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Papers should not exceed 4500 words (including notes and references). Practice-based papers should normally include images in JPEG format (300ppi). Reviews should be around 1000 words. Photo essays should not exceed 2000 words and 10 pictures. All contributions should be formatted according to the MLA style guidelines (see Gibaldi's *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*) and should include a 200-word abstract of the article submitted as well as the article itself. Authors should also send a 50 word bio with their submission.

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Cover image: *Béla Kun Memorial* by Varga Imre (1986). Photograph by Cara Berger.


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Book Reviews

Editorial

This edition of *Platform* takes inspiration from the abundance of contemporary scholarly works that discuss space and place in relation to performance, as well as recent trends in British theatre making. In his seminal work on theatre semiotics, place and performance published in 1989, Marvin Carlson observes that:

> the way an audience experiences and interprets a play, we now recognize, is by no means governed solely by what happens on the stage. The entire theatre, its audience arrangements, its other public spaces, its physical appearance, even its locations within a city, are all important elements of the process by which an audience makes meaning of its experience. (2)

Since the publication of Carlson's monograph, there has been a proliferation of academic studies that explore theatre and performance through the lens of cultural materialism and contemporary geographical thought, including *Theatre & The City* by Jen Harvie, and Elinor Fuchs and Una Chaudhuri's edited book *Land/Scape/Theatre*. Theatre and performance's relationship to site and space has also been debated at a variety of academic conferences: in 2009 Aberystwyth University's Theatre, Film and Television department staged the three-day event 'Living Landscapes', while a conference at King's College London in 2014 highlighted the importance of landscape and environment in dramatic productions in ancient Greece. Furthermore, over the past ten years there has been an upsurge in site-specif-

ic performances in the UK, ranging from productions by *Punchdrunk, Theatre Delicatessen* and *You Me Bum Bum Train*, which revivify desolate urban edifices, to the National Theatre of Wales' open-air shows celebrating the region's rural landscapes.

The wide-ranging interest in how performance is shaped by landscape and environment is reflected in the broad scope of the five articles in this edition, which pose diverse and original questions about the importance of where performance happens. In her photo essay, Cara Berger engages with place on the level of feeling and sensation. 'An Atmosphere of Entropy' is a reflection on moving through the urban landscape of Budapest, a "palimpsestic city" that is marked by the remnants of multiple collapsed political systems. As she searches the streets for a feeling of entropy, Berger's reading of Gernot Böhme's theory of atmospheres leads her to muse on the characteristics of an entropic atmosphere, the sense of possibility such an atmosphere might generate, and what this in turn might reveal about performance.

Next, Canan Salih's article 'Interrogating Bengali Youth's Performances of Place Through Emplacement and Mobility' documents her practice as research project *A Disgraceful Waste of Space* (2009). Salih compares the analogous ways two separate groups of young people of Bengali background in east London perform their diasporic identities through their use of public spaces. Drawing on a wide range of contemporary scholarship the essay reflects on the ways in which place is made and performed and the

significance of gender in spatial practices.

In a very different - but equally sited - example of practice-based research, Victoria Bianchi discusses her attempt to disrupt the androcentric space of an established heritage site through the intervention of feminist performance. 'The path to *CauseWay*' analyses Bianchi's site-specific work *CauseWay*, which was created for the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum and Cottage and told the neglected local narrative of two suffragettes who attempted to blow up the cottage in 1914. Through the theoretical intersection of performance studies, geography and heritage studies, this essay explores the complicated relationship between heritage, site, gender and performance.

Matthew Bent's contribution 'Aspects of landscape politics in *KA MOUNTAIN AND GUARDenia TERRACE: a story about a family and some people changing*' explores Robert Wilson's 1972 production at the Shiraz Arts Festival in the context of the Iranian land reforms of the 1960s, re-assessing the politics of landscape aesthetics in Wilson's theatre. Drawing on the work of cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove, Bent emphasises the significance of the lack of first hand sources on *KA MOUNTAIN*, and instead employs a wider historical perspective to analyses the performance and explore Wilson's use of site.

While the first two articles in this issue focus specifically on urban landscapes, we conclude this edition with an account of site-specific performance in a rural setting. In 'Trace' Elizabeth Bennett delineates her own personal experience of Landscape Theatre Company WildWork's

production *100: The Day Our World Changed*. Bennett's narration gives a unique and introspective description of the performance, as she traces the action from the harbour at Mevagissey, inland to the Lost Gardens of Heligan. The playful design of the paper evokes the topography of the Cornish landscape, and appropriately rounds out the issue's varied approach to the importance of place and geography in theatre and performance.

The editorial board of *Platform* would like to express our sincere gratitude to the department of Drama and Theatre at Royal Holloway, University of London, where this journal is based. Their continued advice and enthusiastic support of this publication has been invaluable. Developing, reviewing, writing for, and publishing a print journal is an important method of learning for postgraduates and early career researchers, the funding of which demonstrates Royal Holloway's commitment to providing opportunities for new research and the development of research skill. We are also grateful to the peer and academic reviewers for their time and thoughtful feedback. Their support has provided assistance to the research of all who have submitted to this issue. We would also like to thank Palgrave Macmillan for book review copies. Finally, we give special thanks to all our contributors who have shared their research and practice.

James Rowson and Catherine Love, Editors

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Notes on Contributors

Elizabeth Bennett is an AHRC funded Doctoral student at Royal Holloway University of London in the Drama and Theatre Department. Her thesis 'Performing Sussex Folksongs: The Role of The Archive and the Repertoire' examines and explores the constituent parts that contribute to the performance of folk songs in a specific locality. Areas of study include landscape processes and practices, the affective qualities of the archive, embodiment and oral repertoires, the use of vernacular songs in site-specific theatre, autoethnographic writing modes and the complexities of perspective, and the preservation and curation of memory in relation to intangible cultural heritage.

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Dr. Canan Salih works as a Youth Arts Officer for Tower Hamlets Council and has been a community arts officer for a number of various arts organisations in and around London for 15 years. Canan specialises in applied theatre practice and issue

based youth arts productions as well as writing and directing her own plays and short films.

An Atmosphere of Entropy

By Cara Berger

Abstract

This paper emerges from experiences collected by staying in a city, Budapest, as a visitor. Building on Gernot Böhme's theory of atmospheres that insists on feeling and sensing, rather than decoding, as an approach to the world, I chart how the cityscape lends itself to an atmospheric reading and how this in turn gives way to thinking about performance. The particular atmosphere investigated is one of entropy that is an atmosphere of decay and deterioration, which I contrast with what I term 'entropic signs', which I conceive as an inversion of Roland Barthes's notion of the mythical function of signs. Through documenting an embodied engagement with the sites under consideration, I propose that rather than producing a feeling of nihilism or futility, an entropic atmosphere cultivates a sense for creative becomings. In the final part of the essay I discuss what an atmosphere of entropy reveals about performance, suggesting that that an entropic aesthetics allows us to conceive of performance as an activity that cultivates a sensibility for how the present gives way to an unpredictable future.

Introduction: Sensing Atmospheres

This essay starts with a provocation set to me by Carl Lavery: "Where do you get a taste for entropy? What does it do to you? How does it make you feel?" Lavery's questions reached me as I was staying in Budapest as a visitor. In response, I would like to chart how the cityscape evoked an entropic atmosphere and offer a theorisation of this atmospheric experience. Moreover, I allow this reading to lead me into thinking about how an entro-

pic atmosphere might offer a generative starting point for theorising performance. In doing so, I hope to suggest, in accordance with Helen Nicholson, that the spatial structures that surround us contain a "pedagogical force". That is, they might provide us with a "sensory training" that can inform our thinking in other areas – in this case performance – more widely (95).

My discussion builds upon Gernot Böhme's theory of atmospheres that parallels with the non-representational turn in human geography and the affective turn in the study of arts in its insistence on experiencing, rather than decoding, as an approach to the world.[1] What is appealing about Böhme's theory for the purpose of this essay is that it allows me to "make transparent and articulatable" ('Atmosphere' 125) an aesthetic reality that is rooted in an everyday experience and - in a second step - use the outcome of this to theorise another area of experience: performance. To undertake this I offer a mixed-media investigation composed of theoretical and personal writing, as well as a series of photographs which, alongside the writing, seek to capture something of the entropic atmosphere I encountered. The photographs are included as a means of communicating the richness of atmosphere that, in the sense that I use the term here, names an intangible yet noticeably present feeling that exceeds verbal description.

1 Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth describe in their introduction to The Affect Theory Reader the year 1995 as a 'watershed moment' (5) for the affective turn as it saw the publication of foundational essays by Eve Sedgwick and Brian Massumi. Since then, a number writings that seek to theorise and articulate bodily sensations as a way of illuminating how we relate to the world have been published, many of which are collected in the aforementioned reader. Affect theory has also played a significant role in the development of human geography through the writings of Nigel Thrift and his non-representational theory.

In asserting that atmospheric experiences are tacitly familiar in everyday life as well as in the reception of artworks, but seldom acknowledged in an academic context,[2] Böhme develops a theory of atmospheres as a new approach to aesthetics that is fundamentally rooted in a spatial and relational vocabulary. For him – and contra earlier articulations on the term such as those of Hermann Schmitz – the experience of atmosphere cannot be simply located in the perceiving subject but comes to the fore through things radiating into their spatial environment. By proposing an aesthetics that takes "the relation between environmental qualities and human states" as a starting point, Böhme's ideas might be used to expand Nicholas Bourriaud's concept of relational aesthetics ('Atmosphere' 116). Whereas Bourriaud's writing centres on inter-human activities, Böhme's work offers a way of identifying the relationship between human and non-human actors. Bourriaud analyses a tendency in the visual arts of the 1990s to move away from the solitary contemplation of an artwork, instead stressing "the micro-community gathering" (61) that an exhibition provokes, especially when the work itself facilitates interactions between its onlookers. He goes on to associate a crucial emancipatory agenda with this tendency, claiming that it holds the potential to invent and enact "new life possibilities" (45) through the formation of a "temporary collective" (61) who jointly "[learn] to inhabit the world in better ways" (13). Similarly, Böhme's concept of atmospheres propels

2 Böhme's assertions might be tempered somewhat since, for example, the practices of psychogeography are often attentive to atmospheric experiences. Guy Debord's 'Psychogeographic Guide to Paris' for instance charts the different atmospheric blocks of Paris. While Böhme perhaps overstates the marginalisation of atmosphere, his work does produce a more structured approach to identifying and delimiting them than often attempted.

us to recognise ways of inhabiting the world that acknowledge our enmeshment with non-human formations. He is clear in that he seeks to move away from a "classical ontology" of the thing that is premised on distance and is "conceived in terms of its closure" (120) to a more co-creative relationship between the perceiver and the perceived in which things are imbued with a certain agency: the ability to "make their presence perceptible" (121). Atmospheres occur through an experience of being-with, in which both subject and object reach out to each other, radiate towards each other across a spatial divide.

However, I am also responsive to how Bourriaud's ideas have been critiqued by Claire Bishop. She takes issue with the idea that any kind of relationality, irrespective of its nature and participants, is seen as democratic and emancipatory without interrogating the specific "quality of the relations" (65). Arguing that Bourriaud's ideas too easily establish a collective "whose members identify with each other", she warns that his notion of community is premised on "immanent togetherness" (67), thus denying the importance of antagonism and conflict in both artistic and democratic processes. Taking Bishop's critique into account, it is important to stress that the kind of relationality that atmospheres establish between non-human (though at times human-produced) spatial structures and human perceivers is not one of selfsame immanence. Rather, Böhme's writing disrupts any notion of collective immanence, since an atmosphere appears as something that is always in excess of both the perceiver and the perceived. It is a highly paradoxical term that names a type of experience that is both objective – insofar as it lies outside of the perceiver – and subjective to the extent that "without the sentient being [atmospheres] are nothing" ('The Art of the Stage Set' 2). Rather than provoking identification, atmospheric

experiences sharpen an awareness of difference – between the human and the non-human – while at the same time underlining their dependency on each other.

Böhme's framework also opens up the possibility for conceiving of the non-human as equally involved in performative activities. He notes that whereas we have a rich everyday vocabulary to describe atmospheres, aesthetic theories have concentrated on three exclusively: "the beautiful, the sublime and then the characterless atmosphere or "atmosphere as such", aura" ('Atmosphere' 122). Building on this, this essay seeks to contribute to Böhme's project by revealing one of a myriad of possible atmospheres we might encounter: the entropic. The term entropy is loaned from the study of thermodynamics and describes how all systems – even those that appear tightly closed – lose energy. The law of entropy explains that there is always some energy that cannot be converted, made purposeful. Entropy is the measure of what goes amiss, what escapes the system, what exceeds it. This loss of energy – no matter how negligible – destabilises a system, making it porous and causing an inclination towards decay and degeneration. Entropy, in other words, produces disorder and results in the dissolution of systems over time.

This is what Budapest taught me about entropy and performance:

I: Entropic Signs

Budapest is a palimpsestic city.[3] Because of the political history of Hungary across the last two centuries – seeing the creation

3 Andreas Huyssen suggests that urban landscapes might be conceived as 'palimpsests of space' in which multiple layers of temporality co-exist and: 'strong marks of present space merge with traces of the past' (8).

and collapse of numerous political systems, one after another, from monarchies, through short-lived democracy, to kingdoms, empires, then fascist and communist rule, arriving at contemporary late-capitalism – an abundance of obsolete monuments and buildings inhabit the cityscape, leftovers of past systems, now collapsed.

Figure 1: *Stalin's Boots* recreated by Ákos Eleőd (2006). Memento Park, Budapest. Author's own (28 Dec 2014).

It would seem that Hungary's capital lends itself from the outset to an investigation of an entropic atmosphere since its cityscape is marked by the entropic decline and eventual collapse of political systems. However, I found that these marks did not in fact produce an atmosphere of entropy, rather they acted as what I will term 'entropic signs'. I offer this discussion of entropic signs in order to differentiate them from an atmosphere of entropy, which I discuss in part II.

The development of Budapest's cityscape in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century is characterised by struggles over how to memorialise its past. The primary site that prompts my discussion – Memento Park – grew out of these struggles. A popular tourist destination, the park is situated on the outskirts of the city and contains a remarkable collection of socialist statues and plaques. Its location on the borders of the city has often been noted as a compromise between two factions in the population – those calling for socialist public artworks to be destroyed and those arguing in favour of retaining them in their original locations (Light).

Figure 2: *Béla Kun Memorial* by Varga Imre (1986). Memento Park, Budapest. Author's own (28 Dec 2014).

Beverly James argues that relocating these monuments from their original context "radically [destabilises] whatever meanings they had come to embody previously" (294). Indeed, they now no longer function as an expression of the values and history of the communist state, but rather seem to act as entropic signs. That is, their previous semiotic function is overshadowed by a secondary layer of meaning: they point towards a time in the past reminding the visitor of the decline of systems of thought and political organisation. This secondary function takes prominence over the diverse visions of communist politics represented by the individual works of art, an effect that is amplified for the mostly Western European and North American visitors who are offered little or no interpretation and contextualisation of the works. The subtlety and particularity of the societal visions presented go unread by most visitors.

I suggest that an entropic sign is a sign whose representational function has faded because the context in which it was legible has been eroded. In this way, entropic signs expose the performative function of signs: they demonstrate how signifiers constitute and regulate identities and beliefs – through their absence rather than their presence. Entropic signs might be seen as an inversion of what Roland Barthes calls myth, a "mode of signification" in which a secondary order of meaning takes hold of a sign and functions as a way of naturalising ideological positions (109). A statue of Stalin, for example, not only denotes the historical person but the mythical function of the sign establishes him as a exalted figure of communist thought beyond the boundaries of the Soviet Union. Entropic signs are signs whose mythical content has become obsolete through radical changes in their ideological surroundings but whose mythical function

still lingers in a spectral form. The former fullness of the sign is perceptible but it no longer fulfils its naturalising function; it has become de-naturalised.

Such entropic signs are copious in Budapest. However, what I frequently noted was how little space for an experience of entropy there seemed to be. Places where I expected to find a sense of the entropic turned out to be thoroughly recuperated and repurposed: the destroyed Café New York, a hub of artistic life in turn-of-the-century Hungary when the country was still one of the pinnacles of the European cultural scene, has been rebuilt as an expensive sightseeing destination and Memento Park is frequently treated as a kitsch theme park in which visitors take entertaining selfies and can buy ironic communist-themed souvenirs. Entropic signs seemingly lend themselves to appropriation. In the case of Memento Park, the statues no longer commit visions of political organisation to stone but function as a method of affirming Hungary's devotion to Western values and Europeanness. It communicates, as Duncan Light notes, that "the country is sufficiently relaxed about its experience of communism to have few reservations about remembering it" (168). At the same time – by placing the park on a wasteland on the outer border of the city – it is implied that the country's communist past is well and truly over, lacking any bearing on the present. Entropic signs, having been emptied of their original mythical function, can be used to give birth to new myths, precisely because their emptiness acts as an invitation to fill them again. In this way entropic signs might point towards the decline of ideological truth statements but at the same time this loss can be converted into new systems of thought, made purposeful once again.

Figure 3: *Past Visions of Progress*, Memento Park, Budapest. Author's own (28 Dec 2014).

II: Sensing Entropy

It was not the public memorials to the disintegration of past political systems where I experienced an atmosphere of entropy but in much more mundane places. Gazing upon the myriad subsiding, decaying neo-Renaissance villas built in the decades before the final collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, allowing that gaze to feel, to search for atmospheric connections, I began to sense entropy. With their boarded-up windows and facades that give way to warped roofs, they are testimonials to Budapest's fall from a centre of European art and culture to a city that is unable or unwilling to take care of its ubiquitous grand architecture. Standing side-by-side with well-maintained and in-use buildings housing art collections and embassies, these rotting structures act as an ever-present memento mori, a reminder that all that is present tends toward disintegration.

Figure 4: *Wall Detail*. Andrássy út, Budapest. Author's own (30 Dec 2014).

What struck me was how these ruins provided me with a space for unexpected aesthetic pleasures beyond intent or control. The multiple textures – crumbling plaster revealing solid stonework, coarse patches of rust, soft areas of moss – and colours – burnt orange, yellowed whites, dirty greys, fresh greens – were like sudden, violent bursts of disorder amongst the otherwise cleanly white-washed, authoritative, stately buildings. They made me giddy, roused my curiosity, asked me to touch and explore them in a way the surrounding buildings foreclosed.

Figure 5: *Wall Detail*. Andrássy út, Budapest. Author's own (30 Dec 2014).

Figure 6: *Wall Detail*. Andrássy út, Budapest. Author's own (30 Dec 2014).

To experience an atmosphere, according to Böhme, is to be possessed by something external to oneself "like an alien power" and "in order to define their character, one must expose oneself to them, one must experience them in one's own emotional state" ('The Art of the Stage Set' 2). My account then of an entropic atmosphere is inevitably subjective and to some extent speculative; I can only theorise from an "irrational" standpoint (3). On a basic level the textures and materials I describe above carry signs of decay – moss is an indexical signifier for the neglect of a building and its ruinous state. In contrast to what I have termed entropic signs in the previous section, however, these uncontrolled signs of decay are not manifestations of ideological positions that can be decoded, but phenomena that affectively reach out to the observer, creating an intangible sensory experience that cannot be accounted for in semiotic terms alone. The rotting state of the buildings, the flat natural light conditions of late December and the lingering threat of rain enveloped me in an atmosphere of decline and degeneration.

To my surprise, what this atmosphere provoked in me was not a melancholic state of mourning or a nihilistic sense of futility. Finding my imagination drawn more to these abandoned places than their well-behaved neighbours, I was tempted to consider the generative potential of entropy, wondering what happens to escaped energy that does not simply dissipate or vanish. Rather it must manifest in coincidental forms, as unpredictable changes and becomings. The dissolving walls involved me, welcoming my hand and my eye to interact with them. I suggest, then, that an entropic atmosphere develops a sensibility for change and possibility. Entropic atmospheres might not so much hark back to a place in the past, mourning a lost object, but set up the possibility of a future. The grammar of entropy is

not written in the past tense, enthralled with what is lost, but is articulated in modals of speculation: what could, might, may be. Immersed in this atmosphere, I was prompted to consider that perhaps we need experiences of entropy for political reasons: as a means to summon chaos in the political body, as a reminder that change is not only possible but inevitable. With the backdrop of a city that in the past century instituted torture and execution as means to ensure the smooth running of the political system of the day – whether fascist or communist – in order to keep a stable equilibrium for the benefit of its elites, a flurry of moss, rust and rain can allow us to sense that the future is always undetermined.

III: An Entropic Aesthetics of Performance

What then does an entropic atmosphere have to do with performance?

On the one hand, atmospheres might be experienced, identified and charted with the purpose of re-creating them through performance in the way that Stuart Grant outlines in his article 'Performing an Aesthetics of Atmosphere'. Certainly, the entropic atmosphere that I delineate here can be used as a basis for practice-led research that investigates which scenographic and performative tools envelop an audience in a feeling of entropy. However, what I would like to suggest is a different way in which atmospheres can inform performance studies, one in which paying attention to particular atmospheric experiences reveals something about the activity of performance. As noted at the start of this discussion, I propose that atmospheric experiences act as a sensory training ground. By tuning into an atmosphere, we sharpen our senses to the kind of experience it provokes and the different ways of inhabiting the world it articulates.

Cultivating an openness to an entropic atmosphere allows us to develop a sense for entropic processes in performance. Indeed, an aesthetics of entropy makes it possible to detect a structural similarity between the sensation of entropy and the temporality of performance. Frequently, performance has been understood as an activity that negotiates between present and past time. Peggy Phelan, for example, has famously characterised the ontology of performance as a becoming "through disappearance" since its "only life is in the present" (146). Phelan's thinking centres on the relationship between the past and the present of performance: the time of performance is in its fading, and the experience of performance is one of loss; performance makes perceptible the moment in which the present becomes past. Rebecca Schneider in 'Performance Remains' has challenged Phelan's assertion by emphasising what remains of performance by drawing on memory and oral history. Here, performance's time is in how the past ghosts the present. An entropic approach to performance's time, in contrast, might not so much be interested in loss or remains and their respective privileging of the present and past of performance but in the potential time of the future that performance makes sensible. Recently, Lavery has suggested that we pay more attention to the futurity of performance, conceiving it as "an event that discloses the future in the very process of erasing the now, in producing the past" (112). This is what a reading of performance that is informed by entropic atmospheres can achieve. I have proposed that an atmosphere of entropy makes both the possibility and inevitability of a future time perceptible and attunes us to the seeds of the future in the actions and states of the present, reminding us that we live in a present that will inevitably give way to an essentially unstable, as yet undetermined future. Just as a closed system of

energy exchange cannot be maintained and the entropic loss of energy will cause changes within the system, an aesthetics of entropy promotes a sensitivity towards how the future devours the present moment, that something else, something unpredictable, is always to come.

This sensation can also be detected in the present-time of watching performance. Due to the time-bounded nature of performance - it is both in and of time - it brings to the fore the impossibility of stepping outside of the flow of time. It draws us back towards the past, since we always seem to lag slightly behind our own perceptions, but at the same time it propels us forward in time. We are caught, as Hans-Thies Lehmann notes, between the states of "just now" and "in an instant" (114). This conflux of temporal processes gives shape to an entropic experience of being in the act of watching performance as we simultaneously witness the decaying of the present into the past and the creation of a future time. In this way, performance can remind us that to be alive is not to be an element in a perpetual motion machine or a closed system of energy exchange, but that something is always escaping us and that living mindfully means observing how everything around us is always already collapsing, making room for becomings, ushering us into the new.

While identifying particular works that bring to the fore such an entropic experience in and of performance goes beyond the scope of this article, I would like to end by suggesting that the framework of entropic aesthetics can be used as an analytical model for pinpointing how performance works create an experience of futurity. Such a sensibility for futurity might be of particular importance, as Lavery notes, in a world where the "transformations that climate change […] will bring" and the "unsustainable practices of neo-liberal capitalism" place us at

threshold of an indeterminate and turbulent future (113). In this paper I have suggested that an atmospheric analysis of a place – in this case the decaying structures of buildings on Budapest's Andrássy Avenue – can stimulate thinking in the discipline of performance studies. Theorising performance from the vantage point of atmospheres acknowledges that we develop ways of inhabiting the world and understanding our activities within it not just through our interactions with other people, as Bourriaud proposes, but that places and things also impact upon our perceived reality through the production of atmospheres which inform and enlighten different ways of being and experiencing.

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Interrogating Bengali Youth's Performance of Place Through Emplacement and Mobility

By Canan Salih

Abstract

This article is concerned with how diaspora youth (in this case Bengali), living in East London Tower Hamlets, make place and perform and negotiate their youth diasporic identities through the use of public spaces. Using applied arts practice-as-research and by documenting the overall process of the project, a greater understanding of the participating youth's concept of belonging, territorialism and gendered spatiality is established and sets out a framework for further research. This article focuses on addressing complex issues arising out of the practice-as-research, including identifying young participants' relationship to cultural space (in particular gendered space), perceptions of territorialism through place making practices in public spaces, the temporary/transitional space and notions of belonging as part of an identity construction process.

Introduction

The practices of emplacement and mobility of young diaspora communities in London are significant indicators of how young people perform their diasporic identities through the act of "making place" (Myers 171). Hava Gordon's well-founded argument that "young people's use of space is integral to their development as political actors" (1) indicates why this paper is a useful contribution to understanding the performance of young diaspora communities' spatial engagement in public places. Gordon identifies the interplay of young people's privatisation of public spaces as a political move towards self-iden-

tification. The significance of this concept is exemplified in the practice-as-research (PaR) project discussed in this paper. The project in question is entitled *A Disgraceful Waste of Space* (*DWOS*), which took place in two particular locations in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets during the summer of 2009. *DWOS* was specifically aimed at exploring participating youth's movements within external public places of attachment, exploring how young people re-create and use urbanised public space. Using applied arts' PaR methodology, the project was concerned with investigating spatial performances of second and third generation Bengali diaspora youth living in East London. Various themes emerged from the PaR concerning urbanised youth utopianism, diaspora youth identities, territorialism and gendered space. At times these themes challenge existing theories around urban youth culture, critical thinking about place and space and the performance of place. Young people's use of space *does* appear to be integral to their development as political actors (*sic* Gordon, above), but not always in the way that some theorists might suggest. This paper focuses on the two particular *leitmotifs* (Mackey) that emerged from the *DWOS* project concerning territorialism and gendered spatiality. I use the term *leitmotif* to refer to recurring commonalities that transpired from the practice of this project. In other words, although initially there was no particular hypothesis to steer the project in any particular direction, the outcome of the practice generated various themes, of which territorialism and gendered spatiality were the two areas of commonality between the two participating groups.

Participation and Context of the PaR

DWOS was a two-week, site specific project that looked at how young people use public spaces and make place in the London

borough of Tower Hamlets; how they use their environment to create a safe place, a place they claim ownership of, a place they change or are changed by. This project was delivered in collaboration with 'A' Team Arts and Emergency Exit Arts (EEA), who provided street and visual arts artists Alex Evans and Andrew Sidall to facilitate the young people and put together an exhibition in the final week of all the work produced during the project. EEA's Associate Director Chloe Osborne also helped co-direct the project. In addition, The Ideas Foundation arranged for both groups of participants to attend London Metropolitan University's architecture department on the final day of the project and take part in a workshop in constructing a utopian place. The levels of engagement in this project are set out in Figure 1 below.

I deliberately decided to deliver this project with single gendered groups (a young men's group and a young women's group) in order to investigate how men and women differ in their use of public spaces. In this instance, I used gender as the defining cultural framework. This gendered use of public space was also a key concern for the LBTH youth services. Young women were not accessing as much youth provisions as the young men in the borough. Furthermore, there were numerous gang related conflict incidents in the borough, referred to as 'postcode wars'. Young men in particular were laying claim to specific areas of their neighbourhood, with violent and tragic results. Finding a male group to partake in this project was a challenge. Many of the existing groups we approached were not interested in participating for various reasons. Mogul Ahmed, a local music producer and rap artist who wished to enter into youth work, helped us with outreach for this project. We managed to engage with 8-10 young Bengali men who record music with Mogul and live

in his area. Their ages ranged from 13-19 and their base was the central bench in Innes Park, Bethnal Green. It was difficult to maintain the men's interest for more than a week, but they did return for the exhibition of the visual artwork they produced during their engagement in the final phase of the project.

Katie Burwood, the Haileybury Youth Club's female youth worker, and the head of the Stepney Green area's youth provision, Gwen Jones, were keen to be involved in this project. At the time of this project, there were various consultation exercises being conducted with the young people who attend the Haileybury Youth Club on a regular basis. These talks were based around plans put in place by Tower Hamlets Council's Youth Services for the demolition of the old building the youth club was housed in and requirements the young people had for the new building being designed. How the young people use the space and whether provisions were equally available to both the male and female groups were taken into consideration.

The *DWOS* project consisted of young people engaging in practical arts-based activities that also generated informative dialogue between participants and practitioner, culminating in a short documentary that highlights the key points made by the young people on mobility, gendered space and emplacement.[1] These dialogues were an integral part of the PaR, as were the diverse visual artworks generated by the young people engaged in various arts-based activities throughout their involvement on the project.

1 The documentary is available to view on https://youtu.be/St_DpzckQiQ

The Project	**DISGRACEFUL WASTE OF SPACE 2009** A pilot project that uses applied drama to look at the ways in which young people (living in Tower Hamlets) perform and my place in public spaces – outside, in parks, street, etc. as well as in transition.	
The Researcher	**Dr Canan Salih** Working as a Youth Arts Officer for Tower Hamlets youth services under employer – 'A' Team Arts	
The Partners	**Emergency Exit Arts** EEA is an arts organization, based in Greenwich, specialising in creating spectacle, site-specific festivals and cultural celebrations in public spaces. EE a provided two visual artists and a participation officer (Chloe Osborne) to the project.	**Ideas Foundation** And organization aims to increase diversity in the creative industry through working with industry partners and young people, 13 to 19 years of age. They provided a film documentary on the project and arrange to visit to London Metropolitan University's architectural department on the last day of the project.
The Participants	**Innes Park Boys** Boys of Innes Park outreached by one of our volunteer youth workers, Mogol Miah. Studio engineer, Miah, had helped some of the boys record their rap/spoken word compositions. The boys agreed to take part in the project and chose Innes Park as the site they wished to work in.	**Haileybury Girls** The girls only summer project based at Haileybury Youth Club in Stepney, Tower Hamlets. Head youth worker, Katie Burwood, outreached the girls specifically for this project. Burwood and the youth club's manager wanted to research why the girls-only provisions are so low attended. All the girls were Bengali.
The Outcomes	**The Boy's Work** The boys produced plaques with their own individual designs on them - related to the use of public spaces and belonging. The also produced sign posts that were then erected onto a park lamppost for public display	**The Girl's Work** The girls produced a number of layered maps of their everyday routes and spaces, as well as fabric paintings with space related motifs.
	The Exhibition Next exhibition of the girls' work and the boys' plaques were presented at the Brady Arts Centre, Whitechapel. The Brady Centre is the base for 'A' Team Arts. Members of the public and the Mayor of Tower Hamlets attended the exhibition.	

Figure 1: An outline of the partners and contributors of DWOS. Author's own (2009).

The difference in practice between the young men and women were not based so much on their genders but on the artists who were working with each group and the space in which the groups engaged in the arts practice. Andrew Sidall and I worked with the young men outside in Innes Park, while the following week Alex Evans and I worked with the Haileybury young women in the youth club. Sidall's approach to the work was much more street art-based. He looked at where the young men placed themselves and the significance of the park space to their sense of identity before suggesting that they create plaques and signposts. These elements spoke to the transitional aspect of the park, whilst underlining each individual participant's personal character. Evans's approach to the artwork with the Haileybury young women was more about the question of safety and their use of public spaces outside of the youth club setting. The women, therefore, used mapping, fabric painting and stenciling to reflect on places they inhabit on a regular basis and how these places make them feel, whether it be safe or threatened. Both artists (and groups) then joined together at the end of the two weeks to prepare an exhibition of the work produced, which was then presented to the local mayor of Tower Hamlets.

The types of questions that were asked of the young men during their engagement on the project mainly referred to why, how and when they used the park space, as well as what they think others' perceptions of their spatial practices may be. The young men were eloquent in expressing what the park meant to them at that point in their lives and a discussion evolved around how these expressions of meaning may be presented within the park space for others to see. The young men were encouraged by Sidall to produce plaques (see Figure. 2 below), where each plaque signified its designer's response to various questions

around spatial practices. Some plaques represented direct references to the area, using images of a built environment, apartment blocks and houses that seemed to represent participants' homes. There were also suggestions of economic significance, like using the term 'Fat Kat' (which refers to wealthy individuals who exploit the community for their own personal gain), and images of marijuana (of which the young men alluded to dealing with others).

Figure 2: Plaques created by the boys of Innes Park during *DWOS*. Author's own (August 2009).

The idea of signposts came from one of the young men (see Figure 3) who wanted to leave the signposts in the space as a clear message of what the park meant, as a significant transitional space (both literally and chronologically) in their lives. The construction of the signposts in Innes Park represented the start of 'avant-garde practices' as political steps towards a psycho-geographical approach to investigating how the young men on the project used the park. The very nature of the signposts implied mobility and movement, while their positioning indicated a pause, an aesthetic observation of art work and, more importantly for this enquiry, a reflection on the narrative of each signpost and what that narrative tells us about its relator.

Figure 3: Signpost created by the boys of Innes Park during *DWOS*. Author's own (August 2009).

Figures 4 and 5: Haileybury Girls Group, examples of layered cartographies created during *DWOS*. Author's own (August 2009).

The Haileybury young women group, on the other hand, were asked by Evans, to create drawings of maps that depicted particular sites they felt evoked feelings of safety, belonging, and security, as well as fear, threat and discomfort (see Figure 4). These maps consisted of double layers of card and tracing paper and were intended as a planning exercise that would lead to a performance of these places through walks to each site. A lack of time meant this transition into direct performance did not take place. Yet the creative palimpsest cartographies and small fabric paintings with space related motifs, created by the Haileybury young women, along with the plaques and signposts created and displayed by the young men in the park, were all important and informative parts of the PaR. Equally, the significant dialogue that took place during this engagement, between the young men, the women and the artists and researcher, were essential to the research. It was this engagement in dialogue and the outcomes of each group's creative task that raised the two main themes of territorialism and gendered spatial practices.

I had a number of concerns about *DWOS*. The project was intended as a pilot project with the initial intention of exploring ways of using applied drama practice as a research tool. The original intention was to adopt and adapt some practical approaches to walking, pausing and performing of mobility and place-making in public spaces. Some of the activities were derived from Wrights and Sights' *Mis-guides to Anywhere* (Hodge *et. al*), but most were my own devised ideas on walking, mapping and exploring routes through various places, familiar to the participating youth. Although it was extremely useful to collaborate with the artists employed by EEA, who had extensive experience in working with young people outside in public spaces the ways in which *DWOS'* methodology digressed away

from my original plans of cartographic performance activities into more visual and creative arts practices, and the fact that the participation of the Haileybury young women's club did not take place in an outside public space as originally intended but within the walls of the youth club, were problematic for me as an applied drama artist. The original idea of exploring, through applied drama practice, public sites that resonate with participants' identity did not happen. Furthermore, as an applied drama practitioner I felt the work was heavily visual arts-based rather than performance based. Yet, as a researcher, although the engagement with the Haileybury young women did not reach its expected fruition, and although the performance element of *DWOS* seemed somewhat lacking, the dialogue documented, as well as the creative outcomes of the two-week project, provided me with much to think about. The two key themes that emerged from the practice and informed the direction of the research were perceptions around territorialism and gendered spatiality. These themes emerged from the conversations we had with the young people during the project and were reflected in their responses to the sites they inhabit (Innes Park young men) and those they reflect on (Haileybury young women). The next section of the paper examines how issues around gendered space and territorialism were evoked through the PaR of *DWOS*. The question of whether territoriality is a gendered tendency or whether it exists within both genders, albeit in different forms, is tackled through an analysis of the young people's response to questions and the spaces they inhabit and discuss through the PaR.

Authority, Gendered Space and Territorialism

The separate, gendered nature of *DWOS* resulted in issues of authority, gendered space and territorialism, which provoked questions around controlled performative spatial engagement.

Who holds the authority in the space the young people engage in, for example? To what degree, if at all, is this power negotiable? What implications does this authority have on the young people's performative behaviour and relationships within the space? Considerations of these themes and questions form the structure of this paper.

Controlled performative spatial engagement was demonstrated in two specific ways from each gendered group. For example, in Innes Park, an articulation of subtle, performative negotiations took place between the youth and the different members of the public who use the park and the youth club. During our engagement with the young men of Innes Park, a daily time was set up for working with the them. This schedule, arranged by the men themselves, seemed non-negotiable. There were several reasons for this, some of which involved the young men's own personal commitments to family. The men would not be in the park any earlier than 2pm, at which time most of the users of the park were young mothers with children. Even the far end of the park, specifically used by drug and alcohol users and dealers (referred to as 'winos' by the young men), did not tend to become populated before 4pm onwards. It seems that the demographic network of the park was somehow negotiated in such a way that different social groups operated according to certain times of the day. What isn't certain is whether the young men's own commitments and preferences meant they did not lay claim to their 'turf' at an earlier time, or whether they actually acknowledged and conceded the other park consumers as an act of underlying democratic practice. This idea of democratic practice challenges notions of territorialism that arose during the work with this youth group and is discussed further on in this paper.

During the second week of the *DWOS* project, when

we engaged the young women of Haileybury Youth Centre in various arts based activities, a different performative spatial engagement emerged. The fact that the youth club is a place that was provided specifically for young people meant that it required a different set of negotiations between the users themselves and between the users and the providers (in this case Tower Hamlets youth and community services). The issue of gender differentiation, in the dialogue between the users, is a key factor in negotiating the use of space. In the last OFSTED inspection of Tower Hamlets Youth Service provision. OFSTED recommended the youth services 'increase the participation of all groups of young people (13-19 year olds), particularly girls and young women' (Office for Standars in Education 58). At the time, the demographic framework of the borough consisted of 30% Bengali Muslims (it is now above 40%). Whether it is because of restrictions in participation of youth provisions placed on Bengali women by their families, or whether because of the attitude towards women's work by youth work providers in the borough, in 2009 there was a deficiency in single sex youth provision for women. This was also identified in the 2009 Equality Impact Assessment carried out by the youth services, which stated: "it has been identified that there is a gap with regards to Young Women's work, Somali and Faith based work in the Community. Therefore courses have been created to promote the equality and opportunity for these groups." (Tower Hamlets Children's Services Community Resource Team 14). The assessment suggests that plans were in place to address the deficiency in women's provisions.

DWOS challenges these statistics of inequality. Reasons why young women of Tower Hamlets may or may not use provisions provided by the youth services emerged through

the exchange of dialogue and the evidence of visual arts generated during the PaR. Although, for me, *DWOS* was a pilot that offered an opportunity to try out various PaR methods, the reason for 'A' Team Arts, EEA and Ideas Store's support was because Tower Hamlets youth services funded the project as a means of identifying how and why young people use public (and provided) spaces in Tower Hamlets. During discussions with the young women whilst making the maps one of the participants stated that "boys get more". They discussed the reasons behind this inequality and expressed exasperation at the self-imposed restrictions the young men seemed to place on themselves, through territorial attitudes.

DWOS suggested three main areas for consideration in the main PaR activity with the participants, youth territorialism, gendered spatiality and spatial authority. These are not autonomous but interlinked through complex correlations of class, gender and ethnic cultural agencies that affect the mobility, perceptions and expectation of Tower Hamlets youth. The territorial attitude of the young men in Innes Park relies on perceptions of power and authority of spatial consumption that can arguably be construed as gender or non-gender based. The young women of Haileybury youth club may not experience this territorialism for various reasons that are discussed later on in this paper, but the challenges they face with the use of space at the youth club could arguably be as a result of gendered spatial performativity that forms a part of their social construction and, interestingly, appears to be reflected in the youth service provisions.

Gendered Practice of Space

During the *DWOS* project, working separately with the two

groups of Innes Park (young men), and Haileybury Youth Club (young women) inevitably required an interrogation into the difference in spatial practices and perceptions of each gendered group through dialogue with and observations of the young participants. What emerged was an interesting paradox in how the young people in the project managed and negotiated their emplacement and mobility within the borough.

As all the young women in *DWOS* ended up being young Bengali Muslim, it could be assumed that their encounters with spatial restrictions were dictated by religious, cultural or social conventions. It has been suggested in some writing, for example, that such restrictions on the mobility of Bengali young women are as a result of religiously informed cultural expectations and practices that may dictate gendered space (Ullah, Alexander, Firoz & Rashid). Yet in the *DWOS* project, although both groups were from the same religion, religion was not mentioned as an identifying factor in their mobility practices and the way in which they used public spaces. Through conversations with the young women, it became apparent that most of the restrictions in mobility in and around the borough were not so much dictated by their religion and cultural background, but by a fear of violence (although it is not necessarily clear by whom). Ansar Ahmed Ullah refers to the ghettoization and restrictions in mobility of East End Begalis deriving from threats of racial violence in the early 1980s:

> racial tensions between Bengali and established white British communities caused a rise in racial violence. This caused Bengali immigrants to mould themselves as a community in an unfamiliar and hostile environment. The fear of violence in other areas meant an influx of new immigrants to this already populated area of the

> east end. Research indicates, to avoid racial harassment groups tend to find solidarity within their own communities. (3)

The young women of Haileybury Youth Club (and even the Innes Park young men) did not see racial violence as a threat to their mobility at the time of the project. Although the Innes Park young men experienced tensions in mobility as a result of territorialism, the women's freedom from such violence presented them as, what Nishat Awan calls, "quasi-subjects, able to mediate between here and there, not just 'belonging' to one place or another" (268). The performance of the quasi-subject is achieved through various negotiations of cultural influences and different places visited, inhabited and passed through.

Ethnic cultural identities, like those of the participants of the Haileybury Youth Club, lends itself well to negotiations by a youth culture that can adapt the concept of mobility to mean more than "movement in physical space" (Stald 145). As the Haileybury young women exemplify, "mobility is about being ready for change, ready to go in new directions" (Stald 145.). The confidence and presence of these Bengali women, in public spaces, exemplifies a shift in, at least, ethic cultural practices (if not social or youth cultural practices) from previous generations.

Gill Valentine suggests "public space is not just 'there,' but is something that is actively produced through repeated performances" (216). This framework of repeated performance is a concept applied to gender studies, first proposed by Judith Butler in 1996 as a claim that, "gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory framework that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (33). Valentine suggests that the production of space, like that of gender, is also a perfor-

mative act that, through repetition, becomes normalised. An example of the normalisation of gendered space could be to suggest that the home is the female domain whilst the streets are "boys' places" (Valentine 205-220). When asked about the restrictions on their mobility by their families and cultural agencies, most of the young women of Haileybury Youth Club contested this claim, stating that their parents trusted and allowed them to move freely within their everyday routes. However, during the exercise of naming public places where they felt unsafe, many of the young women wrote "outside", "in an alleyway", or "outside by myself at night." This implied a sense of restriction that challenges their sense of safety.

> Deidre Heddon states:
>
> Space is also gendered as it is raced, and the vast majority of women will have felt out of place at some time, with 'public space' having been historically constructed as masculine, with so-called 'private space', typically domestic space, perceived as the domain of the feminine (Duncan, 1996) […] The continued fear that women experience in all sorts of so-called public places suggests that place, then as now, still does not belong equally to all. (122-144)

Yet Heddon's claim is challenged by the Innes Park gang's mentality that also evokes a fear of violence, in this case brought on by a territorialism that directs them towards *self-imposed* restrictions around where they can and cannot go in the borough. In other words, the so-called power of the male-biased inhabitation of public spaces bestowed upon the Innes Park young men that is supposed to signify a lack of freedom for the young women is curtailed through their territorial attitudes. The Haileybury

young women did feel, however, that they had more freedom to move about in public places, as they did not engage in the territorial practices adopted by the young men. It seems logical therefore to suggest that perhaps the young women in the project empower themselves through their disdain and rejection of territorial attitudes that would at any other time restrict their mobility around the borough and beyond, whilst at the same time dealing with an inequality of public spatial engagement because of a fear of violence.

It seems that a fear of violence, therefore, may be considered a key form of restriction on spatial use for both groups of young people in *DWOS*, but for different reasons. Karin Grundstrom defines public space as "often used to describe those spaces of cities such as streets, parks, squares and public buildings that are open to the public and accessible for everyone" (1). Yet comments made by the young participants of the *DWOS* project suggest that this assumed access to public space is denied to the young women of Haileybury Youth Club and the Innes Park young men as a result of the threat of harm that may be owing to their respective genders. According to the Haileybury young women, certain public spaces are considered a threat because of perceived violence associated with them being young women (a specific alleyway or late at night, for example). On the other hand, although the Innes Park group do not necessarily divulge similar fears of threat directly associated with their gender in these spaces, they do suggest feeling threatened in certain public spaces as a result of territorial practices.

Although territorial practices were not evident in the Haileybury group in particular, this does not mean it does not occur within groups of young women at all (Batchelor 125-134). Equally, threats of violence associated with spaces perceived as

unsafe are not restricted to women only. The suggested specificity of gendered restrictions in the *DWOS* project, however, exemplify a form of controlled performative spatial engagement in that perceived threats of violence, associated with specific genders, seemed to control where and how the participating young people of the *DWOS* project engaged in public spaces. The political performance of spatial practices by the Innes Park young men, however, demonstrated how sites like Innes Park are made 'meaningful places' through perceptions of territory and relational spatiality. In other words, as one of the participants states in the *DWOS* documentary "this park has a strong mark in my heart […] the centre of the park is the centre of our life". Perceptions of territorialism and relational spatiality came from a sense of meaning the park had for these young men and the relationships they share within the parameters of the park that evoke this meaning. Yi-Fu Tuan) proposes that "space is transformed into place as it acquires definition and meaning" (136). Marcel Mauss (1950) defines place as "culture localized in time and space". He suggests: "locations in which individuals with distinct identities form human relationships that in turn accrete, creating the sediments of history" (Mauss in Varnelis and Friedberg 2008: 41).

According to the dialogue exemplified in the *DWOS* documentation, the park seemed to serve as a *place* that declared and affirmed the young men's existence and, even though they were aware of the other park users, their sense of territorial control did not seem threatened by these users. Instead, there seemed to be unspoken negotiations taking place to share that site. In other words, although the young men were clearly engaged in territorial tensions that affected their mobility across the borough, their territorial inclinations were not as assertive

when it came to laying claim to the park and sharing the space with other public users. Perhaps this was because other users appeared to be of different social groups. Yet, what if the other occupants of the park were of the same age or ethnicity as the young men? Would their sense of territory perhaps provoke more antagonism and if so, why? A research report on urban youth territorialism compiled by the University of Glasgow and funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2008 states:

> Interviewees in Tower Hamlets described how minority ethnic gangs formed in the face of racist attacks in the 1970s and 1980s. Protection was the main focus of these groups at this stage. As time passed, the ethnic make-up of the area changed and the minority expanded. Thereafter, racial friction subsided, only to be replaced by territorial conflict within ethnic groups. The sentiment of protection was wrapped up with an acute sense of place attachment and could quickly lead to revenge activity if one group thought that another had caused offence. (Kintrea, *et. al* 28)

This "place attachment" is an interesting reason for youth territorialism. The signposts erected by the young men in the centre of the park exemplified, not so much ownership of the park, as much as what the park means to them: a crossroads, a place to stop in transit from home, college and other places and "hang-out", a platform for them to declare their existence, reaffirm their identities and perhaps maintain a level of power against other agencies they may perceive as threatening the construction of their identity.

Conclusion

DWOS began as a pilot project into how applied drama could be

used as a research tool for exploring place-making practices of diaspora youth in public spaces around London. Its digression from the intended applied drama PaR, into applied arts practice was at first problematic for me as an applied drama practitioner and novice researcher. Concerned with what challenges engaging young people in applied drama practice within public sites, may bring to this form of research, *DWOS* was supposed to be a way of tackling these challenges within a funded and supported project. The visual arts practice of engaging the second-generation Bengali participants on the project, although effective in creating dialogues around the themes of public safety, gendered use of public spaces and the meanings attached to certain sites, was not how I envisioned the project to progress. I imagined more performance-based articulations of personal cartographies that would steer spectators into specific sites around Tower Hamlets. This concern aside, *DWOS* was undeniably supported by the various collaborators involved in the project and the quality of youth work practice, as well as the aesthetics of creative work that was generated by the participants, was of high quality. In fact, what began with the purpose of investigating everyday, performative articulations of diasporic identities soon generated some interesting issues around gendered spatial practices that included notions of territorialism and controlled authority. When discussing the gendered use of space, in the section titled 'Authority of Gendered Space and Territorialism', I draw on the writing of Heddon, whose preoccupation with auto-topography as a means of articulating auto-biographical, gendered and spatially led narratives of the self are key in framing the two different views of belonging by the two groups in *DWOS*. Furthermore, Valentine's proposition of young people's use of public (adult) spaces as a means of making private place

helped explain the choices the young people made in what they considered places in which they felt a sense of belonging or threat in the context of the PaR.

This project exemplified the structure of PaR in that, without the practice (whether it be applied drama or applied arts) the key themes, or *leitmotifs*, may not have subsequently emerged for critical discussions. In that respect, *DWOS* was successful in introducing PaR methodologies as a means of investigating the place making practices of Bengali diaspora youth. The works produced by the young people were therefore PaR in that they produced interesting, viable research material to think and write about. It could be argued that the *DWOS* project was, first and foremost, an endeavour of performative research rather than performance. Therefore my reference to Butler was significant to both the performative practices of the young men and women, as well as their gendered response to territorialism.

The concept of young Bengali women's performance of public spaces, young men's territorial attitudes and the challenges of gender-based provisions available for young people by Tower Hamlets' youth services were all explored and at times challenged, through various articulations that included creative examples of work and ongoing dialogue between the artists and young people that engaged in the project. There were opportunities to explore the idea of spatial ownership in more depth, gauging various viewpoints of the young Bengali men, as well as enquiring into how young women consider and use public spaces, with particular consideration given to notions of safety, fear of violence and the social and cultural, if not ethnical, impositions of these threats. References to Ullah and Awan are key in distinguishing the changes in mobilisation and gen-

dered practices of young Bengali men and women from migrating generations. For example, Awan's "quasi-subjects" is an apt classification of the Haileybury young women group's response to notions of territorialism and gendered use of space, as they challenge perceptions of ethnic restrictions based on gender, as proposed by Ullah's observations of first generation Bengali's in East London.

As a pilot project, *DWOS* may not have researched using strictly performance-based practices, but it was successful in identifying a possible form of PaR in the field of youth spatial practices, both engaging young people through the arts and generating interesting dialogue around key themes of territorialism, gendered spatial practices and controlled authority of public spaces.

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The path to *CauseWay*: Developing a feminist site-specific performance practice at the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum

By Victoria Bianchi

Abstract

This article analyses *CauseWay* (2014), a feminist site-specific performance work created for the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum and Cottage (RBBM) in Alloway, South Ayrshire. The performance, which explored the history of two suffragettes who attempted to blow up the cottage in 1914, challenged the dominant, androcentric heritage narrative of the RBBM by exploring the hidden female history of the space. Drawing on Doreen Massey's concept of gendered spaces, this article applies a feminist lens to the relationship between performance and space. Beginn–ing with an exploration of the gendered nature of heritage tourism, the narrative of the suffragette attack is discussed. The development of *CauseWay* is then analysed by employing a theoretical framework of performance studies, human geography and heritage studies. Practical discussions of intertwining feminist theory with site-specific performance are offered with a view to further exploring the relationship between heritage, site, gender and performance. The article concludes by considering the relationship between gender and heritage and proposing live performance as a potential tool for the development of a more representative heritage sector.

Introduction

Green grow the rashes, O,
Green grow the rashes, O,
The sweetest hours that e'er I spent,
Were spent amung the lasses, O
(Robert Burns, 1783)

In early 2014 I was commissioned to write the script for a site-specific performance about Frances Parker and Ethel Moorhead, two suffragettes who attempted to blow up Burns Cottage in Alloway, South Ayrshire in 1914. The play, *CauseWay,* directed by David Overend, was presented at the RBBM almost exactly 100 years later in June 2014. This article reflects on this performance in order to discuss strategies that can be employed to develop performance practice that is both feminist and site-specific. Drawing on examples from the production of *CauseWay,* I reflect upon the creation of a performance within a specific place of heritage and explore the ways in which such work can be developed with explicitly feminist politics. I move towards offering a practical toolkit, informed by theoretical principles, which can be employed by those seeking to create work that is both feminist and sited.

The RBBM dominates the geo-cultural identity of Alloway, a small village in South Ayrshire. The aim of this article is not, however, to denigrate the choices made by the various regional and national organisations that have shaped the village. There is no question as to whether such a small area would choose to highlight that it produced Scotland's most famous poet. The concern, however, is for the stories that have been marginalised by the dominant focus on Robert Burns: specifically for the stories of women. Where women are represented

in the RBBM they are portrayed only in relation to men, generally as lovers or mothers and given at most a paragraph in the main display. The gendered nature of this space is, in turn, a microcosm of the wider heritage industry, where, as Laurajane Smith suggests, "masculine values and perceptions, particularly masculine values from the elite social classes … have tended to dominate" (162). Through the focus on one famous man and the reduction of women to antiquated stereotypes, RBBM is, in quite an explicit sense, gendered. My experience of the site as a woman, on my first visit, was of something missing; a subtle reinforcement of a woman's "place in Society" by the mention of so few women (Massey 186). It would be unfair, however, to suggest that those working at the RBBM are unaware of this. The lack of female representation was, in fact, one of the primary factors that led the museum's education department to commission *CauseWay.*

Given his literary status, many who visit RBBM already know the name of Robert Burns, along with portions of his works and life story. How many, though, know the story of Parker and Moorhead? One might assume that the majority of those wandering around Alloway's streets have no knowledge of an event which "roused in the locality the most intense indignation" (*Glasgow Herald*). Depending on one's political leanings, this event may be viewed as either a radical protest or an attempted act of terrorism, but the facts are thus: in the early hours of the 9 July 1914 two women cycled - presumably from Glasgow - into Alloway armed with pipe bombs. They inserted these bombs into the gutter outside the back of the cottage and, presumably, would have ignited them had they not been interrupted by Robert Wyllie, a night watchman (*Glasgow Herald*). Whilst one woman was caught and eventually identified as

Frances Parker (despite initially giving a pseudonym), the other escaped and we can only presume her identity to be Parker's frequent accomplice Ethel Moorhead (WEA Lothian Women's Forum). Parker was imprisoned, although was eventually released to a nursing home due to weakness brought on from hunger strike. She escaped from the home and was given amnesty due to the outbreak of WWI (Leneman). Discussing these events with colleagues, friends, family members and even residents of Alloway often resulted in a surprised response - many had never heard this story, and couldn't seem to grasp why it had not become a popular anecdote from Scottish history. However, my work as a playwright and academic is situated within feminist discourse and aims to highlight the forgotten or sidelined stories and experiences of women. Therefore, my understanding of how undervalued women's experiences are on a worldwide and historical scale meant it was difficult to be surprised that such a story had been forgotten. Perhaps the marginalisation of female stories due to institutionalised patriarchy is to blame (Smith L 162). Or it may be that, given that the suffragettes' cause was eventually successful, such directly militant acts have been suppressed in order to give the impression of success through more peaceful means.

Whatever the reasons, when *CauseWay* was performed in the summer of 2014 it offered a new interpretation of Alloway's history for public consumption. The performance began outside the RBBM and started much like a guided tour. The performers then introduced each other as Parker and Moorhead and became the characters. They invited the audience to follow them out of the museum and picked up two bikes along the way. As the performers cycled ahead, the audience followed along Poet's Path (which connects the museum and cottage),

periodically stopping to hear about the characters' journey on bike from Glasgow to Alloway. This section was accompanied by music from the Ayrshire based performer Little Fire (Jamie McGeechan), whose male presence alluded to the presence of Burns in the work. The performance eventually arrived at Burns Cottage where the remainder of the action took place, including an exploration of the parallels between Burns' works and the suffragette cause, the attempted bombing, the chase by the night watchman, and Parker's speech in court. Rather than reading about these women in an old newspaper, audiences stood in the same place as the events that took place a century ago. It was my intention that the audience experiencing these stories, physically placed in the position of these women, would allow for a more profound understanding of their story and of the forgotten spatial ideologies hidden within the RBBM.

Figure 1: Frances and Ethel at Burns Cottage. Alloway, Ayrshire. Author's own (14 June 2014).

Heritage, gender and performance

CauseWay was performed four times over the course of two days at the RBBM. The play was produced by the National Trust for Scotland, supported by the University of the West of Scotland and South Ayrshire Arts Partnership, as one of a plethora of events taking place to mark the centenary of the start of WWI. Despite many of these events focusing specifically on the war itself, some of the creative team at the RBBM were keen to present an alternative story: that of the suffragette attack on Burns' Cottage. Christopher Waddell, the Learning Manager at the RBBM, had hoped to develop the story into an event or performance for some time. The piece was to be staged on site and as the playwright attached to the project the development of my work began by exploring the space. The relationship between heritage, gender and performance was the key theoretical underpinning of my practice.

Massey demonstrates how our experience of space is affected by our gender (2). In heritage sites this experience is frequently recognisable. As a woman, to enter a heritage site is generally to enter a space where female voices are absent. For the most part, heritage sites represent periods when women were almost universally oppressed, and the narratives promoted within these sites are largely male: "heritage is gendered, in that it is too often 'masculine', and tells a predominantly male-centered story, promoting a masculine, and in particular an elite-Anglo-masculine, vision of the past and present" (Smith L 159). This version of the past offered by the heritage industry reinforces the male viewpoint as dominant and arguably beyond reproach. Whilst Burns was not necessarily elite and was Scottish rather than English, his position as a white, cisgendered male doubtless helped him to become an influential literary figure.

The strong focus within the RBBM upon one male figure from Alloway's past and the aforementioned reinforcement of female stereotypes, inadvertently or not, promotes androcentrism within the space. The lack of female narratives has resulted in the gendering of such spaces by aligning them almost exclusively with men and maleness. This is, of course, a legacy left by patriarchy - the era during which Burns lived (1759-1796) was one in which women were viewed as naturally secondary to men. As highlighted in the museum, in rural Scotland women's roles were primarily domestic; independence and mobility was generally a privilege reserved only for men.

The question of what genders a site is, however, by no means concrete; the exclusion of female narratives works in conjunction with "gendered power relations" and "visitors' gendered identities and gendered performances" (Reading 402-403). It is important to understand that my reading of gendered aspects of the RBBM as problematic and exclusionary is coloured by my position as a feminist, a writer and an academic and that interpretations of gender and space are personal and fluid. However, one's personal position is an important component in forming the identity of space; each individual understanding of space contributes to its meaning (Soja). Furthermore, the influence of the heritage site within wider society should not be underestimated. Sites that proffer androcentric or misogynist narratives impact upon gender identities; to view one's gender as subjugated or unimportant, without question, can "reinforce the contemporary values and inequities given to women's identities, social roles and experiences" (Smith 163). To have inequality presented as something that has always existed may, therefore, lead to the sense that it is socially ingrained, unchallengeable and unchangeable. Therefore, efforts must be made to explore

and represent women's experiences within heritage.

The creation of *CauseWay* was situated at the intersection between heritage, feminism and performance. The relationship between feminism and performance is, of course, an area that has received much analysis within and outwith academic discourses[2]. Although definitions vary as to what feminist performance is, exactly, my intentions in developing *CauseWay* were to create a performance that "manifests the conscious intention of remedying the effects and conditions of sexism in our culture" (Wark 4). The work would be a direct response to the reductive representation of women in the RBBM and to the androcentrism of the heritage industry in general by placing women's stories and politics directly into the site. Anthony Jackson and Jenny Kidd, two of the team members in Manchester University's Performance, Learning and Heritage project, state that performance practice "can be usefully … employed in the interpretation, and indeed the interrogation, of 'heritage'" (1). It should be noted here that although heritage performance is gaining currency within the academy, gender has not currently been foregrounded in any substantial studies.

In relation to Jackson and Kidd's work, I argue that the ephemeral nature of performance renders it particularly effective in challenging heritage narratives as the work need not go through lengthy approval processes and can, therefore, be provocative or radical. The ephemeral nature of performance practice raises issues of legacy. It is, as Gilli Bush-Bailey puts it, an "ephemeral experience that simply resists repetition or capture, even by modern technology" (92). An experience that cannot be documented or repeated will, arguably, have little effect on the permanent identity of a space. However, in writing *CauseWay* I was entirely aware that the work would not nec-

2 See, for example, Case, 1988; Martin 2002; Aston & Harris, 2012.

essarily make concrete changes to the identity of the RBBM. Rather, the work proposed to reconceptualise space for the performers and audience members that chose to inhabit a moment. The limits of heritage performance must be accepted; it may not immediately restructure the offerings of a site, but it adds to an understanding of space. Furthermore, if programmed more regularly, performance practice can offer renewed, feminist perspectives to a larger cross-section of heritage visitors.

Site-specificity, mobility and feminism

CauseWay was intentionally site-specific, that is to say that the physicality and history of the RBBM site was an essential presence within the work. Given the variety of definitions of site-specificity, I employ Fiona Wilkie's understanding that such performance, "engages with site as symbol, site as story-teller, site as structure" to delineate my working concept of the term (Mapping the Terrain: a Survey of Site-Specific Performance in Britain 158). The essential characteristics of *CauseWay* as a site-specific performance are that it responded to the site, interacted with it and could not be performed in any other space. Beginning at the Birthplace Museum, the performance followed Poet's Path along to Burns Cottage (see figure 1), with the performers moving through Alloway on bicycles followed by the audience on foot (see figure 2).

The implementation of mobility places *CauseWay* within the sphere of what Wilkie has termed a "mobility turn" within site-specific performance (Site-specific performance and the mobility turn 203). Wilkie defines this turn as "site-specific artwork that only makes sense in relation to the contexts of mobility" (ibid). Wilkie has offered potential reasons behind this relationship between mobility and site-specificity as exploring "concep-

tions of place fundamentally tied up with questions of mobility" (ibid 212). Furthermore, David Overend suggests that "the journey form is frequently used by contemporary performances in order to respond to site as part of an increasingly mobile relational realm" (379). Wilkie and Overend both highlight site as a relational entity, arguing that sites exist in relation to other sites and that this can be explored through employing mobility in performance. While a consensus seems to have been reached that mobile, site-specific theatre responds to the relational nature of space, the question of gender has been underrepresented. The link between feminism and mobility is clear in Massey's assertion that "one gender-disturbing message might be - in terms of both identity and space - keep moving!" (11). Juxtaposing this with the idea of women as home, Massey advocates that mobility is one method of opposing such gendered stereotyping. She discusses the classical notion of men wanting to 'fix' women in a space, as a 'stabilising' influence for their own mobility. In response to this, the text of *CauseWay* used mobility as a direct challenge to oppressive patriarchal structures:

> FRANCES
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> My legs keep moving because they have to, because they are obliged to. They are obliged to keep the wheels turning, keep pushing forward for those who can't … those who don't understand. The women and the men all over this great nation who base their lives around the belief that our two sexes are fundamentally, irretrievably different. My legs ache more and more as they push me forward, and I can feel a burning in them that matches the rage that burns in my chest. All

> the while I think of those who believe that one half of civilisation is only good for matters of the home, matters of childcare, for needlepoint and piano playing. The people who think that we only fight for equal rights because we hate men, or we have nothing better to do with our time. I think of them as the miles roll by, and my legs keep moving.

CauseWay was developed to include mobility as a core element within the performance. The work used the suffragette narrative in order to bring discussions of mobility from spatial theory and performance studies together in practice. Furthermore, the use of bicycles evoked the freedom of movement offered by cycling, which Susan B. Anthony noted "has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world". Employing the promenade form and selecting relevant forms of transport can, therefore, be viewed as a means of engaging with feminism and site-specificity. The form allows the performance to raise questions of gender issues within multiple spaces and also to contrast the static nature of historical women's lives with the mobility of the characters.

The methods used and performances generated in site-specific work are, as one would imagine, hugely varied. Wilkie suggests that "in many cases, a thematic engagement is deemed less necessary (or, in one or two instances, less desirable) than a geometric or structural one in order for a piece to be termed site-specific" (Mapping the Terrain: a Survey of Site-Specific Performance in Britain 155). However, this conception of a hierarchy between the theme and physicality is not the case in the work of all artists and/or companies creating per-

formance in this area. Cathy Turner, in her discussion of Mike Pearson's work, states that "archaeology is posited as performative (an enactment of the past in the present) and site-specific performance is viewed as an archaeological investigation of place" (ibid 376). Note here that archaeology, which brings with it the narratives of human history, is viewed as integral to the creation of site-specific performance.

In developing *CauseWay,* the creative team and myself eschewed the hierarchy between the thematic and the physical that Wilkie has highlighted. By implementing a sense of equality between these features, the spatial considerations of the RBBM were interpreted within a feminist model, applying feminist understandings of gender relations, where "hierarchies have been eliminated", to spatial relations (Ianello xi). The implementation of a non-hierarchical and mobile engagement with space allowed a wider range of features of the RBBM to influence the performance text.

Within the RBBM textual and spoken language, often coded as male (Zerihan 2006), is the main form of communicating historical themes and narratives. My aim of creating site-specific *and* feminist theatre was to take into consideration the forms of communication (language) and thematic concerns (Burns) of the site, but also to offer an alternative viewpoint that foregrounded women's narratives. Furthermore, a non-hierarchical approach was taken with the characters of Ethel and Frances; they were featured equally throughout the work and although they may have had moments of conflict, it was clear that one did not hold power over the other. This was particularly evident towards the end of the work. In the final sections at Burns Cottage, the women fought over whether or not militarism was the right method for women's liberation. Once this

developed into a chase and Frances' arrest, both characters were given an opportunity to address the audience and reflect on how the events unfolded. In this way, no one view was given precedent over the other; the equality of the characters aspired to echo the aims of feminism.

Burns Birthplace Museum. Alloway, Ayrshire. Author's own (14 June 2014).

The performance began as a guided tour that evoked the traditional feeling of the RBBM. The piece then evolved into a feminist, polemic examination of history and of women's rights. Different spaces were used as a marker for new sections of narrative, in this way allowing the spatial and thematic elements of the story to evolve in tandem. Rather than placing more value

on one or the other, both the female history and the physicality of the site were employed to create a non-hierarchical, feminist understanding of the space. The mobility of the work aligned it with current trends in site-specific performance, but also with the feminist cause. Furthermore, the promenade style of the work can be viewed as an allegory of the progression of women's rights; symbolic of how far we have come and how we must still keep our 'legs moving'.

Performing gendered space

Throughout the process of creating *CauseWay,* it became clear that the performance should not be framed as an attack on Robert Burns or the RBBM. The aim is not to detract from what one person has achieved, but rather to highlight other narratives present. The importance of promoting site-based narratives can be understood through Lefebvre's perception of space as "political and ideological … literally filled with ideologies" (31). Lefebvre here outlines that space cannot be viewed as a neutral, purely physical entity; multiple narratives inhabit every space that has been touched by human existence. It follows that our understanding of a space can never be complete until attempts are made to uncover, document and represent the individuals and/or groups that have contributed to its formation.

Presenting an alternative, feminist narrative of Parker and Moorhead would be an attempt to create a deeper, fuller understanding of the RBBM and of Alloway. As expressed by Parker and Moorhead in *CauseWay:*

ETHEL

So, you see, it's not about attacking his legacy or his works, it's about attacking the people who steal them and use them for oppression.

FRANCES

You know, I read once that he had a stoop in his back because of all the manual labour he did at this cottage. He probably hated the bloody place! Mind you, that obviously didn't affect his ability as a womaniser.

ETHEL

But it's not about that…it's not about how he treated women or anything like that - it's not about him at all. It's about them … and what they've used him for.

FRANCES

It's about them, and it's about us.

The aim was to celebrate that there is more than one story that the space has to tell. Offering new interpretations of heritage sites is essential, as Laurajane Smith puts it:

> Competing or alternative discourses about both 'gender' and 'heritage' will construct different ways of understanding the realities of social practices structured by gender relations, and will give different and competing values and meanings to the historical and contemporary validity of gender identities. (161)

Therefore, the act of challenging hegemonic representations of heritage has the potential to bring about a greater change within how we perceive not only the heritage site itself but also our (gendered) identity in relation to it. In order to promote an egal-

itarian understanding of heritage sites, the multiplicity of narratives present must be celebrated. In creating the *CauseWay* script I used songs and quotations from Burns. In one particular scene, audience members were encouraged to join with the performers in singing Burns songs whilst standing in the cottage. This section highlighted the similarities in the politics of Burns (a vocal socialist) and the women's suffrage movement and underlined the assertion that these stories can co-exist rather than compete.

Furthermore, the performance worked against a notion of the heritage site as a static, "sacred space" and offered possibilities of how such spaces can be constantly reconfigured (Marstine 9). Much performance work that takes place in heritage sites represents populist narratives. However, the potential for challenging hegemonic narratives in heritage sites through performance practice, whilst under-researched, is not without precedent[3]. In this vein, the primary aim of *CauseWay* was to reinterpret the site and to offer a renewed understanding of the space. The piece engaged the audience and the RBBM site directly in feminist politics by foregrounding the suffragette story. It encouraged the audience to question, as one spectator put it, " what can make a difference, what is legitimate protest, how to achieve social change" (Fremantle). As a playwright, it was important that the challenge to patriarchal social structures was present in the work in order to underline its feminist principles.

The formational nature of the relationship between space and gender leads to the necessity for challenge in spaces where women are underrepresented. As discussed in *CauseWay*, an example of "straightforward exclusion" is the institution of Burns Suppers that happen annually in Scotland and across the Scottish diaspora (Massey 179). Although, for the most part, these events are open to men and women, they are traditional-

3 See Smith, 2013.

ly (and many continue to be) exclusively male. This is a literal example of a gendered space and events where women are now permitted are affected by this legacy - for example, there is only one point in the evening set aside to be delivered by women ('the reply from the lassies'). In the aforementioned Burns cottage section of *CauseWay,* Ethel points out this exclusion.

That there has to be a specific point set aside for women at a Burns supper also emphasises the notion of woman as "Other" famously posited by Simone de Beauvoir. At these dinners, as in de Beauvoir's text, women exist to complement the existence of men, rather than as active agents in their own narrative (16). While developing *CauseWay,* I found that the notion of 'otherness', of sexual segregation, could be highlighted whilst also inviting collusion. Performers would travel on bicycles, accentuating their separation from the audience, yet they invited the audience on their journey. They would burst into song, alienating the audience, whilst once again asking them to join in and sing Burns songs that would be familiar to many in the audience. As the performers moved through the RBBM they continually drew attention to their 'otherness' as women and as historical figures, but they also managed to bring the audience with them. By integrating de Beauvoir's concept into the performance text, *CauseWay* called attention to difference while simultaneously offering the audience a way in. The message proffered was that an audience can join in with creating a new, feminist understanding of a heritage site by accepting the invitation.

In the creation of *CauseWay* I found that subtle hints at such cultural misogyny, like noting Burns Suppers, was more fitting within the somewhat gentle, bucolic nature of the space. In order for such audiences to be amenable to questioning the site and the gender issues within it, they should feel comfort-

able with what Jackson calls the "rules of the 'game'" (14), rather than being continually tested and tricked as is the case with some more provocative and antagonistic contemporary performance (see, for example, recent works by Ann Liv Young and Ontroerend Goed). Therefore, the text of *CauseWay* developed in such a way that allowed the audience to feel safe in the first instance. The guided tour style of the beginning was used to engender a feeling of security; this was a form that most tourists would be familiar with. The performers addressed the audience directly and explained that they were going to tell them a story, before transforming into the characters. The ultimate aim of the work was to offer an alternative to traditional views of women in heritage and to unsettle the site through "the disruptive presence of performance" (Pearson 2). Therefore, while the opening sections of the work took the needs of the heritage audience into consideration, the performance moved towards a more radical, defiant tone in Moorhead and Parker's final monologues, after building the audience's trust. In this way, *CauseWay* began within the 'rules' of the RBBM before gradually building to an engagement with more polemic strands of feminist theory.

Parker's courthouse speech, which was placed at the end of *CauseWay,* drew parallels between the oppression felt by women in 1914 and in 2014:

> FRANCES
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> I know that, once the storm has settled, the people of this country will look back and laugh at the idea that women did not deserve the vote. They will mock the perception that women should not work and should simply stay at home minding the baby. They will be horrified that

> victims of domestic violence and assault were blamed for their own misfortune, or simply disbelieved. The people of the future will be unable to comprehend that anyone in civilised society ever thought that a man could simply be naturally better than a woman at anything. Because they will live in a world of equality - where little boys and little girls won't be told from birth that they are to have different roles and different hobbies and like different colours. The people who live a hundred years from now will know that the only way to create oppression and hatred is to force it upon the next generation, and will know better than that. In everything that I do, I believe - no, I know with all my heart that we move towards a world where bigotry and hatred and misogyny will be a thing of the past. And that's why I stand before you today, pleading guilty of my acts in the fight for equality - because, if we do not fight for it, constantly and with every fibre of our being, then we will never achieve it.

Placing this polemic, feminist speech within a heritage site allowed for audience members to consider both the world of the performance and the real world simultaneously. The heritage site's position as a representation of the past existing within the present renders it a somewhat liminal space, defined by Phil Smith as "chora … a notional, intermediary space between existence and becoming" (108). This liminality, in Smith's estimation, allows for a unique interplay between space and performance, where we have the ability to acknowledge and interact

with history, space and our present selves simultaneously. The juxtaposition of site, heritage and feminism within the performance text therefore allowed for reflection upon a multiplicity of gender-based issues.

Conclusion

As is the case throughout the heritage sector, the RBBM presents a gendered interpretation of history and particularly within the exhibitions, relegates the women in Burns' life to the virgin/mother/crone paradigm. While the site does offer talks and presentations that represent other female and male figures within the Burns arena, the use of performance practice with an explicitly political agenda is somewhat lacking. During the performances of *CauseWay* it became clear that heritage site-specific work could be created in a manner that respects the original intention of the space. However, the piece also highlighted the limits of the RBBM and offered an alternative, feminist narrative.

CauseWay was just one example of how creative interventions have the potential to contribute to a more egalitarian understanding of heritage sites by mobilising feminist theory into performance practice. The script and performances of *CauseWay* engaged with site and theory in order to create a work that was feminist and site-specific. The theoretical underpinnings of the work evolved into practice by employing mobility, eschewing various hierarchies and foregrounding women's stories. Furthermore, the liminality of the heritage site was employed to highlight the progress of women's rights over the centuries and the necessity for change to continue. Live performance is ephemeral by its very nature and thus has the "potential" to exist as a force for change, affecting audiences in a more radical and immediate manner, perhaps, than an authorised and carefully crafted row

of information panels (Kershaw 3). The issues surrounding the ephemerality of performance and potential lack of legacy are of course a concern for any practitioner. A potential solution, perhaps, is to integrate heritage performance with more tangible evidence of women's narratives within heritage sites. If creative practice can be scheduled into the quotidian programme of the heritage site, alongside more physical, concrete changes, then the sector can begin to move towards offering a more inclusive interpretation of gender and identity.

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Aspects of Landscape Politics in *KA MOUNTAIN AND GUARDenia TERRACE: a story about a family and some people changing*, by Robert Wilson and the Byrd Hoffman School of Byrds.[1]

By Matthew Bent

Abstract

Theatre director Robert Wilson spent much of the summer of 1972 incarcerated in a Greek jail, sketching mountains. These would form the basis of a performance – the vast *KA MOUNTAIN AND GUARDenia TERRACE* – which took over the land surrounding Shiraz, Iran, for seven days, creating a site of sprawling performance activity on the Haft Tan Mountains. Navigating the inherent difficulties of studying a performance of such scale, my intention in this paper is to acknowledge the aesthetic politics beneath the surface of *KA MOUNTAIN*. Bringing performance theory of the avant-garde into contact with the work of cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove and writing on Iranian land reform, I hope to offer a productive evaluation of the politics of *KA MOUNTAIN*'s landscape aesthetics.

Introduction

This paper will consider one of the most distinctive and

1 This paper builds on a project from my time at Queen Mary, University of London, working under the supervision of Professor Nicholas Ridout. As such, it is only right that I acknowledge his important contribution to this work at the outset.

influential places of avant-garde performance in the late twentieth century: the city of Shiraz in south-west Iran, which between 1967 and 1977 hosted the Shiraz-Persepolis Festival of Arts. Responding to the festival, I will build upon the writing of contemporary theorists of radical (inter)cultural production, considering how their ideas can be brought to bear on a study of performance and place. I will be concentrating on a single work which has a particular piquancy in this historical moment as the project of a contemporary vanguard artist making performance on the land. *KA MOUNTAIN AND GUARDenia TERRACE: a story about a family and some people changing* is famously a work of sprawling size. The performance lasted 168 hours from midnight 2 September until midnight 8 September 1972, spread across the Haft Tan Mountains on the outskirts of Shiraz and in to the city itself. Each day of *KA MOUNTAIN* was bookended by pieces in the morning and evening created for a seated audience in front of a stage which had been erected at the base of the mountains, but the majority of the performance consisted of pieces spread out across a vast area, with activities ranging from solo dances, to silent group 'scenes', to large-scale crowd performances.[2] While there is much to look at in this ambitious

2 Notably, utilising a wholly different 'vanguard' force: the Shah's army. Wilson claims to have got the soldiers chanting 'the dying dinosaurs soar' over and over on the mountainside. (Daftari and Diba 93-95). What with the ubiquitous presence of secret police at Shiraz performances also, this was quite the meeting ground of vanguard forces.

and problematic work, my focus for this paper will be on some of the ways in which Wilson responded to the natural environment in Shiraz and what these can show us about the relationship between performance processes, the commission and creation of certain forms of avant-garde art and the politics of land ownership at this moment in time. I will bring the theories of performance scholar James Harding and cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove into contact with the writing of Mohammad Gholi Majd on land reform to set in motion what I hope will be a productive consideration of the political resonance of Wilson's performance.

Due to the vast spread of *KA MOUNTAIN* over time and space, ensuring that no spectator or performer present would have been able to experience the whole of the piece, the little documentary material and writing on the performance is quite fragmented and sketchy. This presents an issue to any researcher seeking to understand what exactly took place for most of those 168 hours. Arguably, any attempt to understand historical performance events becomes an increasingly difficult task as time takes us away from the experience of *being there* – in that place, at that time, watching the live event. However, I am in agreement with Amelia Jones that while it is important to acknowledge "the specificity of knowledges gained from participating in a live performance situation … this specificity should not be privileged over the specificity of knowledges that develop in relation to the documentary traces of such an event" (12). I am also not convinced that knowing exactly *what happened when* during the performance necessarily

contributes to a greater understanding. Historical distance provides perspective to see the performance in relation to simultaneously occurring, related events. This position is the basis of my analysis here.

Unavoidable within the little documentation which does exist of *KA MOUNTAIN* is the lack of Iranian voices. While there are some widely-available first-hand accounts of those who were there, the most comprehensive English-language source (found in Laurence Shyer's book *Robert Wilson and his Collaborators*) provides testimonies from members of the Byrd School only and not from the many Iranian performers who contributed to the work. Addressing this in my own research, while I may receive backing from Jones on the legitimacy of analysing a performance like *KA MOUNTAIN* from such a historical distance, the lack of sources from Iran provides a methodological issue for this project. Such sources – if they do exist – are for the time being not included.

This said, for the purpose of this paper I would like to consider the relative lack of first-hand sources on the performance as something of an opportunity. The following analysis of the politics of landscape aesthetics in Wilson's practice and consideration of how resonant Wilson's work is with the contemporary issue of land ownership in 1970s Iran demonstrates a critical attention to the historical circumstances and material conditions of the performance event. After reviewing Harding's argument on the centrality of intercultural exchange in avant-garde artistic production, I hope to illustrate how a performance event such as

this, which takes place outside of the theatre on the land and in the streets, becomes not only a series of performance/performative interactions between individuals of different cultures (which, in Harding's terms, defines the avant-garde moment), but a reflection of contemporary geopolitical issues through the political implications of landscape aesthetics. Here, the idea of artistic autonomy – that the work can be considered 'in itself', isolated from historical, socio-economic, (geo)political circumstances – is rejected, in alignment with contemporary studies of radical art which attempt to shine a light on the previously unrecognised politics of such work. My contention that the conditions under which the performance took place are equally important as the (fragmentary) documentary evidence turns a methodological conundrum into a starting point for a re-evaluation of the modes of enquiry in a field of study where a singular event is often considered in isolation for the purpose of critical examination.

Land Reform in Iran

Reading a politics of land ownership in 1970s Iran must include some account of the importance of this issue in the political mainstream at the time. Land reform, a central tenet of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's 'White Revolution', where (in theory) land would be bought by the government from owners who held a large amount and re-distributed amongst peasants and sharecroppers who could then own the land they worked on, produce surpluses, enter the market, etc., was widespread in developing economies under

American influence during the 1960s. Mohammad Gholi Majd suggests that from the perspective of the US government, by empowering peasants and sharecroppers through the "gift" of property "a communist revolution or takeover could be avoided" (123). The idea was presumably that by broadening out access to private property ownership a fortunate new class of rural workers would be relieved from their alienation, earn a profit and favour the Shah for his pioneering role in re-distribution. In reality, with the help of some widespread, low-level corruption, the larger landowners were able to retain many of their prime plots and the new holdings for workers were often of poor quality and barely large enough to sustain a family. With the landowning elite holding onto much of their property, then, the pre-existing "small landowners" of Majd's title lost most from the reforms. Quite aside from the (ultimately failed) theory that land reform would involve buying from a few highly endowed landowners and redistributing to the masses, Majd points to the expropriation of the existing rural petty bourgeoisie who had invested whatever meagre savings they had in land (125). For these landowners the results of the reform would be catastrophic, with the authorities offering disproportionately small sums for land and confiscating it if the owner did not 'sell'. Majd considers this small landowning class as a politically vital sub-group which took to the streets in protest after the arrest of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1963, which is now recognised as an early signal of the coming revolution (148). Seemingly, the notion of a land redistribution process from rich to poor did

not work out in such a way – the Shah's attempt to dampen potential resistance from the rural workers serving to impoverish and activate another section of the population.

This may not seem immediately relevant to the question of performance efficacy, but my contention is that this attempt to change attitudes to property and the market, dulling the influence of the religious leaders, and the establishment of an international festival were all part of a cultural project to re-shape Iranian society and place the European-educated, secular and autocratic Shah at its centre. This is why it is important to acknowledge the contentious nature of land-politics for the discussion of Wilson. While the accounts that Majd gives are a brief example of just the first stage of a much wider process of reform, they serve to display something of the tension surrounding this issue of land ownership in pre-revolution Iran and its association with the troubled and contradictory relations with the United States.

The Avant-Garde and Landscape Aesthetics

In their introduction to the book *Not the Other Avant-Garde*, James Harding and John Rouse utilise the uniquely diverse scope of the "broad spectrum" approach of performance studies to posit a re-theorisation of avant-garde artistic production as a performative phenomenon taking place globally, at meeting points between cultures. Harding's article in the collection builds on the assertion that, due to its subtle "entanglement" with the politics of colonialism at its inception, European avant-garde artistic

expression was always already a global phenomenon (18-19). He sees the seeds of European avant-garde art within the moments of intercultural encounter which inspired artistic "primitivism", rather than, as has become "scholarly convention", to see the avant-garde moment as subsequent to these encounters (23) – presumably in the studio of a Picasso or Gauguin. Harding then lays out the conceptual repercussions of this critical refocus. Firstly: a movement from a concept of the "cutting edge"[3] to the pluralised/pluralist "rough edges" of intercultural encounter, which are considered the foundational moments of avant-garde expression. He then uses the linked concept of globally dispersed, simultaneously occurring radical movements as a primer for his discussion of "transnationalism" at the boundaries of intercultural exchange (27) – that troublesome concept, the "contradictory trajectories" of which in different critical accounts make it just as likely to see the term put to use in examining processes of (neo)colonialist hegemony as to counterhegemonic practices (30-31). Perhaps the most likely instance in which to find the term would be in reference to the homogenising influence of 'transnational corporations' – an association which would certainly resonate with many residents of Tehran in the 1960s and 70s during the rapid proliferation of American

3 "Cutting edge" here both denotes the critical term used to recognise the value of a radical form of cultural expression, and (as in the specific instance cited above) a theoretically heretofore unchallenged notion of gradual European homogenisation – where the "cutting edge" acts as cultural border of influence which expands its reach across the world. (Harding 26)

products in public spaces and in the hands of the capital's secular *nouveau riche* (Axworthy 78-84). Conversely, and through an analysis of Homi Bhabha's notion of cultural hybridity as a form of counterhegemonic transnationalism, Harding returns the reader to points of interpersonal contact between cultures – those rough edges from which avant-garde expression springs – which might, with renewed vigour, be explored as sites of exchange, contestation and mutual resistance to the forces of homogenisation. That is, of course, if it is a concern of the artists involved – the intercultural moment remains precarious because it not only has the potential for counterhegemonic cultural invention, but also because it retains the problematic possibility of subtly extending the reach of homogenising/appropriating neo-colonial forces.

I would like to build upon Harding's work, considering the precarious politics of intercultural encounters in avant-garde production in a site (the Shiraz Arts Festival) created to facilitate such meetings, with a discussion of the intercultural politics of Wilson's practice on the land. I am interested in the way in which Wilson re-formed the landscape and what this may have meant in Iran at this time. The work which most informs my thinking on landscape is Denis Cosgrove's *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*. In a move to acknowledge the idea of landscape as a human, social phenomenon within the field of geography – "a way of seeing the world" (13) – rather than purely as object of empirical enquiry based upon the model of the natural sciences, Cosgrove draws his reader's attention

to "[landscape's] links to broader historical structures and processes" in order to "locate landscape study within a progressive debate about society and culture" (15). It is "a way in which certain classes of people have signified themselves and their world through their imagined relationship with nature" (Cosgrove 15). I would like to place Wilson's work within a genealogy of such historical processes of signification, in an intercultural moment which Harding and Majd's writings help us to understand.

The passage in Cosgrove that is most obviously relevant to my purposes here is his section on the subject of landscape and social formation through an innovation in the history of European painting and the distinction it illuminates between different relationships of land, leisure and work. The technique in question is single-point perspective. Using this device, the artist shapes, orders and invitingly directs the natural world towards the gaze of a viewer (presumably the commissioning patron), standing immediately in front of the painting. The spectator-owner and their peers could gaze into this image of harmony and experience the highly satisfying sensation of propertied ownership. Importantly, they may walk away from and return to the landscape, leisurely, as they please, in a way that the agricultural labourer, bound to the land through necessity, cannot. The landscape aesthetic, as Cosgrove puts it, creates a "control of space in which an illusion of order [can] be sustained" (20). The artist becomes "controlling

creator" (25), shaper of the world for the patron.[4]

It is not so much the device of single-point perspective *per se* which is of interest to me here, though for Wilson this would become an oft-used trope. Of greater relevance is the artist's process of organising and ordering the world within a frame, whether that is the framed canvas, the frame of the proscenium arch stage, or otherwise, and the aestheticised appropriation which comes with this. As early as 1969's *The King of Spain*, Wilson was making work for proscenium arch theatres, using the 'window' of this organisation of spectator-performance relations to define a unidirectional view into his stage pictures.[5] Wilson, it is safe to say, generally adheres to the logic of the 'fourth wall' – that the world of the stage, behind the frame, never 'spills out' into the world of the auditorium – though, of course, his pictures are organised and orientated towards that wall for the benefit of the spectators. These spectators, attending most works directed by Wilson during the 1960s and 70s, were free to get up and leave the auditorium – go for a drink, go for a joint, go home – and come back whenever they pleased during the course of the performance. In

4 John Berger famously makes a similar point in reference to eighteenth-century painter Thomas Gainsborough's *Mr and Mrs Andrews* when discussing the relationship between oil painting and property (106-108).

5 It is also worth remembering Wilson's tendency to designate his stage images as either 'Portrait', 'Landscape' or 'Still Life', as well as the proximity of his vision to the 'landscape' theatre idea of Gertrude Stein. Even within the proscenium arch auditorium, references to the natural world are never far away.

short, the framing of the work and the conditions of spectatorship are comparable to that of the landscape painting as described by Cosgrove, where the features of the scene are composed in a way most appealing to the onlooker, who may come and go at their leisure. In each instance, the artist imbues the spectator with a sense of ownership over their experience – and thus over the land – through their invitation to look (or not) from the privileged position given to them.[6] Cosgrove sees the cultural distinction between those for whom the landscape is a leisure experience and those for whom it is a site of labour. While across Iran the dispossessed and forgotten of the reform period were becoming more dependent on diminishing returns from their labour on the land, in *KA MOUNTAIN* Wilson created a 24-hour avant-garde leisure experience, where the land was given over to the curious festivalgoer to explore under his guidance.

For the 1972 Shiraz Festival, Wilson had initially been invited to present *Deafman Glance* (1970) – the work seen by Shahbanu Pahlavi in Paris the previous year – but

6 It seems to me to be more appropriate to compare Wilson's work to that of landscape painters, rather than to his contemporaries in the 'land' or 'earth art' movement. Wilson's focus on classical composition and his near-exclusive use of the proscenium arch stage makes the comparison to Renaissance painters seem more pertinent. A particularly opportune example to support this theory came in late 2013/early 2014, when some of Wilson's 'video portraits' were on display amongst the collection of European paintings at the Musée du Louvre, Paris.

he declined due to the lack of a proscenium arch theatre.[7] So, in lieu of a traditional western theatre space with its in-built picture frame, Wilson created his own 'frames' on the mountain at Shiraz through which to compose, shape and order the landscape. By this time Wilson was already using a distinctive framing device usually associated with television or cinema to create the imagery for his theatre. I am referring to Wilson's 'storyboard' process, where he sketches out the images which will form the basis of a performance in the way a filmmaker might sketch out scenes to be shot (Shevtsova 47). During his untimely incarceration for possession of pot in Greece, just weeks before the Byrds were due to meet in Iran to rehearse, Wilson was storyboarding and sketching images for *KA MOUNTAIN* which would be realised on the mountains. It is within the frame of these storyboard images that Wilson organises his stage space – and, in the context of Shiraz, the Iranian landscape. In terms of shaping the landscape to control space and direct the spectator, Wilson explains how he constructed a series of "roadmap[s] for the mountain" (Daftari and Diba 95). These came in many forms: as rows of houses, flamingos, fish, the footsteps of dinosaurs and signposts

7 Ironically, the Byrds did end up performing *Deafman* after all. The lack of rehearsal time seemingly resulted in a mass re-rehearsal of old material to fill the first of those 168 hours – *Deafman Glance* was performed in its entirety on the first night of *KA MOUNTAIN*. See: Robert Wilson, 'KA MOUNTAIN AND GUARDenia TERRACE: a story about a family and some people changing, a 168-Hour Play for the 1972 Festival of Shiraz' (Daftari and Diba 93-95) and see also (Shyer 47).

which created pathways for the spectator to follow. Wilson, with characteristically surreal symbols, reordered the world in his image for the pleasure of the spectator – less an intercultural moment of exchange, more an individual artist mapping out coordinates for marking his project onto the terrain.

The shaping and ordering of the space within an artistic frame and the relaxed 'come and go' mode of spectatorship form a clear genealogical link to the proprietary aesthetics of European landscape painting. While the tenets of the vanguard milieu Harding describes are clear to see in Shiraz, the Wilson project reveals an association between land and leisure (via the avant-garde trope of 'blurring art and life') which chimes with recent attempts to change cultural attitudes to land within Iran. The Shah's move to expand and capture a small-capitalist land-owning class, designed to placate and pre-emptively dampen support for a potential democratic uprising, would seek to relieve workers of their heavy labour and turn them in to traders and employers. The Shiraz project, and Wilson's *KA MOUNTAIN*, transformed the city and the land into a site of avant-garde art-life leisure – albeit one underscored by the threat of SAVAK surveillance and censorship. Considering the work within the broader cultural changes being instigated in Iran at the time, the important relationship between aesthetics and land ownership emerges. The neo-colonial influence leveraging land reform aimed at producing stability for the Shah's autocracy by expanding a bourgeois base of comfortable landowners. This formed part of the

policy of cultural transformation which also involved the invitation of global vanguard artists to take over the city of Shiraz as a site of artistic experimentation. Wilson's work, with its ancestral links to the aesthetics of private property exercised by landscape painters, emanates a cultural logic of owning, shaping and controlling the land which echoes the intentions (if not the actual results) of the reforms. So while the festival at Shiraz created the possibility for transnational forms of resistance to homogenisation – the interpersonal connections formed at the 'rough edges' of vanguard creation – a critical reflection upon the circumstances surrounding the policy and how these relate to the artistic strategies and spectatorship model of *KA MOUNTAIN*, displays the troublesome nature of the symbolic terrain on which this performance took place.

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Trace: *100: The Day our World Changed*

By Elizabeth Bennett

Abstract

On August 3rd 2014, I attended a performance of WildWorks' *100: The Day our World Changed*, a continuous theatrical event from dawn till dusk, travelling from the harbour of Cornish town Mevagissey to the nearby Lost Gardens of Heligan. The Treymayne family have owned the Heligan Estate for over 400 years, providing employment in various forms to the surrounding three parishes of Mevagissey, St Ewe and Gorran. Due to storm damage and decades of inattention, the gardens were discovered in a derelict state in 1990, when John Nelson and Tim Smit led a groundbreaking restoration project. The Lost Gardens of Heligan now welcomes 200,000 visitors a year. Nelson and Smit made a vital discovery within days of their initial explorations – the old gardeners' toilet (Thunderbox Room) – where the pencilled names of past staff on the wall caught their imagination and respect. In August 1914, twenty-three outdoor staff were recorded in the labour books; by 1917 there were just eight. This performance grew from a desire by the Heligan Estate to: "honour and commemorate not just the Lost Gardeners from the Heligan Estate but all the people and the families locally whose world was changed in August 1914" (WildWorks, *Programme*).

Using field notes, snatched impressions, visceral responses from embodied memory, and subsequent access to the performance script to clarify my scribbled sentences, this paper aims to trace what has remained with me. This piece of creative remembering is influenced by, and inflected with, my thesis research into landscape processes of biography, affect,

presence and absence. My tracing is presented as a first person narrative, in order to chart the different registers of landscape that this piece created within me. In doing so, this work navigates the tricky waters that Nicola Shaughnessey identifies as "the difficulties of writing about a medium as elusive as performance and of negotiating the absence and presence of events which have happened but which remain as memory and cannot be recovered" (xiv)

Trace: *verb,*
Find or discover by investigation
Take (a particular path or route)
Give an outline
[…]

Trace: *noun*
A mark, object, or other indication of the existence or passing of something
[...] (Oxford English Dictionary)

"They say we all die twice. The first time when our body dies and the second time when people stop saying our names and stop telling the stories of the things we did in our lives". (Bill Mitchell [WildWorks, *100: The Day Our World Changed*])

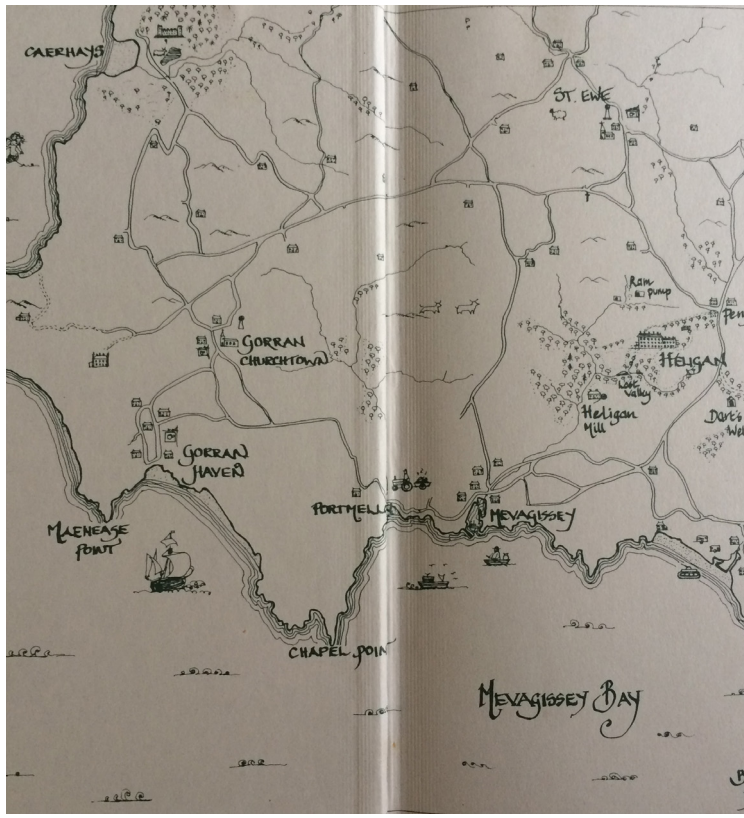

Figure 1: ***End Paper Map: The Lost Gardens of Heligan Map.*** **From S. Pring (London, 1997).**

I remember this.

Sunday, 3 August, 7am Mevagissey War Memorial. I'm here to hear the fallen called. The intoned names reverberate around the still early morning, echoing the departed already woken in the parishes of St Ewe and Gorran.

The Lost Men of Mevagissey:

Reginald Vernon BARBER, 24. He loved to sail on bright mornings with stiff breezes.

John George BARRON, 21. He was a fisherman. Born within days of Michael Burns, a farm boy from Gorran. They took their final journey together at the Somme.
Roy Oliver BARRON, 21. He had nimble fingers and worked making nets when he was just 14.
Alfred Dunn BEHENNAH, 20. He was an only son. His father had hopes they would one day be fishermen together.
Arthur BURT, 28. He loved to dig the earth and keep it well tended. He died with his friend Samson Hunkin, from Mevagissey.
John CARNE, 29. He was small, and wiry, and knew how to cut stone, and build houses.
Arthur Lindsay Maury CHURCHILL, 52. He was a doctor. A healer.
Walter CLOKE, 22. He knew his way on the water and how to sail close to the wind.
Thomas Henry DONNITHORNE, 20. He was a carefree young boy, looking for adventure. Adored by his mother and sisters. The women of his family visit his grave to this day.
William DUNN, 25. He was born by the water and could handline from the harbour wall before the age of five.
Charles DYER, 35. He was lost, then he was found.
William Coombe FOARD, 38. The thing he missed the most was going out to sea on a bright spring's morning.
Raymond FRAZIER, 27. He was four the year electricity came to Mevagissey. He became an electrician.
Charles HOCKING, 36. His mother, Maria, had already lost a husband. (Kemp 4-6)

During the early morning pause, I sit next to a man on a bench at the harbour wall. Already the sun has a delirious heat to it, the coast provides a welcome wind and bouncing up from the waves comes a reflection of the cloudless sky, dressed in the costume of the past: "Sunday 2nd August 1915 … the call up of the Naval Reservists in Mevagissey, a blisteringly hot morning with many out early, yachting" (WildWorks, Programme). We talk about the weather. We talk about the First

war. We talk about his service in the Second. We talk about the harbour. He explains that when he enlisted he was asked about where he would prefer to be deployed; he chose the water. He produces a photograph from his wallet, the only one in there. He hands it to me; I study the black and white image of boats approaching land. They are landing at Malay. I hold it up to the light; the Cornish sea of the present provides a frame for a far away sea, long ago. A life seen in water. "Apart from that break, I've looked at this harbour for 90 years, and I've never got tired of it."

A few hours later, walking back from the church, I am caught up in the marching band of The Lost Boys parading the streets. Mevagissey has taken on the air of a carnival. I ruthlessly ditch the congregation and I duck and dive to try to get up onto a doorstep for a vantage point to see the approaching band. My impressions of this town are formed in part by summers spent further down the Roseland Coast as a child, reading Susan Cooper's *Over Sea Under Stone* (1973) and *Greenwitch* (1974), both set in the a fictional town Trewissick, based upon Mevagissey. I have the former book in my bag and am reminded of a passage I read last night in my tent:

> Satisfied, Barney went off to see the carnival. He followed the last of the crowd still drifting up the road, Even down in the sheltered harbour the wind was blowing in from the sea, but now and again it dropped for a moment, and Barney heard a tantalising snatch of music wafting over the roofs from somewhere in the village […] He made one or two false turns losing the sound. Then gradually the band grew louder, and with it he began to hear the hum of voices, and the rasping shuffle of feet […] and then suddenly the noise burst in

> on him, and he was out of the muffling narrow street and among the crowds, out in the sunshine filling a broad road where the procession danced by. (135)

Figure 2: The Lost Boys Band. WildWorks, *100: The Day our World Changed*. Mevagissey, Cornwall. R. Philpot (2014).

We follow them along the streets to the harbour. A total transformation, the quay is lined with people, materialising what I had heard narrated in church about how the villagers had

turned out in full to wish the men farewell after the news of war was announced and they were called upon to fulfil the duty of their enlistment. Here, in the harbour, our storytellers are Mary, a young laundress at Heligan House and Percy, an apprentice gardener at the Heligan estate. They have arrived to watch the action, both shadowing their younger selves, voices from the past.

Figure. 3: Percy and Mary. WildWorks, *100: The Day our World Changed*. Mevagissey, Cornwall. R. Philpot (2014).

Mary: It's that day again.
Percy: You looked some pretty, Mary King.
Mary: And look at my Jack. He was some handsome…
Percy: Yes, it's that day again. (Kemp 11)

A motorcyclist arrives with news from the continent, six thousand people raise their arms in unison to shield their eyes from the sun and watch his progress down the hill. Elbows swooping down together in a piece of spontaneous crowd choreography.

Squire Tremayne: We have faith it will be a short campaign.
Mayor: It will all be over by Christmas.
Men of Mevagissey go to your homes and say your good byes. Meet back here inan hour with your bags packed and we will all give you a proper Mevagissey farewell! (Kemp 9-11)

From a boat, the ghost of Mary watches her younger self. With a look, a sweeping narrative is fixed in a fleeting moment somewhere between 1914 and 2014. Somewhere between Mevagissey's waters and the pools in Mary's eyes. Solicitations swim through to me in the crowd: "Are you fit and under thirty?" "Women recruit at least one man", in addition to other forms of recollection: "This is the spot where I had the worst seagull shit on me of my entire life". Enlistment haircuts. Medicals. Boatmen arrive back and catch the news. Some depart swiftly, some move to settle affairs before they take their leave.

Figure. 5: The Men Depart. WildWorks, *100: The Day our World Changed*. Mevagissey, Cornwall. R. Philpot (2014).

We process to The Lost Gardens of Heligan, walking the paths of all those who have peregrinated here, carrying out an act of remembrance with our soles. On entering the Lost Gardens the funnelled flow has dispersed. Lacking the direction of a pilgrimage, the bodies relax into a recreational mode and the audience meander around on their chosen path of interest, creating spontaneous curves that people the design of Sue Hill's map. I head first to give my greetings to the Mud Maid in her

gloaming slumber, a spot that still breathes an air of suspension, a garden waiting to be woken from an enchanted sleep and resting from injuries. Here, there is still a vestige of the "unearthly silence" and "deep, brooding melancholy" that struck its rescuers (Smit 21) From there I head off to send another missive in the hut containing postcards to add to the field of the lost; an installation of white flags created by WildWorks as a space of collective remembering. I pass my postcard up to the wire where others have placed their absence. It hovers just in front of a window where the scope of vision soars down to the installation. My message is framed against the blank waves of the missing.

Figure 5: *100 Map* (WildWorks, 2014)

5pm. We gather in Flora' Green by the Edwardian bandstand. It is the local chapel, the girls are singing, the news has spread through the village and the men have been called up, they have come to say goodbye. I have spent the last hour pottering

through the greenhouses, enormous cabbages remembered from my youth, and transient scents of tomatoes and eucalyptus, punctuated by memorials filled with research sparked by the love affair of *les petits riens* found by the restorers: "My eye was drawn to something hanging on the wall: a small pair of rusty scissors, how long had they been there? Who did they belong to? What was their story? What had happened here?" (Smit 26)

A Dedication written on a slate in a greenhouse:

> **Charles Ball.** Born in Gorran Haven, 1876. Died in France, April 1918.
> Remembered on the Gorran war memorial. Charles was known as a gentle giant, with a lovely singing voice. He wrote to his wife shortly before he died that he would like to sing one more time with her in the Chapel on a Sunday morning. (Heligan Estate)

In Flora's Green, the Choir are singing:

> Brightly beams our Father's mercy
> From his lighthouse ever more
> But to us he gives the keeping
> Of the lights along the shore.
>
> Let the lower lights be burning
> Send a gleam across the wave
> Some poor fainting, struggling seaman
> You may rescue, you may save.
>
> Dark the night of sin has settled
> Loud the angry billows roar

> Eager eyes are watching, longing, ,,,
> For the lights along the shore.
>
> Trim your feeble lamp, my brother
> Some poor sailor, tempest tossed
> Trying now to make the harbour
> In the darkness may be lost. (Philip P. Bliss, "Let The Lower Lights Be Burning" [WildWorks, Songs 3])
>
> **Mary:** Percy, would you take me to see what happened next? (Kemp 25)

The men marching to war infiltrate the crowd. We proceed behind them through the gardens. The progress is slow; six thousand people don't move anywhere fast. I think about the monotony of marching, the dead, wasted thoughts, that take place as you troop.

We are led to a field where the women and the children of the village quietly work the land. Their movements are repetitive and physically demanding. A horse and plough move along the field behind them.

Dispatches to the Front:

> "I wish I could put the song of the larks into this letter, as I hear them now, and the heat of the sun". (Kemp 27-28)

I turn as the soldiers pass through us once more, this time they are walking into combat. We are not at the front, these are not ghosts; we are in the minds of the women in front of us, anxious for news and fearing the worst. We are in their

imaginations, but we also know the story.

Dispatches from the Front:

> "The shells fell like rain"
> "It is futile to tell you how much I love you"
> "You are my star on these trench nights" (Kemp 29-30)

Explosions in the bushes at the bottom of the slope, the men advance towards them and disappear.

Silence.

Fig. 6. *The Men Advance* (2014) WildWorks, *100: The Day our World Changed*. Mevagissey, Cornwall. R. Philpot (2014).

The smoke coasts away, dissolving. Traces of memory, the feelings and thoughts of the men, blowing here to these fields to rest.

"Today I have a strong sense that I shall never see

Cornwall again." (Kemp 30)

White stretchers appear from the other side of the bushes, shouldered up the field by nurses. The white flags of remembrance, in the field of loss, shiver. Some of the men are laid down to be treated; many are borne away to their graves. The village women dig the earth with their hands to sow, as the men are returned to it.

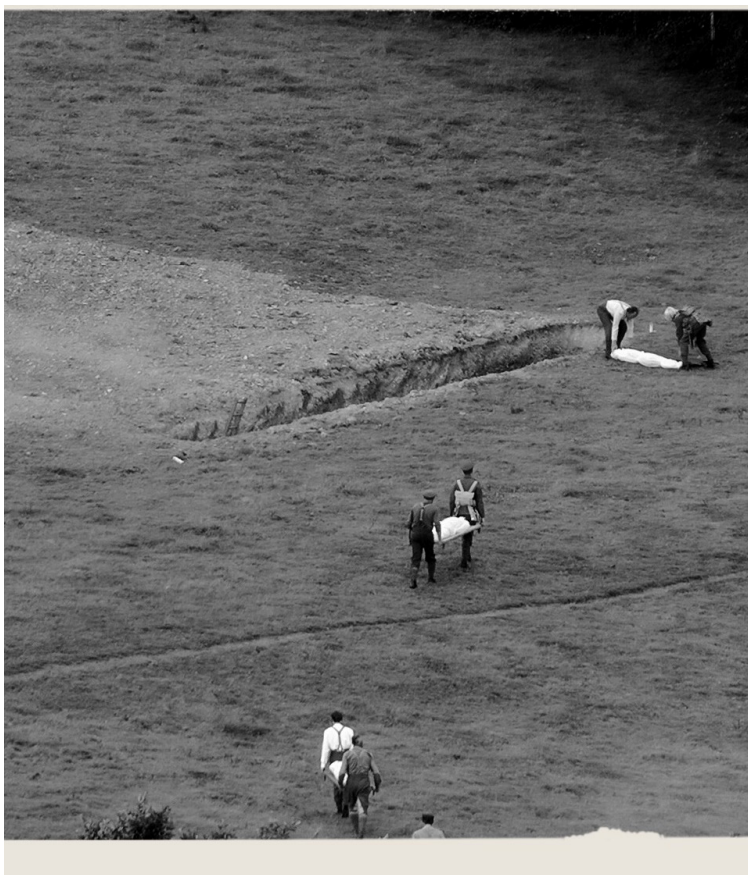

Figure. 7: The Men are Borne Away. WildWorks, *100: The Day our World Changed*. Mevagissey, Cornwall. R. Philpot (2014).

The women and children set down their tools, gather up their baskets and walk towards the poppies. We accompany them, but many continue to look back over our shoulders at the white stretchers in the distance. No-one speaks, no camera phones, no notes, no audience, just a sudden painful awareness of the erasure of lives 100 years ago and the wounds that run deep into the pasture before us.

Village children fold sheets in the poppy fields as we gather around the edges, they have been around the gardens all day, playing games with the sheets, washing them in laundry bowls, stopping occasionally to flick water at each other. The endless folding speaks to the tedium of life left for the women. I picture again the girls wringing out the sheets and the words of the vicar that morning: "They did not leave perfect lives, they left loved ones yes, but not just through duty, they left for the hope of a better future, for the income of infantry, for the prospect of adventure away from a life of service and labour". (*Remembrance Service*).

6pm, 3 August 2014. The names of the fallen are called. Re-sounding.
Frederick HUNKIN, 29. He died with his friend George Moore from Mevagissey.
Samson HUNKIN, 24. He died with his friend Arthur Burt, from Mevagissey.
William Samuel HUNKIN, 22. He was the first to die. He was a long way from home, in far away Africa.
James KELLY, 41. He was older, an experienced man of the sea. He was the last to die.
George MARSHALL, 25. A brave seaman. Went down with his ship together with his friend William Patten from Gorran.
Alfred Horace MARTINDALE, 28. He just wanted to see the world.
Frank MATTA, 27. He loved his young wife. He wanted to keep

her safe.
George MOORE, 21. His young wife found love again, but never forgot him.
Frank PEARCE, 20. His father would always remember him as a young boy running like the wind down Cliff Hill to greet him after work.
William Henry ROBINS, 58. All the boys on ship looked upon him as a father. They all went down together in the Aegean sea.
James Leonard THOMAS, 26. A fishhawker. He loved shouting the catch of the day to all the ladies.
Albert TOWNER, Age unknown. With his friend Frederick Doddridge from St Ewe he joined the thousands of lost sailors in the Hellespont.
Thomas VERCOE, 40. He loved to walk from Portmellon to Mevagissey on a Sunday morning.
Samuel WARREN, 20. He was one of seven siblings. A hard working boy who helped his family.
Alfred WILLIAMS, 48. Remembered as a 'late gardener'.
Perhaps this means he did it out of love. (Kemp 4 -6)

As their names are called the men arise from the poppy field and walk peacefully away into the distance. Unaware that the men had been lying in undergrowth, I watch them grow like poppies from the fields where they had worked, from the fields where they had lived, from the fields where they had loved. Men whose labour seeded the land and whose stories seeded this show. The notes of the last post go with them towards the sea.

Fractions of the audience gather at the bar post-show, I grab myself a drink and a hay bale and try to eavesdrop on nearby conversations. My eye is caught by motion in the periphery.

I can still see the men walking into the horizon.

Figures. 8, 9, 10. The Poppy Field, The Poppy Field and Field of Loss, The Poppy Field and The Sea. WildWorks, *100: The Day our World Changed*. Mevagissey, Cornwall. R. Philpot (2014).

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Book Reviews

Royal Court: International by Elaine Aston and Mark O'Thomas

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, 229 pp. (hardback)
By Nicholas Holden

It is 1996. In football, England plays host to the European Championships. In the charts, Take That disband and the Spice Girls begin their rise to superstardom and in politics the last full year of Conservative government of the twentieth century is underway as Tony Blair's 'New' Labour storm to victory in the 1997 election. Meanwhile, at the Royal Court, 1996 sees the founding of the theatre's International Department by Artistic Director Stephen Daldry.

Headed by Elyse Dodgson, who remains in the role today, the Court's International Department sought to facilitate ways in which the theatre could engage with new writing beyond national borders. With the department's twentieth anniversary on the horizon, Elaine Aston and Mark O'Thomas have provided "an overarching view of and critical engagement with" (2) the international work of the Royal Court.

The history of the Royal Court Theatre is well documented. But often in these accounts, strands of the theatre's work, such as its international agenda, are left relatively unexplored and this is where Aston and O'Thomas' publication is both of value and necessary within scholarship that concerns the Court. Indeed the first chapter of *Royal Court: International* seeks to explore the theatre's history through an "international lens" (3) and offers an insight into how international policy has been present, to varying extents, within each Artistic Direc-

tor's vision since 1956. The history is supported by a contextual frame, which continues throughout much of the book, that places the international work of the Court at the forefront of an illuminating social, political and economic backdrop that takes into account events on a global scale.

Chapter Two deals more explicitly with the workshops and residencies that have initiated connections between the International Department and playwrights from across the world. While the residencies take place in the Court's Sloane Square home in London, the workshops have extended much further afield to countries such as Uganda, Cuba, Brazil, Russia, India and much of Europe, demonstrating the truly international reach of the department. The chapter goes on to trace the path that a select few playwrights (who have participated in the workshops and residencies) have taken towards productions on the Royal Court stage, although, as the authors point out, the success of the International Department should not be measured in terms of how often the work has featured in the Court's programming. Among the writers who have seen their plays receive full productions are Marius Von Mayenburg, Marcus Barbosa and Anupama Chandrasekhar. And it is these three playwrights, along with British writer Mark Ravenhill, who feature as part of the book's central chapter entitled 'Conversations'. Conducted by Aston and O'Thomas, 'Conversations' presents a series of seven interviews with not only playwrights but also directors Indhu Rubasingham and Dominic Cooke, as well as translator Sasha Dugdale. Each practitioner offers vital individual accounts of the international activities of the Royal Court. With insights from Von Mayenburg (Germany), Barbosa (Brazil) and Chandrasekhar (India), along with Rubasingham, Cooke and Dugdale, these interviews illustrate the range of na-

tionalities and roles that have both contributed to and benefitted from the Court's international work, which in turn creates a rounded and personal portrayal of life within the Royal Court.

In a theatre that was once synonymous with British realism, the penultimate chapter of the book considers the reception by audiences and critics to the presentation of international work on the Royal Court stage. Throughout this chapter, the authors discuss plays from across continents, charting the international plays produced at the Royal Court since the inaugural international season in 1997 and analysing these works alongside critical responses to the productions. The negative connotations that can arise out of 'cosmopolitan curiosity' (128) and them/us binaries are explored and an approach to the work more akin to anthropology whereby audiences are invited "inside" cultures to question "not just who 'they' are, but who 'we' are" (128) is revealed as a common objective within much of the Court's international canon.

The final chapter takes us out of London and into the rest of the world once more as the authors look to measure the impact and legacy of the Royal Court's International Department within the countries with which it has partnered throughout its history. Often working in countries where new writing and the text-based model of playmaking is not the dominant theatrical culture, the authors consider issues of sustainability and debate the criticism surrounding the Royal Court's international practices as it looks beyond borders to "break down the walls of cultural misunderstanding, misconception, or misrecognition" (184).

Royal Court: International provides the first study of its kind into the work of the International Department at the Royal Court Theatre. The history provided early on in the book offers a new perspective on the theatre's well-documented life, which

is successfully supported by thorough investigations of the International Department's activities and objectives, a wide range of case studies and insightful interviews in the chapters that follow. In a book that cites countries, participants and facilitators in abundance, one figure remains constant: Elyse Dodgson has been integral to the international work of the Royal Court and indeed the book readily acknowledges her contribution both in the form of a foreword penned by Dodgson and subsequently in first and third person accounts throughout. The authors themselves express a hope that their work will initiate further studies on this topic in the future and their 'Conversations' chapter in particular will not only act as a superb resource for future research, but should spark additional scholarship on the international work of the theatre. The scope of the Court's international work is evident from the useful timeline at the end of the publication and it is this that perhaps best illustrates the significant challenge that the authors undertook in documenting this area. This publication will be accessible to scholars, students and enthusiasts of theatre alike.