality's unconscious.

THE DIALECTIC OF ORDINARY EXPERIENCE AND ITS
capo of political hype, performance artist extraordinaire subcomandante Marcos. And not because I didn’t worship the
man (alongside Cesar Chavez, he is undoubtedly the closest
to a sane and imaginative political leader we Latinos have
had in years). I truly had to bite my lip, but the hype
around zapatismo, and the cheesy parade of celebrities in the
lobby of the jungle waiting to be received by Marcos and
Compania, really turned me off. Among others, Madame
Mitterrand and Regis Debray were there to pass the
blessings of the dying European social democrats on to the
rebels;
Oliver Stone showed up with his entourage but ‘couldn’t
take the water and the mosquitoes’; Eddie Olmos also went
there...for the photo op; Eduardo Galeano’s visit to the
Convencion Intergalactica was like the last visit of the
Pope to
Mexico. Many superstar women journalists fought like crazy
to obtain an interview with sexy Marcos. They wanted to
‘unmask’ the hero...in bed. Even Benneton representatives
showed up to persuade the avatar to appear in a photo ad;
but Marcos politely rejected the invitation. *Indigenous
insurrection which started in the Mexican State of Chiapas
in early 1994, and soon became a nationwide political
movement. Though I was fully aware of the postmodern media
strategies of the zapatistas and their masterful
manipulation of the media, the idea of one of my
performance characters shaking hands (or rather exchanging
props and performance tips) with the rebels just seemed too
hipster and opportunistic for my taste. However, last August, I
finally succumbed to my own curiosity. II RADICAL CHIC
Invited by Chicana cultural organizer Marietta Bernstoff
and her companion, Mexican Chicano glamour in the
American imaginary. Courtesy Lowrider magazine, 1997
photographer Antonio Turok, a small group of artist friends
(including my collaborator Roberto Sifuentes, Mexican
performance artist Lorena Wólfier, Puerto Rican
photographer Tania Frontera and I) headed for San Cristóbal
de las Casas in the central part of the state of Chiapas,
in search of the Mexican Weltschmerz. The Woodstock-like Convencion Intergalactica, which had gathered over 3,000 zapatista supporters from around the world, was just over, and Marietta insisted that we didn’t have to practice political tourism. In fact our original plan was simply to chill out, write, walk the town, meet the local artists and hopefully, if we so desired, come up with a future project. Little did we know... Thanks to the zapatistas, Chiapas has become a major vortex for an end-of-the-century political drama: forty-seven different ethnic groups with a renewed spirit of defiance are attempting to negotiate space, language, cultural difference and political discourse. And these abrupt negotiations are taking place amidst land invasions, undercover military operations, inter-religious conflicts, and racial wars between indigenas and coletos-white San Cristóbalenos. San Cristóbal de las Casas is definitely the most surreal postcolonial town I’ve ever visited. Being the obligatory point of entry to the zapatista-controlled areas, it has also become (against the will of its inhabitants) the new international capital of radical chic (a.k.a.: the SoHo of indigenismo). Its colonial charm has been eroded by the presence of Indian fashion boutiques, cappuccino bars and fast-food restaurants with revolutionary names—to the dismay of the racist coletos and Europeans in search of authenticity. Whenever there is a major zapatista event, and during vacation season, the streets are crowded with hordes of revolutionary tourists and dilettantes from all around the world: gringofarians, hippitecas, eco-tourists, 'radical' anthropologists, macho journalists and burnt-out leftists. They roam around looking for 'the most unique' zapatista souvenirs and bargaining for hammocks and textiles from starving Indians. But they are also looking for a (politico-mystico-sexual) recipe to overcome their terminal nihilism. And in the interim, they provide the 'Indious' (misspelled) with arrogant solutions to all their problems. At night they go to the cafés, which are indistinguishable from those of the Mission District in San Francisco, to discuss the perils or wonders of zapatismo, and to write their heroic diaries. One such diary from a self-proclaimed Canadian 'adventurer' (probably an art student), who insisted on reading it to me at a bistro named Café Paris/Mexico (I swear to God), began with the following paragraph (reconstructed from memory a few hours later):

Dear X, I'm finally here in the heart of the Mexican jungle [false: San Cristóbal is not in the jungle]. Please tell Yvonne I don't love her anymore. I've found myself a beautiful Chia-pa-ne-ca [misspelled] who truly understands me and truly listens to me. My Indian lover is pure, very sexy and quite political: She is organizing her 'comadres'
to be able to sell their artesanias without the need of
government intermediaries. Cool. Tomorrow, I’m moving in
with her. Next week I will try to meet some zapatistas.
Each tourist is looking for a contact; for the right person
to take them to the jungle; for the proper guide for an
exciting 'zapatour'; and/or for the sexiest Indian (or
rather Indian-looking) 'insider' to exchange (for a week or
two) utopian fluids, cultural secrets and ideological
recipes. At the legendary club La Galeria everything gets
intensified. On Friday and Saturday nights, all those who
have just come back from the zapatour—re-energized or
disappointed—show up to pick up those who are on their way.
They exchange stories (political tourism is also about
storytelling), cheap tequila and (they hope) sex. The local
mestizo dandies are always ready to provide the gringo
(meaning any foreign-looking tourist) with whatever s/he
needs: a political contact, good dope, tips for the best
restaurants or places to buy this or that, or a night of
pre-Columbian pleasure. Paradoxically, this revolutionary
fiesta is perhaps one of the main reasons why the Mexican
government hasn't exterminated the zapatistas. In the
suspicious eyes of the government (Mexican politicians are
very sensitive to international opinion), each
tourist—specially those with foreign names and video
cameras—becomes a potential witness, a probable reporter.
Because of this, although I found the revolutionary fiesta
a bit sleazy and pretentious, I support it wholeheartedly
...and even promote it among my gringo friends: 'Go to
Chiapas. Buy lots of trinkets. Wear a zapatista mask. Dance
and drink. Have lots of sex with an activist. Pay lots of
money for the zapatour. It's worth it. You might be
contributing indirectly to the survival of zapatismo.' III
INVOLUNTARY EXPLorERS FOR THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL Fernando
Ochoa is a sweet man with a mission. For five years he's
been working with various indigenous communities in the
jungle on projects of 'organic agriculture' which offer
them, or so he says, 'the possibility of economic
autonomy'. Now he's got an epic enterprise: to try to save
the paradisal lagoon of Miramar (la'ckan'tun) in northern
Chiapas from the ambitious lords of transnational tourism.
When we met Fernando at Marietta and Antonio's house, he
was on his way to the Ejido Zapata, 22 kilometres north of
La Realidad (the home of Marcos), to propose a project of
self-sustained eco-tourism to the community. And we decided
to tag along in two tiny 1970s Cessna aeroplanes with three
camping tents, lots of mosquito repellent and our newly
purchased black plastic boots to walk in the mud. In order
to get to the Ejido Zapata, unless you are willing to drive
fourteen hours on muddy roads and go through countless
military checkpoints, you must fly to San Quintin, the
largest military base in the jungle. We landed there on a Thursday afternoon; five of us looking like S&M Chicano bikers on safari. Suddenly the eyes of 1,500 bare-chested soldiers stared at us with utter contempt. On one side of the landing strip were the fenced military barracks and one tiny zoo jammed with endangered species ('so the guys don't get bored', said a sergeant). On the other side were the suburban-looking homes of the soldiers—many still under construction—and the tiny wooden bordellos. Wherever we turned there were US-made high-tech military vehicles, tanks, and helicopters. Impersonating 'eco-tourists' we were interviewed twice, the men separately from the women; one interview was conducted by a military officer, the other by an officer from Gobernacion (the Mexican Intelligence Department). Performance art became expedient and we were cleared. Fernando's campesino friends were already waiting for us at the other end of the landing-strip. The situation of the Ejido Zapata reminded us of what we imagined Hebron to be like. Right in the heart of the zapatista-controlled area lies this obscene state-of-the-art military base: two overlapping and mutually exclusive worlds, which never look into each other's faces. Our host Don M told us: 'One day, the soldiers arrived. We were so scared that we decided to go to the mountains for one day and one night. And when we came back, we found some tanks, helicopters, and military trucks. They never left.' Today, more than one year later, they are still there, and many more keep coming every day. They are silently preparing for 'Operacion X': the total extermination of the zapatistas in less than fourteen hours. The presence of the soldiers is by no means neutral. They hunt endangered species for fun, cut down (endangered) tropical trees 'for training purposes', build unnecessary roads 'to bring progress' and exercise control, and hire the local women to wash their clothes and cook for them. The women and their kids are constantly harassed, and the men have to endure humiliation. The soldiers' most recent 'project' is to bring electricity to the area, which would mean a better communication system...for them. There are two 'cities' at the Ejido, separated by a river: one for 'humans' and the other for pigs, because, as someone explained to us, 'twenty years ago, a good doctor came from the city. He told us that it was unsanitary to live among the pigs, so we built a city for them.' Around 600 campesino families live in the 'city for humans' in extremely abject conditions. The soldiers create divisions among them by selectively giving certain families cows, plants and food. Those who receive presents from the military are eventually asked to perform the role of informants. The peasants have been forbidden to wear
ski-masks or bandannas which show support for the zapatistas. Their assembly meetings take place in four different indigenous languages (chol, tzotzil, tojolobal and Spanish) and eccentric combinations of them. Everyone participates except the women, 'unless they are widows and therefore own land' (we were told by Fernando that this is not the case in other villages). The opinions of the kids and the elders are being given the same amount of time and moral weight as those of the leaders. (Coded) discussions about local politics, community affairs and domestic conflicts often last four to five hours, and everything seems to get resolved. As of now, I still don't know if what we actually witnessed in these amazing town meetings was one of the finest forms of democracy (not withstanding the absence of women), or a carefully staged performance for virgin visitors. One night Lorena, Tania, Roberto and I were asked to speak at the asamblea. We were to 'explain what we did and present a concrete proposal to the community'. Half of the village showed up (and later on, Lorena and Tania spoke to the women separately). We clumsily tried to explain to them the form and content of our artwork, and our political agenda as US Latinos. We talked about Chicanismo, border culture, the immigration debate and performance art. When we were attempting to describe our use of Spanglish, an old man raised his hand: 'It's sort'a like us. We use many languages to speak to different kinds of people at the same time' (and clearly to establish different levels of complicity and understanding in front of potential 'orejas'—informants for the army). When we were describing fear of immigration in California, a young man elaborated: 'It's like us here in Mexico. The ladinos (urban mestizos) are scared shitless that soon we will take this land back, and they have reason to be scared.' We were humbled by their political intelligence. Since we weren't prepared, we ended up proposing a vague project: sometime the following year, we were to go back and present our performance work at the assembly house in collaboration with some of the members of the community (who had never in their lives seen 'theater' as we know it). The piece would be about the incipient Chicano/zapatista connection. A voting took place and our project was instantly accepted. (Later on at the informal 'women's caucus' organized by Lorena and Tania, our colleagues proposed another project to the indigenous women: a performance workshop about coping with daily patriarchal behavior and domestic violence through art. The women got very excited.) We are now faced with a hairy moral dilemma: how can we avoid reproducing the often paternalistic and insensitive models of community work we criticize in the USA? And, if we are unable to go back,
what will happen to our moral credibility as political artists? During that four-hour long assembly meeting something very strange happened to us: the exoticizing gaze slowly turned through 180 degrees toward us. And in the end, they were clearly in control of the gaze, of the context, and of the terms of the communication process: they clearly knew more, much more, about us than we knew about them. After years of practicing what I term 'reverse anthropology' in my performances, exhibiting myself as an 'ethnographic specimen' inside gilded cages and Plexiglas boxes, I had never felt myself so carefully scrutinized and my true intentions so fully understood as I did that night. My friends felt exactly the same: awkward, vulnerable and superficial, both like stupid revolutionary tourists and like ethnographic specimens on display. And, whether we liked it or not, that's what we were. Next morning, we traveled to Miramar Lagoon, walking for ten miles in the mud. Several members of the community insisted that we hired them to help us carry our stuff. During the two-hour walk, I couldn't help but think about my vertiginous and often senseless life in America as a 'superstar performance artist'; and my own alienation from indigenous Mexico. Here I was, in Chiapas, in the center of the wound, constantly falling into the mud and worrying about the venomous nauyaca snakes, with a very unclear mission. Was I a socially conscious artist in search of a deeper understanding of my times and of my 'new' relationship to a brand-new Mexico (my country has never been the same since the zapatista upheaval)? Or was I an artist on safari, in search of exciting material to write about and to perform? IV SHAMANIC TOURISM AND ANTI-TOURIST SHAMANISM Our next adventure made my predicament even more obvious and painful. We arrived in San Juan Chamula on a Sunday morning. There were ten of us, invited by el juez principal (the main judge), a charismatic artist named Juan Gallo who had recently been voted into office. He showed us the municipal palace, introduced us to various Indian politicians and then invited us to drink posh at the plaza with his comisarios, the indigenous police. Posh is a dangerous drink. A semi-hallucinogenic aguardiente made with refined sugar and other mysterious ingredients, it is thought to be a sacred substance. According to Antonio, 'it reveals the best and the worst of your heart', and the Chamulas know it. They like to get the ladinos (white outsiders) drunk so they can witness how in their drunkenness the outsiders reveal 'their true colors' (intentions). But for an outsider like me, the effects of posh are slightly different: when ingested 'socially', meaning out of context, the first three glasses give you an instant pantheistic experience. But the fourth one sends
you straight to hell. Being an old friend of the Chamulas, Antonio drank as many poshes as Juan and his bodyguards; but my Chicano/chilango flota and I were more careful and only drank a few. After visiting the famous Chamula church, we went to see El Shanick, the only brujo (witch doctor) who welcomes ladinos. The misspelled wooden sign outside his house reads in Spanish, English and French: 'Traditional witch doctor'. He claims he met el senor presidente Bush in 1992 and 'cured him from seven different illnesses'. And he's got a photo of him and Bush at the Oval Office to prove it. Only up close do you realize that it is a collage: the photographed hands are too white and too large to belong to him. El Shanick's 'international clientele' is composed mainly of curious travelers...and performance artists like Roberto, Lorena and me who regard brujos as colleagues. (Their job, like ours, is to create, with the use of props, costumes, words and ritual actions, a coherent symbolic system which helps people understand themselves and their circumstances a little better.) While you are waiting for consulta, his daughter might braid your hair-Chamula style—to make the overall experience more 'authentic'. She also serves you posh, and this time you just can't say no. After the braiding ceremony we looked like Hollywood Indians. We felt extremely self-conscious, especially as we had to go outside and sit on the front porch to wait for our turn to have a limpia (spiritual cleansing ritual). In a matter of minutes, we became a public spectacle, an involuntary tableau vivant, perhaps the strangest one they had ever seen. Amused by our cheesy 'gringo/Indian' look, the kids and the elders surrounded us, while the shaman's daughter continued to pour more posh into our glasses. Once again we were on display as yet another kind of ethnographic specimen: 'the border cultural transvestite', meaning a bunch of Mexicans, Chicanos and one Puerto Rican in Chiapas, all looking like stylish North American Indian bikers straight from a rock'n'roll road movie—and sadly beginning to behave like such, due to the effects of posh. Our impromptu audience spoke to us in Chamula and we answered back in Spanish. In our metaphysical drunken stupor, we truly thought we were having a deep conversation. But the Chamulas were probably just fucking with our minds. After all of us had gone through the limpia, we compared notes. The diagnosis of El Shanick was extremely disappointing: we all happened to have the same 'spiritual illness': 'someone—of the opposite sex—with dark hair was harming us with magia negra', and to cure this problem, we all had been given the same nahual (inner animal/protector): a black eagle. (Now in retrospect, I tend to believe that perhaps the brujo was right and we were all in fact suffering from the same
'spiritual illness': a deadly combination of spiritual nihilism, cultural voyeurism and Chicano irreverence.) By the time we returned to San Cristóbal, we were all roaming around in hell. We started fighting with one another like capricious children, specially the couples. Out of the blue I began to walk randomly at night, as if some cheesy metaphysical being was guiding me with a remote control. I ended up at a cantina named La Esperanza (Hope), befriending the bartender. He told me: 'Are you aware that the brujos are using witchcraft to drive the turistas out of town? They are making them ill and fight with one another. It's like they have created a shamanistic virus which only affects ladinos.' Next day, Marietta confirmed the gossip: effectively, people in town were talking about 'the anti tourist brujeria campaign'. She gave me many convincing examples of Americans and Europeans who in the last month either had been going through some severe psychological crises or were suffering from a serious disease. It sounded like one of my performance texts. V THE JOURNEY TO WALES Roberto and I had only three days to get from San Cristóbal de las Casas to Aberystwyth in Wales, where, paradoxically, we were to attend the conference on 'Performance, Tourism and Identity' organized by the Centre for Performance Research. The hardest and strangest part of my trip began. My colleagues and I first took a cab to Tuxtla Gutiérrez (the capital of Chiapas), where we had dinner with my chiapaneca family. My uncle Carlos and my aunt Maga were surprisingly sympathetic to our 'romantic views on zapatismo', given the fact that they had just lost part of their ranch (their lifetime project) during an indigenous land invasion. (The leader of the invasion knew my uncle and persuaded the others to let my family keep part of the ranch.) After dinner, my colleagues and I took a plane to Mexico City. The next day we had just enough time to have coffee with my mother, repack our suitcases and take industrial alcohol baths to get rid of the unbearable ticks we had collected in the jungle. Then we had to separate: Tania and Roberto had airplane tickets to go back to New York where they live, while Lorena and I flew back to San Francisco. We were exhausted. Once at home, I repacked my suitcase for the third time, and then, operating on automatic pilot, I kissed Lorena goodbye and rushed back to the airport, this time to catch a plane to
JFK where I was to meet Roberto again. He looked as burnt-out as I did. We took a short nap at a bar and then boarded our plane to Amsterdam. We were so exhausted (there is no word to describe how we felt) that we simply couldn’t go to sleep. We spent most of the time playing (or rather attempting to play) computer chess and trying to make sense of our intense memories of traveling across Chiapas. (In fact, the first notes for this chronicle were written during those disorientating hours.) At Amsterdam airport we had a couple of hours to rest in between flights. We had heard about the legendary airport sauna baths and decided to check them out. After an hour-long sauna in which we almost completely lost our sense of self, we headed to London. During that flight, we didn't know who we were any more or where exactly we were heading for. It was as if our primary identities had been deleted. All we could feel was acute deterritorialization (in the geo-cultural sense), psychological disorientation and, strangely, a pleasant form of existential despair: we were constantly cracking up at obscure matters which were not even understandable to us. To kill some time, we even made a list of all the stereotypical images that the word 'Wales' evoked in our scrambled minds. The embarrassing list was as follows: resistance—but not as hard core as that of Ireland working-class anti-colonialist politics neo-nationalism third language dark green fields with immaculately white sheep foggy forests with wholesome white campesinos a strange language 'which sounded Korean' food slightly better than the British thick beer sweet folk rock, etc. The next morning we were not in Chiapas. We were picked up at Heathrow airport by a smiling American student. She told us we had to drive to another airport to pick up 'a famous anthropologist' who was arriving with his wife. On the way to the airport she explained to us she had only 'seventeen hours of driving experience in the UK' (meaning from the righthand front seat of the car). At the time we didn’t understand the implications of her statement. After picking up the other couple, our driver got lost. We spent three hours circling around London, looking at maps for the right highway to take us to Wales. We were silently furious and frustrated, but too tired to make a stink. Suddenly the comedic notion of Roberto and I being 'the Lewis and Clark of the Chicano movement' acquired absurdist and unpleasant dimensions. A car trip which normally would take five hours turned out taking twelve. At one point I decided to console myself by thinking of the experience as a sort of performance exercise of endurance. My rationale was as follows: if I can make it to Aberystwyth, I certainly can spend three days living inside a Plexiglass box, or vice versa. We got to Aberystwyth at nine p.m. Richard Gough and
Judie Christie from the Centre for Performance Research had organized a welcome dinner for the ten theoreticians and artists who had already arrived. All Roberto and I could do to reciprocate their kindness was to smile...and mechanically eat the delicious Colombian food prepared by Richard's family. That night I cried in silence in my minute student dorm room. Who would possibly believe what Roberto and I had just been through in the past three days? Who could possibly understand that it was logarithmically harder to get from Chiapas to Wales than, say, from Tennessee to Micronesia via Buenos Aires. The romantic thought of being in Wales for the first time in my life consoled me a bit and I finally fell asleep. I dreamt my skin was completely covered with a rash, some kind of 'anti-tourist skin disease'. I kept scratching my skin until it began to bleed.

VI TWO LIVE MEXICANS ON EXHIBIT IN WALES

The next day Roberto and I were ready to 'exhibit' ourselves as 'ethnographic specimens' and 'ethnochborgs' as part of the opening events of the conference. The idea of two live Mexicans being the main attraction during the first day of the conference was irresistible. The title of our 'show' was El Mexterminator: Mexican Beasts & Artificial Savages. This work-in-• El Mexterminator: Mexican beasts & artificial savages; Aberystwyth Arts Centre, September 1996. Photo: Keith Morris progress is based on an 'Internet confessional in which we asked thousands of US Net-users to help us '(co) imagine the mythical Mexican of the 1990s', and tell us their innermost fears and desires regarding Mexicans, Chicanos, immigration and the Spanish language. These anonymous Internet responses have become the basis for the creation of a series of 'techno-dioramas' depicting 'ethnochborgs', co-created collaboratively with anonymous Net-users. Unlike our previous diorama projects, the idea now is to cede our will to the internet users (and to the gallery visitors when we are able to have the necessary technology available at the performance site) in determining the nature and content of the 'living dioramas', including how we should dress, what music we must listen to and, most importantly, what kind of interaction we are to have with the ritualized activities we should engage in and what audience. What we do then as performance artists is to 'embody' this information, re-interpret it, and stylize it. In this sense, the 'ethnochborgs' and 'artificial savages' we re/create incarnate profound fears and desires of contemporary Americans regarding the Latino 'other', immigrants and people of color, and hopefully (the work is still in progress) function as mirrors for the (real and virtual) visitors to see the reflections of their own psychological and cultural monsters. Our performance started at around
five-thirty p.m. For three hours, Roberto and I displayed ourselves on black platforms carefully lit as museum pieces. Roberto as CyberVato engaged in highly ritualized actions, which included plunging a horse syringe into his heart and tongue; self-flagellation with an S&M whip decorated with eagle feathers; and various traditional Catholic tableaux intertwined with pop cultural iconography. His arms and face were painted with pre-Columbian-looking tattoos, and his T-shirt was covered in blood and full of holes from gunshots. In front of him stood a small table covered with useless technological gadgets and what appeared to be real weapons and drug paraphernalia. A digital bar above him read: CyberVato (Homo Chicanus: ethno-cyborg # 6935) As seen on The Evening News. Habitat: The US inner cities. Aliases: cholo, pinto, chuco, homie, vato loco, lowrider, gang member. Features: Techno-savvy/neo-nationalist/monolingual/ melancholic/drug addict/experiences permanent social resentment and identity crises/loves oldies and Post-Columbian rap music. Poster boy for the culture of victimization. Wanted by the Los Angeles Police Department. ENDANGERED SPECIES Opposite CyberVato, I was seated in a decrepit wheelchair posing as El mucho macho Mexterminator, a kind of ranchero version of Arnold Schwarzenegger, wearing my Stetson hat, a fake tiger-skin vest, a Hollywood bandolera and my Tijuana black leather pants. The jaw of a bison was strapped to my lower jaw. Fully armed with unloaded guns and 'mysterious shamanistic weapons', my persona was more defiant, animated and more pathetic than Roberto’s. I applied make-up ritually, practiced 'Chicano karate' katas and performed various slow-motion tableaux vivants imbued with cinematic nostalgia, stylized violence and sexuality. My digital bar read: El Mexterminator (Homo Fronterizus: ethno-cyborg #187) As seen on the Supernintendo video game 'Killer Instinct'. Habitat: The American borderlands. Features: Illegal border-croosser/ highly infectious/ extremely politicized/unnecessarily violent & hypersexual/speaks Spanglish only. Indestructible! Multiple identities: karateca; marksman; stuntman; curio shop shaman; Tex-Mex rocker; drug & jalapeno pusher; undercover activist. Wanted by the INS, the DEA, the FBI & the Smithsonian Institution. Political project: To redefine the West and to invade the North. Besides trying to remain awake for the duration of the performance, our main objective was to make sure that our activist diorama (which is often presented in less controlled environments with much more foot traffic) retained its political spunk and sense of cultural immediacy. We don’t know for sure if we were able to attain this purpose. Our impression was
that our colleagues were truly moved and with us. Their intelligent gaze, tender eyes and familiar faces made us feel strangely at home (in Wales, posing as ethnocyborgs?). I suddenly began to remember Chiapas, the skeptical indigenous faces, the cyborg-like expressions of the soldiers, the bar scene in San Cristóbal, conversations with disenchanted leftists, silently rowing on Miramar Lagoon, listening to the ancient howling of the zaraguato monkeys at night, an old woman breast-feeding a child inside the church at San Juan Chamula, serious travelers playing roulette at the Amsterdam airport casino. We had come a long way—from observing and being observed by indigenous rebels and revolutionary tourists to observing and being observed by performance theoreticians, anthropologists and artist colleagues; from attempting to ‘deconstruct’ (what a pretentious term) our unwanted roles of ‘radical tourists’ and failing to do so, to deconstructing the threatening identities forced upon us by the American mainstream. The morning after, we jumped on an express coach and began a new tour. For the next three days all the participants in the conference traveled throughout Wales, emulating a typical bus tour, visiting various historical sites and attending site-specific discussions and performances, dealing with just about everything we had experienced in Chiapas. At the St Fagans Museum of Welsh Life, I was programed to read my performance poetry in a nineteenth-century cockpit, the ultimate site-specific context for a Mexican/Chicano/border performance artist/tourist in Wales, in a mythical Wales. Tourism in the 1990s is perhaps an inevitable experience. Thanks to the zapatistas and to my performance colleagues, I am no longer overly cautious about performing the involuntary role of the stupid tourist. In fact the borderline between ‘involuntary’ and ‘voluntary’ actions has blurred considerably since then. • El Mexterminator. Mexican beasts & artificial savages: Aberystwyth Arts Centre, September 1996. Photo: Keith Morris • Smadar Ya’aron Ma’ayan in Arbeit Macht Frei, Akko Theatre Centre, Berlin 1992. Photo: David Baltzer Believed-in Theatre Richard Schechner Performance Research 2(2), pp. 76–91 © Routledge 1997 Believed-in performances—where real people really act out their lives—have long been with us. Courtroom trials, sacred and secular rituals, protest demonstrations, Goffmanian performances in everyday life, and so on. In believed-in performances people are who they perform, playing their social and/or personal identities: judges, accused, rabbis, lawyers, doctors, teachers, activists, bus drivers, lovers, whatever. Believed-in performances have been theorized over the years by Erving Goffman, Milton Singer, Victor Turner, Barbara Myerhoff, Judith Butler, Eve
Kosofsky Sedgwick, myself and others. Believed-in theatre is related but different. Orthodox theatre is not believed-in, in the sense I am using the phrase. Watching or being in plays such as Inherit the Wind or The Investigation does not mean one sees or becomes the real Scopes, Bryant, or Nazi war criminal. The mimetic theory of theatre demands a prior or at least a separate actuality which the theatre 'reflects' or 'interprets', but which it is not. Some theatre simulates the original, such as the Soviet 1920 The Storming of the Winter Palace, directed by Nikolai Evreinov, with its cast of 8,000 soldiers. But Storming's 8,000 actor-soldiers, many of whom took part in the actual event, and the 100,000 spectators knew they were not doing or seeing the real thing, but participating in an on-site re-enactment (see Golub 1984, Deak 1975 and Gerould 1989). On-site re-enactments, that's what many living history museums and restored villages also are. Sites such as Plimoth Plantation near Boston close to where the Pilgrims first landed in the early seventeenth century or Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia combine environmental theatre, popular entertainment and educational instruction (see Schechner 1985, Snow 1993 and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998). Plimoth Plantation is an unscripted ensemble performance. Improvisational and environmental, it aligns itself with environmental theatre. The display of history of the site reveals a shift from ceremony to virtuality, from commemoration to exploration, from authoritative narrative to ongoing conversation, from discrete moments, objects and scenes (the usual fare at museums) to the waking dream of a virtual Pilgrim World. * *See Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, this issue. Evreinov restaged recent history, giving a Soviet jolt to events. Living history museums celebrate mainstream American 'values' such as the nuclear family, capitalist enterprise, courage and perseverance. Colonial Williamsburg is ambivalent about a 'way of life' many Americans despise while others yearn for: racism and segregation, not to mention slavery. At Plimoth the Pilgrims are given top billing, while the Native Americans, without whose assistance the English settlers would have perished, are located literally off the beaten path at the bottom of a not well-trodden trail. All living history museums enact a reductive, simplified version of the past. Some do it convincingly, in the first person, in carefully researched behaviour, dialect, costume and events. The visitor is being surrounded by the historical presence. Being there, talking to persons from another historical era, watching them tend to crops and farm animals, prepare food, interact with each other and with the visitors, using the language and tools of the past, actually going through the routine of some specific
day in eighteenth- or seventeenth-century American history, sure beats looking through glass at a diorama. But as in the Soviet spectacles and orthodox theatre, the spectators, even young children, know it’s just a game, that these ‘Pilgrims’, 'Colonials', 'Native Americans', or whoever, are actors. * The producers of living history museums recognize that 'acting' taints their projects. At Plimoth and elsewhere, the actors are called 'interpreters'. But whatever the lingo, living history museums fictionalize, making history into make-believe.

*Interestingly, at Plimoth several of the actors playing Wampanoag Native Americans are Native Americans.

When I was there in 1995, one of them told me he was a Wampanoag. Stephen Snow, whose Performing the Pilgrims (1993) is the best text on the subject, is himself a descendant of Pilgrims. He writes: 'It was both ironic and unexpected that I ended up choosing the restored village at Plimoth as the subject of my study... A serious illness in my family brought me back to Plimoth. My mother was stricken with cancer and, after her death in January 1984, I decided to stay on with my father, in Plymouth, and to take a position as an interpreter at Plimoth Plantation... I had vaguely known that I was a descendant of the early English settlers of Plimoth but had not paid much attention to the fact. What I did know before I began my study was that Nicholas Snow, the progenitor of my father's line in America, had actually lived in the original Pilgrim village in 1627' (Snow 1993: xxiv–xxv). Snow never performed his own ancestor, however. A more ambivalent experience is the Israeli Akko Theatre Centre's Arbeit Macht Frei vom Toitland Europa, † ostensibly a drama, with paid admissions, a theatre address and a clearly defined schedule. I saw Arbeit in Akko in 1994. The production is well described by Dan Urian (1993) and Rebecca Rovit (1993). ‡ Urian, an Israeli theatre professor, writes: †The title combines the grisly ironic 'Work Makes You Free' motto wrought in iron by the Nazis over Auschwitz's main gate, with the sardonic commentary added by the Akko Theatre: '... from the Deathland Europe'. Arbeit Macht Frei is a play about memories of the Holocaust.
and their place in Israeli reality. Its materials are the collective biography of its actors and their spectators, the majority of whom are second generation Holocaust survivors... Many spectators have the impression that the text and the actors' actions are to a great extent improvised. This impression is enhanced by the constant tension between the actor's own identity, which is preserved during the performance, and the role or roles he or she plays... The actors in Arbeit Macht Frei wrote the text employing only such facts as they had read, or heard, or experienced themselves, from sources such as documents, films, interviews with Holocaust survivors, musical excerpts, and visits to Holocaust memorials and museums. The process of writing the text took three years, during which the montage was created by David Ma'ayan, Smadar Yaron-Ma'ayan, and Moni Yosef. The rest of the work was also carried out as teamwork, including building the set. (Urian 1993:61–2) Rovit writes specifically about Arbeit's showings in Berlin, and how the Akko group adapted the production for a predominantly German rather than Israeli audience. See also Heike Roms (1996) 'Time and time again', Performance Research 1(1):59–62. Arbeit is a site-specific performance for an audience of about thirty. The performance I saw in Akko began in a parking lot where spectators were loaded into a bus guarded by actors/Israeli soldiers and driven across town to the Akko Holocaust Museum. So many Israelis are in the armed forces reserve that I wondered if they were wearing their actual uniforms. At the museum, Smadar Ya'aron Ma'ayan introduced herself as Zelma, a Holocaust survivor and tour guide. Again, was she telling the truth? She explained some exhibits, then took us to the museum auditorium for a movie depicting the SS shoving children into a windowless truck with Red Cross markings, whose exhaust feeds back into the cabin. This mobile gas chamber was a prototype for the gas chambers at Auschwitz and elsewhere. Was I alone in recalling the bus ride we had just taken? Watching Ambulans I did not know it was a Polish film (Janusz Morgenstern, director) and not, as it seemed, a Nazi instruction film. After the movie, Zelma turned the group over to Khaled Abu Ali (his real name), who said he was an Israeli Arab whose job at the museum was to explain to Arab schoolchildren what happened to the Jews of Europe. Again, was he telling the truth? Only later, when Zelma and Khaled appeared in the rest of Arbeit, did we learn that these people were not who we thought they were...maybe. Members of the Akko Theatre Centre—is not the Arab an Arab? The Polish-Israeli woman—is she too young to be a survivor? We left the museum not knowing who was what. Back at the Akko Theatre we were ushered—herded is more like it—into a small room with a
ceiling so low we had to stoop; we were packed on to hard narrow benches, the actors inches away. At our backs were small windows blocked by barbed-wire. We were in a house, in a concentration camp, in a bunker, in a theatre. Zelma argued with a neighbour about who suffered most during the Holocaust. Suddenly, the ceiling crashed down inches away from our knees and noses: behold, a fully laden table, a kind of seder. 'Instead of a tablecloth, documents and photographs referring to the Holocaust completely cover the table... We pass around Kosher dishes of cholent, hummus, eggs, and matzoh' (Rovit 1993:167). Zelma's husband Menash (Yosef) brags how the Israeli war machine is capable of crushing any Arab resistance. Obsequiously, Khaled dusts everything in sight, including Zelma, as he serves snacks and schnapps to the family and spectator-guests, while singing/explaining his plight as an Israeli Arab. When Arbeit was performed in Berlin in 1992, spectators were asked about the treatment of Turks; in Israel, the questions were about the treatment of Arabs. The performance drove home analogies between the Holocaust and the displacements caused by Zionism, the treatment of the Arabs, the wars for Palestine/Israel. Everything was designed to make the mostly Jewish Israeli audience uncomfortable. When the sardonic feast ended, we were moved to an upper level. The naked actors are scattered in the room. Miri Tsemach sits naked in an iron bathtub threshing about in a heap of food remains, eating and spitting them out; Na'ama Manbar is in a glass tank, swimming in a pile of papers, • Miri Tsemach in Arbeit Macht Frei... Akko Theatre Centre, Berlin, 1992. Photo: David Baltzer
evidence of Holocaust survivors, and Moni Yosef is hanging from one of the walls. Smadar Ya'aron Ma'ayan, a naked living skeleton is dancing a sort of dance of death, almost like a circus acrobat. Khaled Abu Ali, the naked Arab, runs about scourging himself and offering his whip to the spectators to lash him with.
(Urian 1993:60-1)
Khaled was acting the part of a Shi'a Muslim during t'aziyeh, a cycle play depicting the martyrdom of Mohammed's nephew, Hussein. Laughing, crying, Khaled offered spectators the whip and bottles of beer. Sometimes, Khaled later told me, persons accept both. On the night I attended, Khaled whipped himself until there were welts on his back and buttocks. Finally, a spectator took the whip away. But this intervention did not end the violence.
Khaled subverted the attempt to save him by reaching into his store of whips: as soon as one was taken away he grabbed another. The Akko Theatre Centre refused to give Spectators a Comfortable way out. * Finally, 'Smadar approaches and embraces him, and with this tableau of the Pietà, in which the flagellated Arab rests in the arms of the Jewish deathlike figure, a refugee from the Holocaust, the play ends' (Urian 1993:61). Not the night I saw it. Khaled kept whipping himself until the last spectator, me in this case, left. *The intervention reminded me of the Living Theatre's 'exemplary actions'. In these, spectators were invited to intervene and show the way violence could be intercepted or blocked. Of course it was all make-believe: no Living Theatre violence matched what the police, or others, did; and I doubt that practising intervention on a stage promoted such actions in real life. Arbeit spectators were not asked to intervene, and if they did, the intervention was exposed as ineffective. Arbeit's effect emerged from the movement from site to site, the claustrophobic environment, the shared food, the intensity of direct address, the raising of historical/ethical questions and analogies. Arbeit inhabited a conceptual and actual space between what is usually thought of as theatrical—symbolic, not-for-real—and what is actual: the Holocaust museum, actors whose identities slip from 'self' to 'character'. A meal was served and eaten, Khaled's body bled, the welts were real. As at a seder or t'aziyyeh, the actions were real and symbolic simultaneously. The theatrical signs were surpassed by the actuality of the actions, the doubleness of the performers. Arbeit's peculiar flavour was in its address to a specific community-within-a-community: Holocaust survivors and children of survivors who are Israelis. When Arbeit played in Berlin, ghosts haunted the performance: the six million Jews slaughtered by the Nazis. Arbeit is believed-in theatre not only or even mostly because it is a documentary or because it draws a parallel between the Holocaust and how Israelis oppress Arabs, but because, using experimental theatre techniques, its creators explore and express feelings and ideas at the precise point where the personal, the historical and the political intersect. Only by means of
the presence of Khaled Abu Ali could Arbeit dare to speak directly of Israeli and Palestinian Arab experiences; only because of who the rest of the company are, could Arbeit examine with such acerbity Jewish-Israeli attitudes. The actors and spectators in Arbeit co-performed a shared history, problematizing their roles in creating that history. Sardonic, angry, accusatory, bitter, Arbeit lets neither actor nor spectator off easy. Across America today community-based theatres, celebrating rather than excoriating, engage history and memory as these shape social and personal relations. Community theatre in the US used to mean local amateurs staging Broadway hits and/or popular classics. Using play-texts issued by Samuel French or the Dramatist Play Service, community theatres had written out for them detailed blocking, sets, costumes and props. This was 'mail-order theatre', like ordering a dress pattern. Community-based theatre is the very opposite of community theatre. Community-based theatres perform local materials. There is one similarity, however. Some community-based theatres import professional directors and writers to lead or give shape to local resources. Appalshop, Alternate ROOTS, and Swamp Gravy, for example, are the tip of a huge movement including theatre, storytelling, poetry readings, folk music, and so on.

Imagine a room full of over 150 people passionately singing in ragged, beautiful harmony: it is not a choir, it is not a church or school, it is not a rehearsal for professional performance... Then imagine all these people in the same conversation, with a common agenda, on the same page; sharing their work, sharing their dreams, sharing their lives.

This is Alternate ROOTS at its most human best... When I got to ROOTS in 1989 it was a spiritual, artistic, familial homecoming. As playwright Jo Carson of Johnson City, Tennessee says, 'Who comes-is': in a zen way she is correct.
Raphael's rhetoric in describing what he experienced is decisive: 'zen', 'spiritual', 'common agenda', 'beautiful harmony', 'sharing', and so on. This is the vocabulary both of the 'new age' and of an old-fashioned American 'revival'.

This mix is characteristic of community-based theatre. Jo Carson is the playwright-in-residence of the Colquitt, Georgia, Swamp Gravy project. Swamp Gravy is an example of community-based theatre linked to the construction and expression of both individual and collective identity. It is connected to the work of Augusto Boal, to Grotowski and to performance art. Using materials contributed by local people of different ages, races, ethnicities, political outlook, genders, economic station and sexual orientations, Tennessee playwright Carson stitched-the texts for the Swamp Gravy series: Sketches (1993), The Blue Doctor (1994), The Gospel Truth (1995) and Miss Zulu (1996). In a way these plays were the opposite of A scene from Swamp Gravy. Photo: Richard Owen Geer the Akko Theatre’s Arbeit, which is also based on community experience, but presented in an ironic, cutting, bitter and painful way—keeping old and new wounds open. Swamp Gravy is about celebrating the community, even when painful. 'The people that have a part in this production, which numbers in the hundreds, have a respect for each other that was not possible before this started', wrote Terry Toole, publisher of the Miller County Liberal (quoted in Geer 1996:109). Where 'difficult' subjects are touched on, such as violence against women and race relations, there are limits beyond which the community is not willing to go yet. Those limits are decided by the people making the Swamp Gravy plays. The 'limits' mean that the experiences of Colquitt's African Americans, who constitute a large percentage of Colquitt's population, are vastly under-represented in Swamp Gravy's persons and stories. I asked the project's director, Richard Geer, about this. He wrote me that Swamp Gravy of course represented mostly the views and experiences of Colquitt's 'dominant culture'—that is, white culture. I might add that virtually all community-based theatre in the US follows the
same pattern, giving voice overwhelmingly to whatever 'dominant culture' is being spoken of and to. No urgently contrary or avantgarde disruptive voices are likely to be heard. 'It isn't about theatre', said lighting designer Brackley Frayer on the opening night of the first play. 'It's about something else. It takes some getting used to.' It's anthropology, theater, drama therapy, and missionary work, I thought. It's not about the play, it's about the stories; it's not about the acting, it's about the communal agon. (Geer 1996:127) Geer's mentors include Augusto Boal, Victor Turner, Ann Jellicoe, Maryat Lee and me. The believed-in core of community-based theatre is in the fact that people are enacting their own stories and performing mostly for people of their own communities. Playwright Carson comments: Almost all of the material in the four shows I have written for Colquitt is direct address, because we have people as performers who live with storytelling (in the old sense), and are extraordinary storytellers/performers of the sort the deep South grows, but who don't have much sense of themselves as actors.... But most don't need to 'act', if I can write the work right. So the cast is onstage in a very Brechtian construct: they are themselves, in costumes that suggest an older time, telling stories that come from other people—sometimes, when I can do it, a person kin to them—and they have, in their choice of attitude and presentation, a comment on the story.... And it is moving, right up close to a religious experience—a community experience with real roots in it—when stories have this kind of reality for the players and the audience. (Carson in Geer 1996:117) When Carson speaks of a 'religious experience', she is describing believed-in theatre: a theatre where conviction and sincerity, 'direct address' or 'testimony', depending on your frame of reference, are more important than professional acting skills. Ironically, though millions of evangelical Americans subscribe to the public expression of religious belief—speaking in tongues, being possessed by the Holy Spirit, trance dancing, laying on of hands, healing through prayer and touch, rib-rocking preaching—the theatre as such has long been associated with untruth: the anti-theatrical prejudice is strong. Swamp Gravy is exactly the kind of theatre that can flourish in this environment—it is 'truthful' rather than 'theatrical'. At the same time, of course, the outsiders, Geer especially, but also lighting and scenic designers, and to some degree Carson (a southerner, but not a Colquitter), are prized because of their theatre skills. These skills are governed by the community, used as the • A scene from Swamp Gravy. Photo: Richard Owen Geer community sees fit. Geer tells of the time when he overstepped his authority, cursing the cast
because they were late for rehearsals. What happened next came more from American evangelical Christianity than from theatre, as told by Geer: I have offended everybody... Charlotte said that more offensive than swearing was the fact that I lost my temper.... Harold Burrell, the Baptist minister, has come to see me, said he is my friend and will stand with me. Joy Jinks told me she loves me and doesn’t understand what has happened... Don Chandler told me the only way the project could be salvaged was if I got on a plane and went home. He would not speak to me and wanted to hit me for swearing in front of women and children. Tammy Spooner said I was just doing what I’ve been doing since I got here: pushing ideas that I wanted regardless of what other people said... Harold made me feel better, he told me the story of Peter who said, ‘to Hell with the Lord’, and then was forgiven. Harold put his arms around me and Joy and prayed, he said, ‘Father, I know you don’t approve of the words that Richard used, but I know that you forgive him. He is repentant.’... After much discussion, a special meeting was called, and I was allowed to apologize to the cast and families. Then I stepped outside while they put my fate to a vote. Annette Miller, an African American woman who had argued for Christian forgiveness, moved that I be retained, and Don Chandler, who had wanted me gone, seconded: the vote was unanimous. (Geer 1996:124-5) As Geer comments, ‘For an outside director, learning the local mores is a task comparable to mastering the region’s dialect. No one ever questioned my theater knowledge to my face, but what did get questioned, and often, was my ability to direct in a manner appropriate to the people of Miller County’ (Geer 1996:122). If Swamp Gravy, and any of the other projects in five states modelled on it, perform outside of their homebase (as at the 1996 Cultural Olympiad in Atlanta), there is the chance that the work will become ‘generalized’, ‘aestheticized’—be made into ‘better theatre’ in some abstract normative way Playing before strangers, the Swamp Gravy actors would have to get ‘better’; but they would lose direct touch with their audience. In this, Swamp Gravy and the like would become somewhat akin to the Kentucky-based Appalshop’s Roadside Theater, whose ‘local knowledge’ is professionalized. This traffic between the different genres of theatre-commercial, community-based, experimental, local, regional, educational—is complicated. An example of community-based theatre actively seeking intercultural contact is Appalshop, a collective, community-based organization started in 1969, producing work that ‘reflects the diversity of experience in the Appalachian mountains and rural America’ (Appalshop 1996:2). Projects include broadcast TV, videotapes, media production education, sound
recordings, WMMT-FM radio, the Roadside Theater, and the American Festival Project (AFP), 'a national coalition of artists working together with presenters and community co-sponsors. AFP develops arts-based community collaborations that actively involve people who have little access to the arts and confront pressing issues such as race, poverty, and intolerance' (Appalshop 1996:2).

Roadside's Corn Mountain/Pine Mountain (1996) is a cultural exchange between Roadside Theater and Idiwanan An Chaue, a group of Native American artists of the Pueblo of Zuni in New Mexico... The seeds of the collaboration were sown 10 years ago [1986] when Zuni artists and Roadside Theater began visiting each other's homes, getting to know each other, performing and conducting workshops in schools and senior citizens' centers, and having conversations about issues facing both cultures.

Two years ago, seven Zuni artists and students culminated their visit to Central Appalachia with a performance at the Appalshop Theater [in Whiteside, Kentucky]. This performance was well received, and Zuni and Roadside decided that the next phase of the continuing exchange would be the scripting and production of a collaborative performance that would demonstrate the cultural strengths of the two separate cultures and address contemporary concerns. Zuni stories and songs would be presented in the Zuni language and Appalachian stories and songs in English. (Appalshop 1996:5) Traditional cultures and mutual respect produce a hybrid show that ordinary persons can understand and enjoy. The Roadside-Zuni exchange is viewed as long-term, a kind of extended 'barter' along the lines that Eugenio Barba has for many years advocated and practised. At another level of belief, but drawing also on traditional cultures, is the work of Jerzy Grotowski, who after nearly twenty years of secrecy re-emerged in the 1990s with two theatre pieces, Downstairs Action and Action. * These have been seen at the Grotowski Workcenter near Pontedera, Italy, or by means of film elsewhere, by hundreds of people. The he work has a history: in 1969 Grotowski 'left the theatre' for Paratheatre and, successively, Theatre of Sources, Objective Drama and Art as Vehicle. † The conceptual roots of this work include both Martin Buber's 'ich und du' ‡ and the 'cultural performance knowledge' of a number of 'masters'. Grotowski's work in this regard is postmodern: a hybrid or hypertext stitched from many disparate pieces. Grotowski's genius, of course, is to make a seamless performance text from the pieces. In Art as Vehicle, Grotowski both distances himself from the avant-garde he was such a defining part of in the 1960s, and makes clear his strong links to it: *The two works are not both in repertory. Downstairs Action orginated in Grotowski's
objective Drama project in the mid-1980s. It was superseded by Action in the 1990s. Mercedes (Chiquita) Gregory made a film of Downstairs Action which Grotowski continues to show, especially when he is outside of Pontedera lecturing or meeting with groups. No film yet exists of Action, which, thus far, has been performed only in the Pontedera. The history of this development is presented in detail in The Grotowski Sourcebook (Schechner and Woldorf (eds) in press). Not adequately rendered as 'I and thou' because 'thou' is too formal, distant, and awesome. The German 'du' is the intimate, personal form of addressing the other: close friends, lovers, family.

When I speak of 'theatre company', I mean the theatre of ensemble, the long-term work of a group. Work which is not linked in any particular way to the concepts of the avant-garde and which constitutes the basis for professional theatre of our century... In Art as vehicle, from the point of view of technical elements, everything is almost like in the performing arts: we work on song, on impulses, on forms of movement, even textual motifs appear. And all is reduced to the strictly necessary, until a structure appears, a structure as precise and worked out as in a performance: the Action... What then is the difference between this objectivity of ritual and a [regular theatre] performance? Is the difference only in the fact that the public is not invited?

(Richards 1995:115, 122) The difference, according to Grotowski, is that in ordinary theatre, the 'seat of the montage' rests with the spectator, while in Action it is 'with the performer': when I speak of Art as vehicle, I refer to a montage whose seat is not in the perception of the spectator but in the doers. * It is not that the doers agree between themselves about what the common montage will be, it is not that they share some common definition about what they will do. No, not verbal agreement, no spoken definition: It is necessary,
through the very actions themselves to discover how to approach step by step toward the essential.

(Richards 1995:124)

*Grotowski calls the performer 'doer'. In noh, the main actor is called the shite, literally 'doer'.

Flying against the trend toward cultural specificity, the denial of 'universal' or 'archetypal' human cultural traits,

Grotowski's method has been to sift through practices from different cultures for what is similar among them,

searching for the 'first', the 'original', the 'essential'. During Objective Drama, Grotowski worked with masters of traditional and ritual performance from Haiti, Bali, Korea and Taiwan, as well as having brief visits by Sufis, Japanese martial artists and others. From these masters, and from 'work on the self', Grotowski's group formed precise, repeatable elements of song, chant, gesture and movement. Grotowski said his goal is 'To re- evoke a very ancient form of art where ritual and artistic creation were seamless. Where poetry was song, song was incantation, movement was dance' (in Osinski 1991:96).

So what is Action? To those who know earlier works of Grotowski such as The Constant Prince, Akropolis and Apocalypsis cum Figuris, Action will come as no surprise. There is song, dance, chant; intensity bottled into a tightly confined space admitting only a few spectators; no stage as such, but movement throughout the space; the spectator witnesses are 'confronted' but not asked to participate; the performers are highly disciplined in body and voice and,

even more impressive, in some kind of extremely intense 'spiritual' evoke a mood. The performers play with such
discipline. Action does not tell a story, so much as concentration that they seem to have entered a believed-in reality far beyond Stanislavsky's as if. And yet these performers are not in trance, not possessed by 'another'. Quite the opposite, they have found 'themselves'. Wolford was hard pressed to go beyond a detailed physical description:

I cannot say in language what is Action; I think it would be monumental hubris to pretend that I could grasp in a matter of days, of hours seated in this room, the mystery that these people have discovered/created, some of them over a span of many years. In the text Performer, written during the earliest phase of his current research, Grotowski asserts that 'knowledge is a matter of doing' (see Grotowski 1988:36). In no instance is this more clear or more important to remember than in relation to the process of energy transformation that constitutes the essential aspect of Art as Vehicle.

It is a knowledge born in and through the body, pervading the cells, an active becoming that I as a passive witness cannot fully share... The song is a seed of light that finds its rootedness in the heart of the doer, radiating outward, upward, burning away the dead matter and leaving behind it a visible trace—in the body, yes, but not only and not even primarily in the body. To some extent I perceive and respond to the presence of the song-as-force, the song-as living-entity, but my perception is not the same as that of the doer who takes the song into himself and allows it to rise through his body, voice, and being.

(Wolford 1996:146-7)

Rapture, religious as much as aesthetic, Christ celebrating
his crucifixion—Wolford insists that Action is 'non-mimetic, nonrepresentational' (Wolford 1996:151), even if a 'proto-narrative' exists. Although one might think that Action is better called a dance than theatre, neither orthodox genre word applies. What marks Action is the intensity and totality of the doers, belief-in-the-doing-of-it, a belief that is felt by spectators, as one feels the heat of a fire when one draws close.

presence, present as concrete physical, transphysical and metaphysical beings, these persons are, makers and receivers both, doers together, the creators of believed-in theatres. In 1974 in From Ritual to Theatre and Back (see Schechner 1988), I explored the dyadic relationship in performance between 'entertainment' and 'efficacy'. I said that in certain historical periods entertainment was dominant, at other times efficacy was. I linked efficacious performances with ritual, a major component of which I am now calling 'believed-in theatre'. I theorized that efficacy was overtaking entertainment in the 1960s and 1970s; and I predicted that this trend would accelerate. It has.

*See also Johannes Birringer (1996) 'This is the theatre that was to be expected and foreseen', Performance
Turn on the television, and you will be invited to swim in a particular kind of performance according to which history, like coffee, is 'instant'. The terrible ethno-nationalist conflicts that have exploded as senescent empires unravel and collapse are played out prime-time in horrifying visual 'grabs'. Pyrotechnic displays over Baghdad, 'like the 4th of July', induce amnesia about the melting and shattering of bodies ('collateral damage'). Cameras tracking 'smart' missiles, invisibly tipped with depleted uranium, bring the obscene lie of a 'sanitized' war into our lives—bright flashes, but no napalmed faces, no dismembered children. Celebrity murder trials are transmitted live into our homes; star careers are manufactured; books and badges are on sale in the foyer. In the seductive society of the spectacle, politicians employ 'image consultants' and learn to exploit the coercive power of representation; Margaret Thatcher played the Iron Maiden, Bob Hawke played Pagliacci, Bill Clinton plays the sax (while never, ever inhaling). 'News', the great leveller, means infotainment, a commodity driven by ratings; simulational realities come to us cling-film wrapped, for instant consumption, while phenomenal embodied realities recede. I feel no nostalgia for the old empires or geographies of the selfsame, no yearning for a stable monologic Truth. But so many of our dominant cultural forms want us tranquillized, want us no longer to re-cognize ourselves. We suffer from the vertiginous dislocations generated by what McKenzie Wark has called telesthesia: mediated perception at a distance, constructing an illusion of proximity. * Our critical faculties and our memories are failing, our compassion is fatigued, and yet we have rarely been more haunted by myths and ghosts. *'From the telescope to the telegraph and telephone, from television to tele-communications, the development of telesthesia means the creation of, literally, dislocated perception and
action. Dislocating the action from the site via the vector allows the use of power over the other without implicating power in the scene of the other’; McKenzie Wark (1994) Virtual Geography: Living with Global Media Events (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), p. 43. Theatre is a local sub-set of global ‘performance’, and for many now a rather quaint anachronism. Yet certain kinds of theatre offer a site in which maybe we can rediscover ‘an art of memory’ —in which we can re-cognize who, or what haunts us, apprehend what it is we are swimming in and turn against the current. Ariane Mnouchkine’s Théâtre du Soleil is one European company that has tried to make oppositional interventions into popular culture by contesting the ways in which we are invited to live and represent ourselves in the self-generating hegemony of capitalism. Over the past thirty-something years, the Théâtre du Soleil has attempted to explore the social praxes of collaboration, creativity, resistance, pedagogy and the processes of theatre-making as the elaboration of a dynamic local culture. *Michel de Certeau (1998) The Practice of Everyday Life (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), p. 87.

Since its inception by a group of ten idealistic young students in Paris in 1964, the Théâtre du Soleil has become one of the most celebrated, indeed mythologized, theatre companies in Europe. It was christened Soleil as ‘a tribute to certain film makers associated with light, generosity and pleasure such as Max Ophiils, Jean Renoir, George Cukor’. ¶ In the course of its ongoing determination to privilege formal innovation, theatricality and a notion of theatre as social practice, it has explored and reassessed the legacies of some of the seminal practitioners and theorists of European Modernism—Artaud, Meyerhold, Brecht and in particular Copeau, Jouvet, Dullin and Vilar. In addition, it has recuperated and re-invented ‘other’ techniques and traditions, from the popular (commedia dell’ arte, clowning) to the hieratic (projected, ‘imaginary’ Asian theatres). ¶Ariane Mnouchkine and Jean-Claude Penchenat (1971) ‘L’aventure du Theatre du Soleil’, Proutes 7(3):120. ‘Lightness’, ‘generosity’ and ‘pleasure’ continue to be articulated as goals by/for Soleilper formers. Throughout its existence, Soleil members have endeavoured to articulate the problems and pleasures that emerge from their active engagement with a network of interrelated questions about theatre-making as a social practice. What are the functions of theatre in a society in which, to
paraphrase a memorable image of Peter Hulton’s, theatre has become like an orchid on a golf course? How does one collaborate with ethical and political integrity? What processes disperse and multiply creativity and power within a collective? What are the forms of a ‘popular theatre’ today, and what are its narratives? How can theatre dismantle and revision monolithic representations of History? Which performative traditions and forms from the past can create possible futures here now? Perhaps above all, how does one act, and how can theatre become ‘a space of appearance’? * From 1789 in 1970, the celebratory wake for the events of May 1968, to Les Atrides in the early 1990s, a tetralogy of Greek tragedies tracing the fragmentation of a family at the mythical dawn of (a compromised) democracy, in and around each of its projects the Soleil has sought to engage with its sense of the Specificities of its historical moment. So, for example, shortly before departing for Israel to perform L’Indiade as part of the Jerusalem Festival in 1988, the members of the company wrote an open letter to their hosts, explicitly *Mnouchkine has used this phrase on a number of occasions in recent years. It carries traces of Hannah Arendt’s ‘space of appearance’, a notion of civic responsibility, collaboration and ethical action with and in political communities drawn from Arendt’s reading of the Greek polis: ‘The space of appearance [is] the space where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men [sic] exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance explicitly’; (1958) The Human Condition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), pp. 198–9. In addition, there are echoes of Herbert Blau’s articulation of the the double-binds of representation: the ‘play of appearances’ in performance, and the struggle for ‘the liberation of the Performer as an actor who, laminated with appearance? struggles to appear’; Richard Schechner and Willa Appel (eds) (1990) ‘Universals of performance; or amortising play’, in By means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 257; italics in original. criticizing the Israeli government’s refusal criticizing the Israeli to negotiate with the Palestinians. * I propose to quote from it at some length here, for it seems particularly resonant in this issue: a courteous greeting, a statement of a cultural and political credo, and an interventionist claim on a reconciliatory, pluralist future that remains little closer
today:

*The full text of 'Lettre aux Israeliens' was published on 15 April 1988, a month before the company’s arrival,

in the following Israeli newspapers: Ha’aretz and Yediot Ahronot (in Hebrew), Al-Ittihad and Al-Fajar (in Arabic), and the Jerusalem Post (in English). A week later, it was also printed in Le Nouvel Observateur in France.

You have invited us and we have accepted your invitation. But before we enter your house, you must know who we are and what we believe.

We, the writers, actors, musicians, technicians and director of the Théâtre du Soleil, originate from twenty-two countries... We are Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus and atheists. We are white, we are black, we are yellow. We are from countries which, at different times in the course of their histories, have taken the roles of the colonized and the colonizers, of the oppressed and the oppressors, of the occupied and the occupiers. We are from countries which have all known, and continue to know, their times of pride and shame, of progress and decline, of dignity and indignity, of humanity and inhumanity. That is who we are.

And now here is what we believe:

- We believe that the appropriation of territory by force is inadmissible;

- We believe that the killing of children, whatever the circumstances, and whether they be Palestinian or Israeli, is a monstrosity;

- We believe that the killing of unarmed civilians is a violation not only of the Geneva Convention but above all of
moral law;
— We believe that a nation that oppresses another cannot be entirely free itself;
— We believe that it is madness to try to destroy by force what no military force can ever destroy: the love of the homeland and the spirit of freedom. The body can be broken, but the soul of a people cannot be crushed. And of all the peoples, the Jewish people have proved this for thousands of years;
— We believe that the Palestinian people have an inalienable right to self-determination and to a Palestinian State;
— We believe that the State of Israel has an imprescriptible right to exist here, in peace and security;
— We believe that there are two peoples in this Holy Land, and that it should be shared and its borders negotiated. In the hope that, in the future, once time has helped forgive and forget, an association of some kind may be created;
— We believe that there has been enough confrontation and collision, enough obstinate persistence in crime and error, and that there have been enough blind eyes and deaf ears; — We believe that the leaders chosen by the Israeli people should agree to negotiate with the leaders chosen by the Palestinian people, even if these leaders are not to the Israelis’ liking, and whatever their strategies have been in the past; — We believe that it is now time for the right of the stronger camp to give way to the duty of the stronger camp; and since Israel is the stronger of the two, it must take the first step. The biggest of steps. Is Israel incapable of this? Could it be that Israel is more afraid of peace than of war? — We believe that by refusing to countenance those Palestinians who hold out their hands in peace, Israel runs the risk of one day being confronted with those who only know how to brandish daggers; — We believe that Israel and the PLO should come to a mutual and simultaneous recognition at the very moment negotiations begin; then the whole world will breathe and hope once more. We have hesitated about coming; we have talked, we have consulted a fair number of you, and we have decided
not to add a facile refusal to the list of criminal refusals in the past. Nothing will persuade us to despair of the power of words, nor to renounce our faith in humanity as well as in art. We shall never renounce them. We are coming for the sake of peace and of those who defend it, out of admiration and solidarity with all those in both camps who, sometimes risking their own lives or braving some senseless law in their own country, attempt to 'build bridges', to meet and talk together—whether in Paris, Brussels, Beirut, Bucharest, Budapest or Tunis, on one bank or the other. Our visit pays homage to all of those in Israel—members of the Knesset, intellectuals, writers, artists, lawyers, journalists, citizens—who, tirelessly and for decades, have been weaving the fabric of peace which irresponsible leaders obstinately insist on tearing apart. We are coming because we believe that people change, that they have already changed—that many Palestinians have changed, and that if Israel fails to change, it will lose not only blood and lives, but the honour of internal civil peace. For we fear that the blindness of some is driving all of the Israeli people towards the massacre that engenders further massacre and civil war. We are telling you all of this because it is not right to enter the house of a friend with a heart full of unspoken suffering and secret reproaches. The Soleil's most recent production also exemplifies the company's determination to imbricate its work in contemporary histories. Molière's Le Tartuffe (1995–6) is an explicit critique of fundamentalism, in Israel, Algeria and elsewhere; it includes music by Cheb Hasni, one of Algeria's best-known Raï singers, who was murdered by extremists in Oran in September 1994. The newspaper-style programme for Le Tartuffe provides a multi-textural collage of historical documents relating to religious intolerance and racial extremism: from the Edict of Nantes and Jansenist condemnations of theatre, to recent press reportage of the fatwa against Pakistani feminist writer Taslima Nasreen, and of white supremacist groups in the USA. In addition, it contains information about a number of activist human rights organizations in France, pockets of organized resistance to fundamentalisms. * Many of the programmes accompanying Soleil productions over the years have adopted a multi-vocal, critically activist, historicizing approach of this kind. * These organizations included Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitié entre les Peuples (MRAP), Groupe d’Information et de Soutien des Travailleurs Immigrés (GISTI), Ligue Internationale contre le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme (LICRA), Association Internationale de Défense des Artistes (AIDA), Ligue des Droits de l’Homme and Amnesty International. Taken collectively, the company's projects represent the
development and refinement of a body of interrelated work underpinned and informed by recurrent concerns and ideals. Both differences and continuities are informative here. So, for example, a number of developmental trajectories can be traced: a movement from collectively devised material (la création collective) to work that emerges from existing play texts; the development from a carnivalesque historiography to epic passion play and tragedy—an evolution that Mnouchkine once compared to the relationship between Kyogen and Noh; a refashioning of the ideological and party-political (a retreat, some would say) in favour of a collectivism of situational ethics that nevertheless remains wholly politicized; * an increasingly multicultural mix in personnel as the company has ballooned to over sixty members; and so on. *cf. Susan Melrose's account of the Théâtre du Soleil's gradual 'dispersal' of 'any clear, univocal and strongly directed political action', a process which 'rankles with those in theatre who still warm to the crusading politics of, for example, the "Brechtian" or the 1968 leftist tradition' (italics in original). I fully accept Melrose's suggestion that 'this does not indicate a lessening of the political. It indicates, instead, the ways in which myths can change, changing with them certain sorts of polarized roles, certain notions of the enemy and possible modes of intervention.' Susan Melrose (1994) A Semiotics of the Dramatic Text (New York: St Martin's Press), p. 41. See Melrose, this issue. At the same time, continuities underlying these shifts include a negotiation of the implications and paradoxes of the idea(l) of collectivity and civic responsibility; † a prioritization of the actor and of the discipline of mask work as corporeal and imaginal preparation—the legacies of Copeau and Lecoq; a repeated rhythm of exploring forms from other times and places as a pedagogic reculer pour mieux sauter, a way forward into representing contemporary histories with critical distance (Cambodia, India, the recent scandal of contaminated blood transfusions in France, the French Resistance); a recurrent thematic constellation in terms of content—the impact of civil war, separation and displacement, in the widest sense of these ‡The legal status the company adopted at its genesis, 'société coopérative ouvrière de production', underlined the group's commitment to co-operative structures; as did its decision a few years later that every member of the company would draw the same wage, a practice that continues to the present day. terms ('the enemies/spots in Ourselves'), and the avoidability of fratricidal conflict (what might have been); ‡ and the
generative centrality of the company’s base since 1970 at
the Cartoucherie de Vincennes, a former munitions factory
on the eastern margins of Paris—as theatre, workplace,
school, Fourier-style phalanstery, community.

‡A recent UNICEF report, State of the world’s children
1996, records: ‘Between 1945 and 1992, the world has seen
149 major conflicts in which some 23 million people have
lost their lives. At the end of 1995, conflicts have been
running in Angola for over 30 years, in Afghanistan for 17
years in, Sri Lanka for 11 years and in Somalia for 7
years.’ Two million children have been killed in wars in
the past decade. Quoted in The Age, Melbourne, 12 December
1995. The presence of company director Ariane Mnouchkine
throughout this body of work represents one of the most
resilient and dynamic continuities of all. She is
forthright, articulate, passionate, demanding and
dissident; and the Théâtre du Soleil is inconceivable
without her. In tandem with her work as a director, she has
been an active campaigner for human rights—for workers,
immigrants, prisoners of conscience, HIV/AIDS communities,
and most recently the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In
1995, for example, in Avignon and subsequently at the
Cartoucherie in Paris, Mnouchkine led a group of artists in
a hunger strike, in protest against the inaction of Europe
and the United States with regard to Bosina. * *Their
collective action was the endpoint of a process that had
begun in 1993 when the Sarajevo Association was formed at
the Avignon Festival; meetings and petitions were followed
up with material help to artists in Sarajevo. ‘The Avignon
Declaration’ of 1995, which announced the hunger strike,
marked what Le Monde (25 August) described as a break by
artists and intellectuals with their usual petitioning by
putting themselves personally at risk. On 30 August 1995,
Mnouchkine received Bosnian president Alija Izetbegovic at
the Cartoucherie; her words of greeting stressed the
guarantee of human rights and liberties sought by the
President’s peace plan. She also referred emphatically to
the ‘multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, tolerant and politically
secular’ Bosnia-Herze-Govina which Izetbegovic and 200,000
Sarajevo citizens, who had signed a declaration for a free
and unified text of Mnouchkine’s speech was published
(1995) as ‘Cette Bosne—là!: le message d’Ariane
Mnouchkine’, in Le Nouvel Observateur (7-13 Setember): 41.)
Mnouchkine and her colleagues ended their strike after
Izetbegovic’s visit, with a pledge for further action for
‘the principles of democracy’. [Note by Maria Shevtsova] As
director of the Théâtre du Soleil, Mnouchkine has been
implicated in the collisions, rifts and ruptures that are
part and parcel of a utopian project of such scale, intensity and heterogeneity. The Soleil's continually reinvented brand of collectivism has rarely entailed the erasure of difference and the coercive imposition of some fictional consensus. On a number of levels, difference seems to have been privileged as a source of creative friction. As a result, it is perhaps inevitable that in reality there have been several companies called 'Soleil' over the years, a seismic upheaval every five years or so engendering departures and new arrivals. Mnouchkine seems fully aware of the paradoxical status of change in this context—as both an imperative in the avoidance of institutional ossification, and a traumatic dismembering (a 'civil war'). In a 1985 interview, she suggested: The Théâtre du Soleil is one of the rare troupes where change and transformation are part of the very essence of the undertaking. To create theatre is also to work relentlessly at changing oneself. This doesn't happen without pain, nor without difficulties so terrible that they tear apart the very fabric of the troupe. Mnouchkine in Armelle Héliot (May 1985) 'Rêve oriental', Autrement 70:142. This pulsional rhythm of fragmentation/dispersal and renewal/consolidation continues to the present, one of the most recent departures being that of an exhausted Georges Bigot, the most lauded of the Soleil actors in the decade following the production of Richard II in 1981.

Endlessly rehearsing the fate of the good ship Medusa, Mnouchkine is now the only survivor from the early 1960s—the matriarch of a very young group of performers, and a seasoned hand in crisis management. Mnouchkine appears to recognize that, to borrow a phrase of John Berger's, 'utopias only exist in carpets'; but her energy for 'weaving' remains undiminished. One of the great ironies of the Soleil as 'non-hierarchical' enterprise, and a factor that has generated recurrent problems within the collective, relates to media constructions of 'stars' in the company; and it as to be admitted that it has spawned a number of extra-ordinarly virtuosic performers, including Philippe Caubère, Philippe Hottier and Bigot himself. John Berger is (1984) And our Faces, my Heart, Brief as Photos (London: Readers and Writers), p. 18. Over the last decade, the Théâtre du Soleil collaborated extensively with the writer Hélène Cixous, who has become central to the company's work in the wake of the Shakespeare cycle. According to Mnouchkine, this cycle had been undertaken in order to learn how to produce a theatre that could articulate the complexity and poly-vocality of contemporary realities. And since the mid-1980s, the company has directly confronted aspects of the late twentieth century world with three plays by Cixous.
Broadly, these plays have dealt with colonialism and its disruptive legacies: the dismemberment of the Khmer people in Sihanouk (1985); the traumatic partitioning of India in L'Indiade (1987); and, most recently, the contamination of blood and ensuing government scandals in France in La Ville Parjure (1994). The importance of this determination to Speak of and with the world in which we live should not be underestimated. Cixous’s earlier plays have been dismissed by some critics as exercises in nostalgic or revisionist hagiography. However, Cixous’s writings-about-writing as an ethical practice, and their embodied exploration in the écriture corporelle of the Soleil’s performers, suggest that to write (and by implication, to read, or to perform) is to try to do ‘the work of un-forgetting, or unsilencing, of un-earth, of un-blinding oneself, and of un-deafening oneself’; to speak history is to ‘sing the abyss’. And I would prefer to locate these plays as critical meditations on compassion and remembering, as attempted reparation of oblivion and loss. They deal with histories of atrocity and trauma on an enormous scale, interrogating the ideological alibis employed to conceal complicity with erasures of alterity at a personal level; in a theatrum mundi within which micro and macro are intertwined, they remind us that it is above all the inter-personal that is political. For a useful discussion of La ville Parjure, and of theatre as ‘civic’ intervention, see Maria Shevtsova (May 1995) ‘Sur La Ville Parjure: un théâtre qui parle aux citoyens’, Alternatives Théâtrales 48:69-73. See, for example, Jennifer Birkett, ‘The limits of language: the theatre of Hélène Cixous’, in (1992) Voices in the Air: French Dramatists and the Resources of Language (University of Glasgow: French and German Publications), pp. 171-86. My own reading of Cixous’s concerns in Sihanouk relates to the precarious predicaments of individual subjects within collective structures—in other words, the status of difference in relation to various hegemonic regimes of power and truth, regimes that represent economies of morbidity. For a fuller discussion, see my review of the recent English translation of Sihanouk in (Fall 1996) The Drama Review 40(3):198-200.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Soleil's provocation lies in its continuing wrestle with the implications of

and for theatre in critical reinventions of democracy, a dynamic set of practices by definition always in statu nascendi,

the prosaic adaptation of his masterpiece of poetic realism, The White Guard.

Such is the acuity of analysis and the richness of detail in Worrall's book at its best, that these major omissions are all

the more disappointing. Equally, the total lack of illustrations is a crucial defect, particularly given the availability of

the Art Theatre's unique archive of visual documentation. The importance of Stanislavsky and of the company that he
did so much to inspire is not in question, but we still await an account that does full justice both to its achievements

and to its contradictions.

for, through Heidegger, he identifies this internal renting with Smithson's attention to site. Riss 'suggests a tension or

disruption that has overtones both of artistic process and of the physical earth, as when we speak of a rift between

different geological strata' (134). It is this 'antagonism' that, ultimately, might turn attention to the properties rendered

up by a site, which a work cannot encapsulate, although Shapiro notes (115) that Smithson

prefers to speak of 'earth' since this is more concrete, less ethereal, and does not encourage us to abstract from its

heavy mass, its chaotic formations, continental drift, confused strata, cataclysms (like earthquakes), and its sheer
thereness (what the medieval philosophers called haecceitas).

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REFERENCES


Reciprocal Tourism and the Fear of the Floating Local: Networkers and Integristes in a Catalan Provincial Town

Dorothy Noyes


What can the provincial show the tourist? The question imposes an impossible task of self-representation upon those living neither among the apparent security of rural essentialisms nor on the cutting edge of the metropolis, but in the space between. The provincial is a space of split desires and slow decisions, where the pervasive factionalism of public life is in part an unintended consequence of myriad individual attempts to resolve ambivalence.

Ask it the other way round: what does the provincial want of the tourist? Money, certainly: when agriculture and industry fail in such settings, tourism is the obvious deus ex machina. But money cannot feed all the heart's hungers. The provincial wants to be recognized. Not with the gaze of wonder, but with the handshake of fellowship. Still, you can't always be wearing your best clothes for the photograph. Nothing is so restoring for the respectable as a private retreat into the cluttered lumber-room where everything swept from the public stage has taken refuge. But tourists also prefer this backstage region, for the stage-front looks too much like their own to be of interest (MacCannell 1976:91–107). So the provincial situation is cruel. The modernity intended to impress the neighbours goes unheeded, while the tradition hoarded for themselves alone is sampled and tainted by foreigners.

The label of 'provincial' may seem strange to those who know Catalonia only through Barcelona, which has long been in the artistic vanguard and today possesses a mise-en-scène far beyond the common decor of modernity. But in the context of the whole country, Barcelona's frenetic innovation may itself be seen as a symptom of provincial anxiety, a
kind of hypercorrection. Catalonia has not resolved itself: it is a region of Spain and a nation of Europe, a would-be industrial democracy long ruled by a backward authoritarian state, a place of assiduous networkers and fewer but equally ferocious drawers of boundaries. With fewer resources than the capital, the Catalan interior fears the tourists as much as it desires them.

EXPLAINING CATALONIA

'Spain is different.' So said the advertisements announcing the opening of the country to foreign tourists in the 1950s. Catalonia and its sister region, the Balearics, became Spain for the masses of tourists descending from the north to meet Don Juan and Carmen, to drink sangria and dance flamenco. This mass tourism of the Franco regime, which devastated the coastline with hasty construction, was resented still more for its construction of the Catalans themselves. They were marketed as 'Other' to the British and German visitors—the Catalans, whose written constitution antedated Magna Carta, whose industrial revolution preceded that of Manchester, whose opera house played Wagner before La Scala did! Since its eighteenth-century stirrings, Catalan nationalism has argued not only the country's cultural distinctiveness, but its full participation in modernity. The difference between Catalonia and Castile, they still tell you, is that 'we are part of Europe'.

Turisme de qualitat (tourism of quality) is one way to reconstruct Catalonia in the eyes of the foreigner, and since the end of the Franco regime luxury hotels, lavish public funding for the arts, and specialized tours and sports installations have emerged accordingly. The 1992 Summer Olympics were the culmination of this movement. Barcelona had made several attempts to host the games since their establishment by Coubertin, narrowly missing out to Berlin in 1936 after interference from Madrid. In bidding for 1992, the city sought not only an opportunity to develop its touristic infrastructure, but a decisive acknowledgement of its changed position in touristic geography: no longer a stop on a cruise for a quick visit to a flamenco bar in the Barri Xino, but a world-class destination on a par with Los Angeles, Munich, Tokyo, and the rest of them. As important as the Games was the Cultural Olympiad organized by the city, showcasing Barcelona's pre-eminence in theatre, design, architecture and the visual arts. After the Olympics, the city would be grouped with Paris, not Tunis.

The 'Olympic vocation' was just as strong at the popular level. Before the nomination came in 1986, 70,000 volunteers had already signed up (COOB 1989:146), and thousands more participated in nationalist campaigns to establish a Catalan Olympic Committee (as distinct from the Spanish) and to ensure the presence of national symbols in the opening and closing ceremonies, including the sardana round dance, which was performed in five interlocking Olympic rings. English-language banners reading 'Freedom for Catalonia' met the Olympic torch in every town it passed through, and a flurry of English- and French-language publications sought to explain Catalonia to Olympic visitors.

RECIPROCAL TOURISM

Explaining Catalonia has been a favourite middleclass Catalan pastime for many years, discreetly during the Franco period and endlessly since then. They have evolved a mechanism for presenting themselves to outsiders and measuring themselves against them with economy and dignity. This mechanism I will call reciprocal tourism, a pattern of cultural exchange between localities in which each party takes in turn the role of host.

Intercanvis, or exchanges, occupy a large place in the education and leisure activities of any middleclass Catalan in a small city. With the increasing affluence and loosening of restrictions on travel and public assemblies at the end of the Franco regime, junior football clubs, orchestras, bird fanciers, chess players and folk dance groups began to hold and attend tournaments and conventions, first in Catalonia itself, then across Europe and beyond. Schools developed summer-abroad exchanges with Britain and the United States.

A notable but not atypical trajectory is that of the Coral Polifònica de Puig-reig, an amateur choir from an industrial town in the interior, population 5,500. In 1975, the year of Franco's death, the singers took their first trip to Cantabria
in northern Spain. By the end of the 1970s they were making annual excursions to central and eastern Europe, and they have now sung in most of Europe, North and South America, Turkey, Israel, Ukraine, Hong Kong and the Philippines. They have also organized an International Festival of Choral Song, held annually since 1980 in Puig-reig in August. The history written for their twenty-fifth anniversary explains the process and the appeal of reciprocal tourism:

Every year there is an exchange with some choir that has visited or plans to visit our town for the Festival of Choral Song that has been organized for thirteen years now. These choirs are welcomed into the homes of our singers and sympathizers, and later the Polifònica stays with them. In this way the trips, except when they have to be taken by plane, are much more inexpensive. Thanks to this advantage, young people, who normally have less chance to travel, have opened their eyes to the world much earlier than their parents and have, like the older members, experienced the joy of discovering exotic landscapes, new atmospheres, and the different forms of life and culture of other countries. In addition to the joys of singing and friendship, this is their reward for a year of hard work.

These trips are essentially cultural. The singers take in the culture of the countries visited at the same time that they make our own known through interaction with the host choirs and multiple concerts, during which examples of traditional Catalan folk music are never lacking. A notable anecdote is that they are almost always welcomed as a Spanish choir and parted with as a Catalan one.

(Serra and Viladés 1993:110–11)

HORIZONTAL SOLIDARITIES

Reciprocal tourism, like the Olympics on their larger scale, forms autonomous linkages between localities that once had roads only to the capital. Spain is celebrated for bad roads, and the people of Puig-reig, for example, have long had only one highway, going up to the county seat of Berga or laboriously down to Barcelona. From Barcelona you could get to Madrid or up the coast to France, but the fellow Catalans on the other side of the Pyrenees were to be reached only by shepherds and smugglers, and the roads to the small cities in the neighbouring valleys were nearly as inadequate. Capital came—when it came—up the road from Barcelona; government came, as directives, from Madrid to Barcelona to the local factory owners who doubled as mayors and deputies. Today there is another stage to the journey: Brussels to Madrid.

Despite the geographic impediments, provincial Catalans have long sought transverse alliances that would allow them to recover agency from the capitals. The innumerable voluntary organizations to be found in the smallest towns—mushroom hunters, mountain climbers, theatrical societies, Scouts, Friends of Romanesque Art, catechists, Barcelona Football Club supporters, etc.—are all organized into Catalonia-wide federations that collaborate on larger projects and, in Franco's time, offered practice in the workings of liberal democracy. These organizations, as we have seen, are the most vigorous source of reciprocal tourism. Other impetuses to horizontal relationships are more overtly political, stemming from a Catalan tradition, now more than a century long, of participation in international workers' and political movements, repaid with the support of the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War (1936–9) and continuing today in vigorous solidarity campaigns for an impressive variety of causes.

New codes and media have been assiduously pressed into service. In the late nineteenth century, Esperanto clubs were formed in many Catalan towns, enthusiastic about a language that would let them be international without speaking Spanish. Today English is used to the same end. Catalan teenagers are energetic pen pals, mountain villages have fax machines, and the Internet has been embraced with still more fervour.* Weary of the wellbeaten single path from hinterland to capital, many Catalans see genuine liberation in the ethereal self-constituting linkages of the network.

*For examples of Catalan self-presentation on the Internet, see the site of the Generalitat, A Close Look at Catalonia (http://www.catalonia.gencat.es) and the independent site Vilaweb (http://vilaweb.com/).

But reciprocal tourism is a more effective means of cultivating social networks than either the Internet or more
conventional tourism. It constructs a particular kind of relationship. The 'pure' tourism of cash paid for services rendered is inherently asymmetrical, opposing the (at least apparent) self-exposure of touristic representations to the opacity of money. When Catalans demand payment in kind for their hospitality, they declare their right to participate in a dialogue of equals, to receive confidence for confidence.

The cash transaction, an even exchange, is quickly terminated, and a service on which a cash value may be placed can be sought elsewhere. But with the gift, as we know from Marcel Mauss, reciprocity is necessarily deferred and approximate. Gifts create an ongoing relationship, which may escalate and intensify from the difficulty of establishing precise equivalences.

Reciprocal tourism has an instrument that the Internet lacks: the body. Catalan hospitality is often sealed with shared performance. The Puig-reig Festival of Choral Song ends with a massed voice concert in which all the choirs together perform a song from each country that has sent participants. Afterwards they go out and grill sausages on the square in the dark, drinking wine and singing with increasing feeling (though decreasing precision) as the night progresses. This 'meal of brotherhood', as it is called, is recognizably a kind of communion, as is the joining of voices in song. An obligation has been incurred; more importantly, in the process, host and guest have temporarily merged identities. A little Catalonia stays in the guests, just as the hosts 'take in' Brazil and Latvia.

Catalans learned the efficacy of the gift of performance in an older setting, the hierarchical geography of late medieval Europe. A common vocabulary of civic celebration was used interchangeably, with minor adjustments, to honour a local patron saint, the consecrated Host, a new bishop or governor, or visiting royalty. The figure so honoured was incorporated into the body of the community and took on the obligations of membership.

This civic vocabulary took shape with the emergence of the Corpus Christi procession in the fourteenth century, a splendid product of the Catalan king of Aragon's need to display his theological orthodoxy to a suspicious Pope. Soon the procession became a show of wealth and political power in Barcelona and cities aspiring to rival it, and a means of attracting outsiders from both hinterland and abroad. By the time it spread to the small cities of the mountains in the seventeenth century, the festival had elaborated a vocabulary of civic power and popular resistance complex enough to provide every viewer with a different allegory, and therefore a reason for participating.

**PATUM: THE DEEP LOCAL**

A few such festivals have proven sufficiently productive of meanings and social relationships to endure into the present. I will turn now to one of them for the remainder of this paper, to explore the emergence of both reciprocal tourism and resistance to it in one of the most deeply rooted Catalan celebrations of local attachment. It is the Patum of Berga, capital of the *comarca* of the Berguedà—in which, by the way, Puig-reig is located.*

*For a detailed account of the Patum see Noyes 1992.*

Imagine, if you will, driving north-west up the highway from Barcelona about 100 kilometres into the foothills of the Pyrenees. You come to a rocky country with the scars of history upon it: closed coal mines and textile factories, a power station spewing out smoke and a reservoir that drowned a village to send water to Barcelona. Stripped tree-trunks are black from a fire in 1993 that locals fear has knocked back the growth of rural eco-tourism by twenty years. The road has improved somewhat since they built the
Festes de la Patum, pre-massification. Courtesy of Spanish National Tourist Office, London

tunnel through to the free-trade paradise of Andorra; but now it laps quickly round the town of Berga, where once it ended. We, however, will stop here, as will 25,000 visitors, who through the five days of the Corpus Christi festival will crowd in with the 15,000 inhabitants to celebrate the Patum.

This festival focuses on a set of mimetic dances in the main square, performed annually since the seventeenth century, with a major revitalization and restructuring in the 1890s, and another in the 1960s and 1970s. Some enact combats: Turks and Christian knights, devils and angels. Others mimic social dance: the beautiful pairs of giants and the grotesquely charming dwarfs. And two creatures perform alone: a stiffly elegant crowned eagle and a green long-necked mule-dragon with firecrackers in its mouth that chases women and challenges men. The devils return, wound in green vines and greatly multiplied, to fill up the plaça for the grand finale. When the firecrackers at horns and tail are lit, the square becomes a sea of dancing sparks over darkness, until the red trails open into black explosions.

The effigies and masked figures danced here map out all the divisions that constitute Berguedan society: human and animal, male and female, adult and child, upper-class and lower-class, native and foreign, in such a way that everyone present feels represented. The imagery of the dances condenses a long history of conflict, at once national and internecine, and awakens divisive memories. But as the dances progress and are repeated several times over the five-day period, as you drink more and more and sleep less and less, as the great drum keeps beating Pa-tum in your head and the band and your neighbours force your feet into motion, as the smoke of the firecrackers blackens your face and the crush of the bodies robs you of your freedom of motion, mimesis collapses into vertigo (Caillois 1979). The giants and the dwarfs spin into one; the royal eagle becomes as fierce as the plebeian mule. At the end, Berguedans are no longer moving through the world: it is spinning around the axis they have created.

The gaze of the participant, the evaluative gaze of everyday relatedness, is incapacitated. It's too dark to see, too smoky to see, you're too drunk to see. In the Patum, Berguedans return to the lowest common bodily denominator, shedding the visible signs of difference. They understand this process as a return to the primordial, both historical and individual, to the time when there is no conflict because there are no signs. Instead, there is communion: not now Eucharistic, but maternal. Patum drinking is called mamar, to 'suckle': 'We suck the breast of our mother and we suck the Patum,' they say. The great explosion of the devils, which is the climax of the festival, is understood as simultaneously orgasm and rebirth.