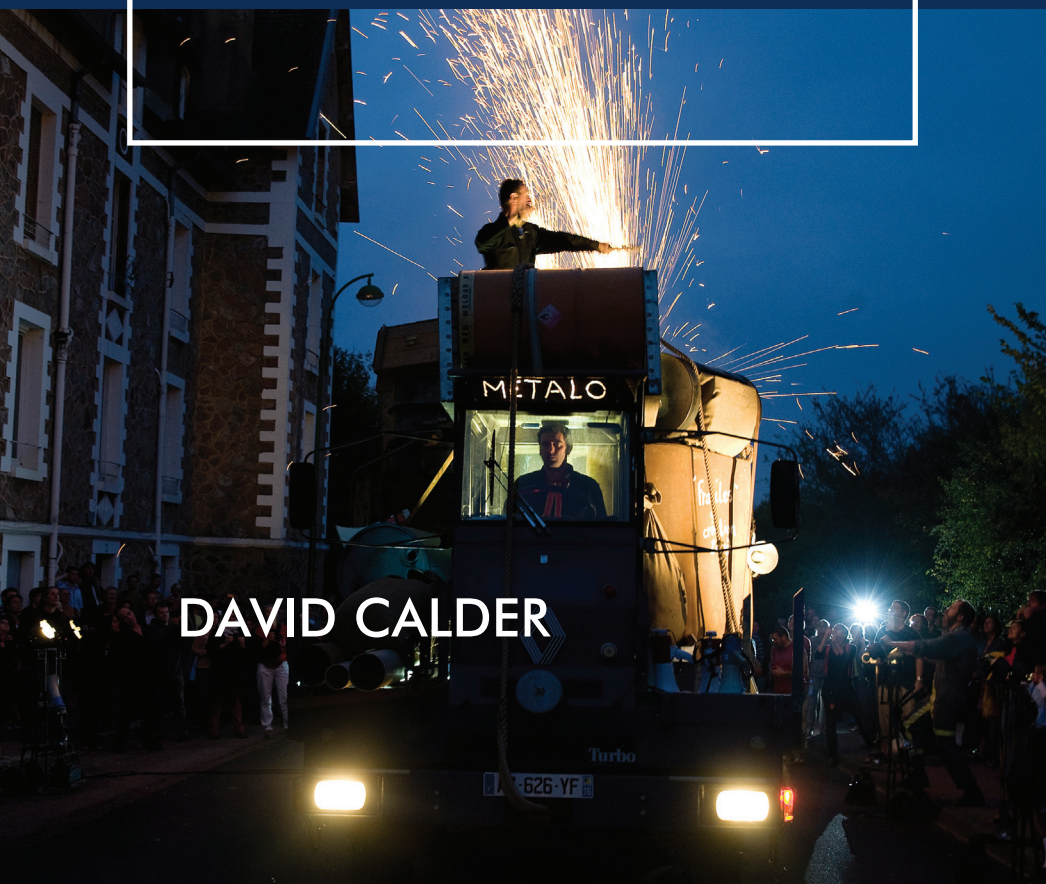# Street theatre and the production of postindustrial space

Working memories

DAVID CALDER

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ideas take shape through dialogue, and even I can only talk to myself for so long. This book exists thanks to the insights of numerous interlocutors and the support of so many people it has been my privilege to know.

First and foremost, special thanks to two research mentors, role models, and advocates, Tracy C. Davis and Maggie Gale, who believed in this project and in me at a time when I believed in neither. This is a book about the imagination of an endpoint, of a process completed, of a project achieved. They saw it before I did.

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Many of the conversations that spurred the development of this book took place at meetings of the American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR), the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA), the Summer Institute in Cologne, and the Inside/Outside Europe research network. Some of those conversations were about the research,

Introduction: working memory

Sauver l'usine, c'est sauver la mémoire ouvrière de ce quartier, se rappeler que ce quartier est un quartier ouvrier, que ce n'est pas rien, que les ouvriers existent, sont encore là, même si on voudrait parfois nous faire croire qu'ils ont disparu. […] Quoi faire de cette histoire pour ceux qui sont là, aujourd'hui, que cela leur serve, qu'ils puissent s'appuyer dessus?

To save the factory is to save the working-class memory of this neighbourhood, to recall that this neighbourhood is a working-class neighbourhood, that it isn't nothing, that the workers exist, are still here, even if at times one would like to make us believe that they have disappeared. […] What to make of this history for those who are here, today, that it might serve them, give them something to lean on?

Stéphane Bonnard[1]

It could be so many factories, so many neighbourhoods. But 'this neighbourhood' is the Carré de Soie (Silk Square), a rough patchwork of industrial sites and workers' housing in the eastern suburbs of Lyon, stitched together over the course of the twentieth century as high-polluting artificial textile manufacture replaced the artisanal silk weaving of Lyon's northern slope. The Carré de Soie straddles the communes of Villeurbanne and Vaulx-en-Velin; its coherence as a neighbourhood is a matter of debate. Its name is an exercise in rebranding, a euphemism assigned by developers well after the closure

of Textile Artificielle Sud-Est (South-East Artificial Textile, or TASE), the rayon factory that was once the area's largest employer. 'To save the factory' is to save what remains of the derelict factory's architecture, much of which the wrecking ball had already reduced to rubble before a successful lobbying effort by locals and preservationists to designate the building a heritage site.

Stéphane Bonnard is not (primarily) a heritage preservationist. He is, with Pierre Duforeau, co-artistic director of street theatre company KompleXKapharnaüM. Since its founding in 1995, KompleXKapharnaüM has worked out of a former metal parts factory in what is now the Carré de Soie. KompleXKapharnaüM creates site-specific, multimedia performances that engage local memory, industrial and working-class heritage, and urban and economic change. Bonnard's reflection on the preservation of the TASE factory reveals much about the stakes of his company's work, the tensions inherent in deindustrialization and redevelopment, and the issues that will recur throughout this book.

Bonnard conveys urgency, even danger. The task at hand is not to preserve a corpse but to save a life, or rather a living connection between present and past congealed for the moment in the fragile structure of the factory itself. This temporal link establishes local identity that might persist despite socioeconomic upheaval. For Bonnard, to save the factory is not to recall that this *was* a working-class neighbourhood, but that it still *is* one. The original French dispenses with 'class' by making 'worker' into an adjective: at stake is worker memory in a worker neighbourhood. Bonnard identifies a group called 'the workers' and positions himself outside of it. *They* are still around, even if a separate, more shadowy 'they' – *on*, the French language's neutral, third-person singular, rendered here as 'one' – would prefer that we – and who are we? – not think of them, or think of them as cleanly, confidently gone. The continued existence of this group, the workers, complicates neat narratives of transition. Bonnard then shifts from memory, the reconstruction of the past in and for the present, to history, both the actual past and the stories we make of it. He asks how this history might be interpreted (what to make of it?) and moulded (what to make of it?) to serve the present needs of those who are 'here,' a group that for Bonnard includes the workers but might also include their families, new arrivals, even tourists. This group relies on that history as a source of stability even as the group shapes and reshapes it, thereby revealing how *un*stable it is. This interweaving of authenticity and fakery, of duration and ephemerality, of embodiment and absence, of time and space, makes up the fabric of history, memory, and, of course, theatre.

This is a book about how street theatre companies and their perfor-mances produce postindustrial space. It takes as its objects of analysis the institutions and events of contemporary French street theatre. At its core, this book is an exploration of how theatre and performance more generally participate in and make historical sense of ongoing urban and economic change. Theatre and performance enable us to make ongoing situations like deindustrialization and redevelopment intelligible as events, to make sense of past and future from within an unfolding present. This is a book about how street theatre reorders spaces and times and how it suggests to its publics ways of navigating the real or imagined transition from one kind of space, time, work, or economy to another. (The phrase 'real or imagined' recurs throughout the book, not as indecision, but as an inclusive disjunction that allows for the performative force of particular narratives and scenarios of change. As any theatre audience can attest, imagined circumstances sometimes produce real effects.) To produce postindustrial space is to recover from the trauma of deindustrialization, to 'work through,' in the sense of processing and moving on. It also entails continuing to generate surplus value in a changing economy, 'working through' in the way a performer soldiers on despite illness or injury. The 'post' in postindustrial sug-gests a period after something else. But other 'posts' (postmodern, post-traumatic, postpartum, post-punk) remind us that, even if we are situated chronologically after something, we are not necessarily over it.

Working memory

The production of postindustrial space is one historically specific itera-tion of a process I call *working memory*. If memory refers to a connec-tion forged between past and present, then working memory suggests, most obviously, a connection between past and present forms of work. How might workers in a so-called creative economy commemorate the industrial labour that once occurred in the factories and mills that have since become their offices, studios, and rehearsal spaces? Just as impor-tantly, how do persistent, residual practices and tropes make changes in the nature of work manageable and spatial transformations navigable?

As a modifier, 'working' also evokes the working title, something pro-visional that must be provided in order to move on with a task. There is embarrassment here. 'It's just a working hypothesis,' says the academic to a colleague before handing over the execrable first draft. Translation:

'Please don't judge me.' Or perhaps: 'Please critique without judging. Trust that I am capable of making this better.' As municipal governments stumble through the processes of deindustrialization and redevelopment, commemorative cultural projects might serve as apologies, as temporary stopgap measures before the ink has dried on the official narrative of industrial heritage or urban revitalization. The connections between past and present made by working memory are subject to revision.

This study is concerned with local, spatial, cultural, or collective memory, not with memory as neurological function, but nonetheless the cognitive scientist's understanding of working memory is instructive. In cognitive psychology, working memory (as distinct from short-term memory, though common parlance conflates the two) refers to our capacity to manipulate information in addition to, or perhaps instead of, passively storing it. Psychologists Susan E. Gathercole and Tracy Packiam Alloway describe working memory as a 'mental jotting pad' used 'in situations when there is no other external record.'[2] Working memory allows us to keep some information in mind while processing other material that will clarify, complicate, or otherwise alter it. Gathercole and Alloway offer mental arithmetic and the sorting of complex syntax as examples of simple classroom tasks that become difficult for students with impaired working memory. (As a beginning student of German, I regularly find my working memory tested by the deferral of verbs.) I must stress that I am *not* making claims about the brain function of theatre-makers, their audiences, former factory workers, or urban redevelopers. I am not a cognitive scientist. I adopt the term 'working memory' because it suggests the provisional nature of memory as work-in-progress, subject to manipulation, volatile and unfixed, but also as that which enables the performance of complex tasks: here, continued economic performance amidst shifting circumstances.

Working memory has particular conceptual power as a descriptor of provisional links between past and present required by historically specific conditions for the continued production of surplus value. Scholars outside the fields of psychology, neuroscience, and technology have typically not adopted the term working memory, perhaps because its provisional nature is endemic to the prevailing understanding of memory *tout court* in humanities disciplines. The notable exception is German cultural historian Aleida Assmann, who distinguishes between cultural working memory (canon) and cultural reference memory (archive). 'The working memory,' she writes, 'stores and reproduces the cultural capital of a society that is continuously recycled and re-affirmed.'[3] According to Assmann, a culture's canon, its working memory, 'defines and supports

the cultural identity of a group. It is highly selective and … built on the principle of exclusion.'[4] This selection process Assmann calls canonization. The canon itself is not dusty and ossified. Assmann refers to the canon as a culture's working memory precisely because it maintains the past as *present* through 'continuous repetition and re-use.'[5] Working memory refers not merely to what a culture *has* readily in mind and on hand, but to what a culture actively *keeps* in mind and on hand through rereadings, remountings, and restagings. For Assmann, the selection process of canonization is always ongoing: material may pass from the actively circulated working memory of the canon to the passively stored reference memory of the archive; conversely, material relegated to the archive may be reactivated by the artist or scholar to become part of the canon.[6]

I share Assmann's view of cultural working memory as an active process of repeated circulation and manipulation that keeps the past present, but my use of the term working memory diverges from Assmann's in a key respect. Whereas Assmann equates working memory with canonicity and therefore with durable, lasting value (even as she acknowledges that material may pass in and out of a culture's canon), I emphasize working memory's provisional, temporary nature. In my estimation, working memory maintains the past as present, but it also suggests an ultimately fictional endpoint at which the past will be laid to rest. To borrow again from psychology, if working memory enables a pupil to calculate a string of figures, to work with information already received, modifying it based on the arrival of additional information, it also relies on an eventual end to the sequence. Ultimately, the teacher finishes the equation; the students total the sum. Working memory has served its purpose, and the students can discard those figurative sheets of their respective mental jotting pads. Language operates similarly; the (near-messianic) arrival of the German verb clarifies the meaning of the preceding words and ushers in the full stop. The sentence is over. Working memory conjugates experience in two tenses simultaneously: the present perfect continuous links past and present, and the future perfect suggests eventual completion.

Thus, in this book, working memory refers to a paradoxical process that simultaneously keeps particular forms of work present and promises to relegate them to the past. Working memory is not merely necessary to navigate the transition from one economy to the next; it makes that transition intelligible, inventing the postindustrial as an imagined end to the turbulent processes of deindustrialization and redevelopment. This is why I refer to the production *of* the postindustrial rather than a shift *to* the postindustrial. The postindustrial is not a pre-existing, clearly

defined endpoint toward which a city or town might collectively strive, even if this is precisely how some municipal governments and private developers choose to represent it.

This book explores a contemporary manifestation of working memory in a particular geographic area, France, which makes its operations especially explicit. Though France has not featured prominently in Anglophone deindustrialization scholarship, it felt the economic crisis of 1973 acutely. The country was late to industrialize and so always had models to follow, first in Britain and then in the United States. Particularly in the decades following World War II, a period of continuous economic growth referred to in France as the *Trente Glorieuses* (Thirty Glorious Years), France benefited from an economic framework already installed and rigorously tested in the US, namely the Fordist dynamic of productivity gains supported by a culture of mass consumption.[7] The collapse of the Fordist compromise left France in much the same position as its Anglophone precedents and thus robbed it of the clear sense of direction that had enabled its rapid postwar modernization.[8] These drastically altered circumstances, characterized by pervasive uncertainty, make working memory both especially necessary and more readily apparent.

As I demonstrate below and throughout this book, working memory operates theatrically and performatively. To make historical sense of deindustrialization and redevelopment requires theatrical events and performative acts that revise, resituate, and re-embody particular pasts. Working memory depends on the ability to register thick, dissonant space and time (the perception of which is fundamentally theatrical) and the continued re-enactment with a difference of sedimented behaviours (i.e. performance). But if working memory always relies on the spatial and temporal logics of theatre and performance, the local manifestations of those logics vary. Particular artistic practices facilitate working memory's function in certain locations at certain historical moments.

I argue that, in contemporary France, street theatre is working memory's privileged artistic form. In part this is simply because the French encounter street theatre more than other kinds of live performance.[9] But it also has much to do with the qualities of street theatre explored throughout this book: its attempts to rescript everyday spatial behaviour, its playful and reflective nostalgia, the relationships it establishes between performers and spectators, and its ability to link and relink spaces and times. Street theatre is not at all historical moments the most logical aesthetic component of working memory. But I will argue throughout this book for street theatre's necessity and peculiar force in the contemporary moment, the 'historical present' characterized by

what Lauren Berlant calls 'crisis ordinariness,' that roughly maps onto the period since the collapse of the Fordist compromise and the crisis and recession of the 1970s.[10]

Since the late 1970s, regional, departmental, and municipal governments across France have encouraged the conversion of defunct factories and warehouses into cultural spaces that commemorate regional cities' industrial pasts while heralding their new identities as service economies and tourist destinations. When theatre companies occupy these buildings, they become part of the narratives of postindustrial transition disseminated by the governing bodies that facilitated the theatre companies' relocation, though the respective missions of those theatre companies and governing bodies do not necessarily align. Theatre companies frequently work out of converted factories and warehouses; the spaces are relatively inexpensive and readily available. I am concerned with what happens when the work of theatre is to commemorate another kind of work, industrial work, that the theatre company itself has supposedly re- or dis-placed. This study insists on the connection between theatre's economic, memorial, and historiographic functions, and explores how this connection is forged by contemporary French street theatre companies.

In one sense, the book explains the function of contemporary French street theatre in relation to the end of Fordist-Taylorist modernity and ongoing transformations in the nature of work, space, and time. In another sense, it *uses* contemporary French street theatre as an in-depth case study of the theatrical and performative operations of working memory, locally specific to a given space and historical moment. These are the two components of the book's argument. The first determines the book's scope, the second its broader significance.

Street theatre

There is a logic to the conjunction of theatre and street. Theatre as an art form unfolds in space and time. The street, too, as a site of movement, passage, circulation, congestion, of speed or slowness, is measured in minutes as well as in metres or miles. Then there are the people and things around us, and how they make us feel: theatre and street are inter-subjective and affective. 'In the street,' writes Henri Lefebvre, 'a form of spontaneous theatre, I become spectacle and spectator, and sometimes an actor.'[11] Streets and theatres are places in which to see and be seen,

but also to hear and be heard, overhear and be overheard, or for that matter smell and be smelled, feel and be felt, touch and be touched. We act and are acted upon; we affect and are affected. Street and theatre are multisensory space-times in which people bump into or rub up against each other, literally or figuratively, pleasantly or otherwise. Our occasionally awkward co-presence fosters behavioural conditioning: codes of performance, rules (some stated, some not) of spectatorship. We can break these rules, bend them, adhere to and enforce them, test their limits, challenge their legitimacy, momentarily suspend them, or claim they don't apply to us.

Street theatre, however, need not transpire in a literal thoroughfare, or even outdoors. The street in question might be a derelict factory, an empty lot, a municipal swimming pool, the stairwell of a tower block, the inside of an automobile, or even, as Sylvie Clidière suggests, the wings of a proscenium stage. For Clidière, street theatre need only occur outside of purpose-built performance spaces ('*hors lieux préaffectés*').[12] Thus street theatre always occurs in converted space, because it converts space by definition. There is an obvious connection here to what Anglophone scholars would more readily call site-specific, site-responsive, or site-sympathetic theatre. Contemporary French street theatre also shares with site-specific performance the twin genealogies of radical theatre and the expanded visual arts. But the 'street' is crowded with historical, political, and cultural meaning not evoked by the specificity of site.

The 'street' of street theatre stands in metonymically for public space or for space that performers and their audiences seek to make or claim as public. This public, however, is neither universal nor fixed. In the street we encounter the royal procession and the popular uprising, the nationalist parade and the general strike, misogynist harassment and the feminist march against it, the marketplace and the anti-capitalist demonstration, protest and counter-protest. Streets are everywhere sites of power and resistance (though historically the French have excelled at establishing *la rue* as overdetermined symbol of order and disorder). The contested nature of the street as public space is intelligible in the language of transgression that pervades the scholarly and media discourses surrounding street theatre. These companies do not merely *perform* in the street, but *invade* (*envahissent*), *storm* (*prennent d'assaut*), or *occupy* (*occupent*) the street.[13] The opening sentence of Susan Haedicke's *Contemporary Street Arts in Europe: Aesthetics and Politics* is illustrative: 'Street arts interventions invade a public space, shake it up and disappear, but the memory of the disruption haunts the place for audiences who experience it.'[14] Haedicke foregrounds French street theatre's most persistent concerns: the transgression of boundaries, overturning

of hierarchy or disruption of quotidian spatial practices, and the tension between ephemerality and the possibility of enduring impact.

Street theatre might make a claim to public space by expanding access to a particular site, thereby expanding the definition of 'public,' but this is not inherently progressive. As I discuss throughout this book, refashioning a derelict factory as public space might effectively deny former industrial workers symbolic and material ownership of their own working-class heritage. Street theatre might also reframe the definition of public without expanding it, so that the formerly excluded become included and the formerly included become excluded. Public space is neither smooth nor flat. Some may pass through public space more easily, freely, and safely than others.[15] Some have the time to linger in public space; others do not.[16] The constitution of publics and their spaces is contested and contingent.

I insist that the companies discussed in this book make street theatre even when their work takes spectators inside the walls of a repurposed factory. In referring to such spaces as the street I aim not to quibble over terminology but to make a strong claim about what performances in such spaces might accomplish, the histories and politics of which they become part, and the relations and systems in which they participate. Just as a literal street links one site to another, so the 'street' in street theatre establishes a connection among diverse performance practices and their myriad locations.

Crucially, though, such a connection does not negate the importance of site. Though I maintain throughout this book that street theatre companies bring spaces together within the generic category of 'street,' I also draw on the insights of site-specific theatre and its scholarship. Spaces have repertoires: as defined by Fiona Wilkie, 'a set of choices (culturally, traditionally, personally, or physically defined) available to people in a particular place' and 'created in part by what has gone before in that place.'[17] Street theatre practitioners can attempt to renegotiate the repertoires of a space in performance; to claim a space as public is surely to propose a modified set of available choices and behaviours, and Wilkie adopts the term 'repertoire' because it allows for improvisation and emergence within existing frameworks. But repertoires do not simply disappear. During street performance, the spatial repertoires of theatre and street continue to intermingle. Not only that, but the particular repertoires of a given street will be intelligible to local audiences even if they are not apparent to tourists or the performers themselves. The 'street' allows me to make broader claims about what certain spaces do, but it does not efface the specificity of those spaces. In this study, the street is both metonym and specific site, with the understanding that, to

borrow from Doreen Massey, every site, regardless of scale, is networked to other localities and is itself multiple.[18]

Contemporary French street theatre is as diverse in aesthetic form as in its choice of location. A visitor to the International Festival of Street Theatre in Aurillac will encounter magicians, mimes, jugglers, and fire spinners; processions and parades; dance, circus, and installation art; and technologically sophisticated spectacles involving multimedia projection and elaborate, moving set pieces. Examples of street theatre discussed in this book include object theatre inside an automobile (in Chapter 1), a musical collaboration between industrial percussionists and a local wind ensemble (in Chapter 2), mock archaeological digs (in Chapter 3), rides atop gargantuan mechanical animals (in Chapter 4), and interactions with sculptures that emit sound in response to spectators' movements (in Chapter 5). The field is so expansive that practitioners, critics, and scholars alike increasingly drop the designator 'street theatre' (*théâtre de rue*) in favour of the plural 'street arts' (*arts de la rue*).[19]

My retention of the term street theatre derives neither from conservative contrarianism nor from an artificial limiting of scope. Rather, I insist on the usefulness of street theatre as an umbrella term because it suggests both an *institution* that establishes a public, and an *event*, a durational encounter that creates a relationship between performer and spectator and works on space and time in particular ways.

It might appear counterintuitive to discuss street theatre as a set of institutions as well as a series of performance events. Indeed, street theatre practitioners (particularly those who began working prior to the 1980s) frequently voice anti-institutional sentiments: Claude Krespin, founder of street theatre troupe Théâtracide, remarks, 'street theatre captivated me [in the 1970s] but I fled when it was perverted starting in the 1980s [...] I have seen quite well who has nicked the money for twenty years in institutional culture.'[20] Krespin is referring to the proliferation, in the 1980s and 1990s, of professional organizations and street theatre production centres that offer competitive funding and residencies. His concerns exemplify a pervasive anxiety (taken up in Chapter 1) that street theatre's immediacy, spontaneity, and subversiveness have been corrupted by money and confined by mortar. Institutional culture, here, seems to suggest conservative fixity rather than radical flow.

But analysing street theatre companies and their bases of operation as institutions attunes us, firstly, to the conditions in which street theatre practitioners operate as *workers*. Shannon Jackson has demonstrated how resistance to institutional funding structures (such as that expressed by Krespin) is part of an ongoing tension between autonomy

and heteronomy that dominated the cultural creation of the 1960s and that continues to characterize the discourses surrounding radical performance. She rightly notes: 'If progressive artists and critics unthinkingly echo a routinized language of anti-institutionalism and anti-statism, we can find ourselves unexpectedly colluding with neoliberal impulses that want to dismantle public institutions of human welfare.'[21] For my purposes here, this means simply that street performers, like the rest of us, need to eat. We can and should critique the conditions in which they must earn their crust, but we can hardly fault them for attempting to survive or even thrive in those conditions. Some of the street theatre companies discussed in this book participate (eagerly or reluctantly) in processes of redevelopment that might be thought of as gentrification. My goal in this book is not to condemn the companies in question but to examine the function of particular modes of theatrical labour in the wake of deindustrialization.

Institutional analysis attunes us, secondly, to what theatres do before, between, and after performance events. Christopher Balme contends that theatre is 'much more than the sum of individual performances; it consists of a complex set of institutional as much as artistic practices that need to be brought into historiographical focus.'[22] This applies to street theatre as well, because, for Balme, 'an institution is by no means coterminous with the building and vice versa.'[23] A street theatre company, too, is more than the sum of its performance events. Examining theatre as an institution allows the scholar to analyse the construction of and engagement with a theatrical *public* that includes, but is not limited to, the eventual spectators of a given performance. This reorientation from spectator to public matters because the 'theatrical public sphere,' defined by Balme as 'a realm of interaction outside the coordinates of the performance event' involving 'forms of communication beyond the exchange of libidinal energies between performers and spectators,' is the broader arena in which the work of a theatre company becomes intelligible to those who attend its performances *and* those who do not.[24] The conversion of a derelict factory into a street theatre production centre modifies the spatial repertoires of the surrounding area even for those who never see the company perform.

In this book, street theatre consists of *both* a set of institutions that form publics and a series of events that engage with spectators. The events in question might not involve plot or character, but I call them theatre because they facilitate modes of spatio-temporal perception that are fundamentally theatrical.

Theatre excels at transforming one space into another. Purpose-built stages become plazas, bourgeois interiors, or post-apocalyptic wastelands

depending on the needs of the night. Between performances these spaces remain as potentialities. During performances these spaces do not neatly replace that of the theatre; rather, the audience is aware of both fictive space and theatre space simultaneously, just as (in those cases where character remains a relevant category) they are aware of the coexistence of actor and character in a single body. Spatial doubleness allows for the coexistence of actuality and potentiality and the perception of that coexistence by performers and audiences alike. Even postmodern or post-dramatic stagings that dispense with conventional settings do not preclude the audience from doing such imaginative work.[25] Site-specific projects take advantage of the inherent doubleness of theatrical spatial perception in order to knit together the histories, practices, and rules of theatre with those of their respective locales. Street theatre, too, evokes the street as it was or has been, as it is, and as something else: an alternative, imaginary space of potentiality. As on the proscenium stage, the space of potentiality does not replace the space of actuality in performance; rather, the imaginary and the real, the virtual and the material, coexist and commingle.[26] I use the term street theatre even when discussing encounters with multimedia projections (in Chapter 3) and with outdoor installation art (in Chapter 5), because those projects facilitate this mode of spatial perception.

Theatre also captures something of the *temporal* element, the event-ness and again-ness, crucial to all of the diverse practices under consideration in this book. During a theatrical event the audience oscillates between purportedly objective clock time and phenomenological time-as-experienced. Matthew Wagner calls this theatre's temporal dissonance; Tracy C. Davis simply calls it theatrical time.[27] Theatre makes explicit the everyday tension between measured time and felt time. Because of the frame of the theatrical event, which, regardless of narrative structure, must begin and end, Wagner argues that theatrical time is thick as well as dissonant: 'It is the nature of the theatrical present to draw out [the] human faculties of retention and protention, to use our awareness of the birth and death of the event – an awareness that owes its existence in large part to the temporal frame that is endemic to theatricality – to constitute each present moment.'[28] As the action unfolds, theatre audiences situate new information in relation to a remembered starting point and a projected endpoint.

Wagner argues that the dissonance and thickness of theatrical time enable audiences to grasp the dissonance and thickness of everyday temporal existence. Theatre, for Wagner, by virtue of the fact that it must end, offers a more readily intelligible microcosm of Heideggerian Being-towards-death. In everyday experience, the beginning (birth) and

end (death) are not as present as they are in the theatre. The thick time of theatre makes the present palpable as that which is between opening and closure. In other words, theatre has the capacity to make ongoing, unbroken processes intelligible as events.

Regardless of its actual dramatic structure, theatre's function is similar to what Hayden White has called 'emplotment.' Emplotment turns chronicle, a litany of occurrences, into history, an intelligible and coherent sequence of events.[29] According to Alain Badiou, 'Theatre indicates where we stand with regard to historical time, but it does so in a kind of readable amplification that is its own. It clarifies our situation.'[30] Though Badiou is not referring to *situation* in the sense used by Lauren Berlant, I connect the two: if theatre clarifies the situation, as Badiou suggests, it is thanks in part to how theatrical time facilitates the construction of events. Berlant describes the situation as 'a state of things in which *something* that will perhaps matter is unfolding amid the usual activity of life. It is a state of animated and animating suspension that forces itself on consciousness, that produces a sense of the emergence of something in the present that may become an event.'[31] Theatrical time inspires more – perhaps false – confidence, lending the shape and direction of an event to the muddled middle of the situation. Theatrical time projects an ending, a way out of crisis from within crisis.

By describing the diverse array of practices under consideration in this book as street theatre, my point is not to conflate formal or genealogical differences but to make a stronger claim about how these practices produce space and time. Street theatre, then, is at once expansive and precise. Paradoxically, the expansiveness of street theatre allows a refocusing on these performances' spatio-temporal work: more specifically, for my purposes here, on how they produce the postindustrial.

Postindustrial space

What does it mean to be postindustrial? A. K. Coomaraswamy, Ceylonese Tamil philosopher and art historian, appears to have coined the term in his 1913 correspondence with British architect Arthur Penty, who credits Coomaraswamy in his 1917 treatise on guild socialism, *Old Worlds for New: A Study of the Post-Industrial State*.[32] Thus in its earliest incarnation postindustrial society is an imagined socialist utopia based on medieval guild structures, a return to pre-industrial labour organization inspired by Victorian reformers William Morris and John Ruskin.

The postindustrial society as anti-industrial or even anti-capitalist vision returns in 1980s New Left ecological thought.[33] Though the 1910s guild socialists and 1980s eco-socialists paint differing portraits of postindustrial society, they share one frame: a leftist rejection of industrial, capitalist modernity.

Postindustrial society is perhaps better known not as modern capitalism's antithesis but as its logical progression, its next evolutionary phase. Daniel Bell depicts it as such in *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973). Postindustrial society here is characterized by greater emphasis on services, information, and knowledge than on manufacturing. Bell connects these developments to what he sees as the end of ideology and (rather blithely) proposes that industrial capitalism has successfully met the material needs of most members of Western societies.[34] By contrast, Alain Touraine views postindustrial society as a threat to democracy that masks rather than ameliorates class domination, and fosters 'dependent participation.'[35] But triumphalist (Bell) and critic (Touraine) agree on the hypothesis of dematerialization and the idea of a radical break between the industrial and postindustrial as historical periods and modes of social and economic organization.

More recently, the dematerialization hypothesis has been framed as a shift from material to *affective* or *immaterial* labour. The concept of affective labour originally emerged to direct critical attention to undertheorized (and, more importantly, underpaid or unpaid) forms of work, particularly those in the domestic sphere. As a concept in feminist scholarship, affective labour demonstrated how women's unpaid work actually sustained the economy and was worthy of compensation.[36] As taken up by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt (among others aligned with the Italian post-Workerists), affective labour refers to a uniquely contemporary form of work of which the primary product is not a material object but an emotional state, usually a sense of well-being, as in many of the service professions.[37] The post-Workerists have since expanded the concept and now speak of *immaterial* labour, of which the product is a set of social relations, symbols, or information rather than an automobile, mobile phone, or widget. Of course, as Sean Sayers convincingly argues, labour's primary product is never an automobile or a widget but rather a set of social relations.[38] Hardt and Negri claim that Marx's theory of 'formative' labour is outdated and unable to account for contemporary forms of work based on symbol manipulation and affect. But Sayers rightly notes that, for Marx, *all* labour is formative labour in that it produces materially grounded social relations. In the industrial economy, factory labour and domestic labour alike had to reproduce their own conditions of possibility by perpetuating the strict

spatial division of labour and the rationalization of time. Contemporary labour must reproduce the fusion of networked interconnectivity and precarious individualism that is the model for neoliberalism. A shift has occurred, but this is more of an organizational and rhetorical shift than a shift from material to immaterial products.

Ultimately, there is no such thing as a postindustrial society. Economies of the Global North continue to rely on manufacturing, even if much of that manufacturing now takes place in the Global South.[39] Increasingly common is a globally networked production chain in which parts of a single commodity are designed, produced, assembled, and marketed in far-flung locales. Sociologist and economist Pierre Veltz argues that France and other nations of the Global North have entered not a postindustrial society but a hyper-industrial one, 'characterised by the convergence between the industry of objects and the industry of relationships.'[40] According to Veltz, the distinction between manufacturing and services becomes increasingly outmoded as service logics infiltrate manufacturing and Fordist-Taylorist logics infiltrate the service industry. (Sayers would argue, based on his reading of Marx, that such a distinction between manufacturing and services was always illusory.) Even proponents of a shift from material to immaterial or affective labour acknowledge that one has not entirely replaced the other, suggesting instead that the self-employed artist has supplanted the unionized autoworker as the paradigmatic labourer of developed economies and that industrial work now demands affective tasks or qualities.[41]

Following Pierre Naville, Veltz observes that forms of labour (e.g. agricultural, artisanal, Fordist-Taylorist) do not cleanly succeed one another in a linear fashion; rather, they accumulate. Supposedly 'past' forms of labour persist long after they have ceased to define the dominant mode of production, and 'new' modes of production draw on pre-existing forms.[42] This is the industrial sociologist's version of the relationship among emergent, dominant, and residual cultures.[43] The performance scholar recognizes this as repertoire: the recombination of existing elements to produce an intelligible new.[44] The production of the postindustrial occurs in a situation in which the relationship among – even the existence of – different forms of labour is fundamentally contested.

That contest plays out spatially in derelict and repurposed industrial sites, which lend material form to the dynamics of globalized capitalism. Redevelopment involves more than the rearrangement or renovation of the built environment. It entails remaking a space discursively – making it intelligible as something else – so as to encourage or discourage particular embodied activities. City officials and private developers might

represent disused factories, even entire working-class neighbourhoods, as blights or cancers, using medical rhetoric to foment public support for their invasive operations.[45] As physical renovations get underway, public and private partners might portray an area as reborn, renewed, rejuvenated, revitalized, reinvented, or even reclaimed. When a redevelopment project involves sites claimed or officially recognized as heritage, the structural, discursive, and embodied moves become more complicated. Architects and urban planners must identify what to preserve and how to preserve it, a process that also involves intervention by interest groups. In the cases addressed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of this book, theatre companies and municipal governments alike insist that the converted factory buildings remain spaces of work and industry. This means that the sites must become intelligible as something else (cultural centres, theatres, public parks) while *remaining* intelligible as what they once were. This is why I argue that redevelopment and heritage projects cultivate a distinctly theatrical spatiality.

It has become commonplace to refer to such repurposed industrial sites – among many other spaces – as palimpsests. The metaphor is a textual one, from the Greek for 'again rubbed smooth': the page or slate bears traces of old writing, partially effaced, beneath more recent passages. Andreas Huyssen has expanded the concept to refer to the perceptible, material accumulation of a space's past uses.[46] However, Doreen Massey argues that, by focusing on the historical accumulation of layers, the palimpsestic model of space fails to account for contemporary acts of erasure. 'Palimpsest,' she writes, 'is too archaeological. In this story, the things that are missing (erased) from the map are somehow always things from "before."'[47] Massey is concerned with what (or who) might get excluded or effaced in the *present*. But redevelopment projects might exclude people in the present precisely by relegating them *to* the past. If we describe repurposed spaces as palimpsests, we must not take this as the natural and inevitable accumulation of layers of use and meaning, but as active processes of effacing and overwriting through which living bodies and persistent practices are made intelligible as history. Embodied performances such as those discussed in this book can facilitate this process, hinder it, or do both at once.

Even if we are not happily and healthily postindustrial (and we are not), local governments and private developers might have a vested interest in presenting their communities as such, or suggesting that they will be at some point. Discourses of mourning and practices of memorialization are crucial to this endeavour. As Jackie Clarke observes, much memorial work is 'predicated on the not unproblematic assumption that the industrial world is dead and gone.'[48] Clarke has documented how the

rhetoric surrounding individual plant closures laments the passing of a generalized way of life. But this 'language of class death … does little to get to grips with the fact that the people who populated the old industrial order still exist. Indeed, one of the problems with this discourse is that in seeking to honour the past, it tends to present as complete and inevitable a process which is incomplete and historically contingent.'[49] Or, as Stéphane Bonnard insists in the epigraph to this book, 'the workers exist, are still here, even if at times one would like to make us believe that they have disappeared.' Nonetheless, the myth of the postindustrial society retains its power and can create problems for working-class and local identity.

If, as I claimed in the opening pages of this book, to produce postindustrial space is to recover from the trauma of deindustrialization, a preliminary step must be the construction of deindustrialization as a traumatic event in the first place. My point here is not to deny the real material and psychological consequences of deindustrialization and factory closure. My point, following Lauren Berlant, is that the language of trauma presents a crisis as exception rather than the rule (as *a* crisis, singular, manageable). Trauma discourse, Berlant argues, suggests that the historical present is 'the scene of an exception that has just shattered some ongoing, uneventful ordinary life that was supposed just to keep going on and with respect to which people felt solid and confident.'[50] In order for deindustrialization to be something from which a community might 'recover,' it must first be represented and experienced as a temporary wound, and not as the normal functioning of capitalism. (This becomes most apparent in Chapter 4, with the rhetoric surrounding the closure of the Nantes shipyards.) But, as Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott argue, deindustrialization is ongoing and forms part of the broader dynamic of capitalism; the most profound effect of the period of accelerated deindustrialization in the 1980s might be the revelation that the supposed stability of the Fordist compromise was illusory all along, a mere blip in the history of economics.[51]

The postindustrial must be produced, and I argue that it is produced performatively and theatrically. Performance, as never-for-the-first-time embodied practice that recombines existing strips of behaviour to produce something ostensibly new, is necessary to produce the postindustrial from obstinate industrial remains. It is the spatiality of theatre – its inherent doubleness – that facilitates the perception of industrial space both as what it is and what it is not (or not yet, or no longer). And it is the eventness of theatre – the thickness and dissonance of theatrical time – that enables the production of the postindustrial from within the process of deindustrialization.

This is not to say that the theatre companies discussed in this book *intend* to loosen the real or imagined constraints of industrial identity, or what David Byrne calls an 'industrial structure of feeling.'[52] I am concerned here more with effects and affects than with intentionality. Though I often refer in this book to theatre companies' press packs, websites, and promotional materials, as well as to interviews with artistic directors, I treat these sources as components of the theatrical public sphere and thus as one way among others to approach the question of intelligibility. Even if we take such materials as statements of intent, or would-be performatives that establish horizons of expectation and frameworks for interpretation, there is never a guarantee that audiences will behave accordingly. Theatre companies and their performances act as part of uneasy, unstable, and unruly assemblages. Theatrical institutions and theatrical events might also do conflicting work: some of the events considered in this book make palpable the accumulation of forms of labour, their accretion, interpenetration, and recombination, even as the theatrical *institutions* are heralded as evidence of the tidy postindustrial transition that the events so clearly disprove.

Works ahead

The structure of this book mirrors the processes of deindustrialization and redevelopment. Though each chapter takes up different case studies, the overall trajectory of the work carries the reader from industrial ruins to (real or imagined) sustainable, postindustrial environments.

The first chapter is set in the urban landscape of the 1970s and 1980s, when artists were increasingly occupying industrial sites that had become derelict in the aftermath of the economic crisis. Bringing together street theatre historiography and performance analysis of two long-running, iconic productions – Théâtre de l'Unité's *2CV Théâtre* (1977–97) and Générik Vapeur's *Bivouac* (1988–) – I explain why, in contemporary France, street theatre has emerged as working memory's privileged artistic form. Ultimately, I argue that street theatre thrives in the remains of the modern industrial city because of its anxious relationship to a mythic urban ideal. The subsequent three chapters examine street theatre companies that, willingly or not, have become embedded within specific, ongoing redevelopment projects: Metalovoice in Corbigny (Chapter 2), KompleXKapharnaüM in Villeurbanne (Chapter 3), and La Machine in Nantes (Chapter 4). Each chapter explores a

distinct environment – rural town, sprawling industrial suburb, and regional city centre – and its respective industrial heritage, and proposes a model of how working memory operates. The final chapter considers installations by multimedia artist Fabrice Giraud and Compagnie Fer à Coudre, which invite audiences to imagine a fantastical, sustainable, postindustrial landscape, even as they question the purpose and value of human presence in that landscape. This concluding chapter serves as a capstone to the preceding exploration of performance, memory, work, and space.

   This book is about street theatre as a form of work, its relation to other forms of work, and how the spatio-temporal practices of street theatre are called on to make those other forms of work intelligible as, and locatable within, history. By bringing to the fore questions of intelligibility and transmission, I adopt a historical and historiographic approach to contemporary material, the recent past and the not-yet-passed. Rather than focusing on street theatre's potential to make change, I am interested in street theatre's capacity to make *sense* of change, though I acknowledge that these two forms of making, these two kinds of change, are linked. In French, *sens* suggests both meaning and direction. By rendering an ongoing process intelligible as an event, street theatre simultaneously offers a sense of direction and the option of changing course. When I claim that street theatre produces the postindustrial, I do not simply mean that theatre companies are forces of gentrification (though they might be) or that street theatre has become part of the new urban ideal (though it has). I mean rather that street theatre creates a complex, fraught 'after but not over.' The necessity of theatre and performance – more specifically here, street theatre – to the production of the postindustrial means that street theatre companies benefit from and participate in redevelopment, but it also means that through street theatre the industrial might reassert itself in unanticipated ways.

Notes

1 Stéphane Bonnard, 'Quelle usine?' *Soie Mag*, no. 1 (December 2011): 6.
2 Susan E. Gathercole and Tracy Packiam Alloway, *Understanding Working Memory: A Classroom Guide* (London: Harcourt Assessment, 2007), 5. Prepared in affiliation with the Working Memory and Learning Research Group, Durham University.
3 Aleida Assmann, 'Canon and Archive,' in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (eds), *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 100.
4 Ibid., 106.
5 Ibid., 99.

6 The depiction of the archive as passive storage space is Assmann's, not my own. Rather, I side with (for instance) Alison Jeffers, Heike Roms, and Rebecca Schneider in conceptualizing the archive as the site of active, performative processes. See Alison Jeffers, 'Recollecting and Re-Collecting: The Ethical Challenges of Social Archiving in Post-Conflict Northern Ireland,' in Claire Cochrane and Jo Robinson (eds), *Theatre History and Historiography: Ethics, Evidence and Truth* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 147–62; Heike Roms, 'Mind the Gaps: Evidencing Performance and Performing Evidence in Performance Art History,' in Claire Cochrane and Jo Robinson (eds), *Theatre History and Historiography: Ethics, Evidence and Truth* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 163–81; and Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

7 See Jean Fourastié, *Les trente glorieuses, ou la révolution invisible de 1946 à 1975* (Paris: Fayard, 1979).

8 See Pierre Veltz, *La grande transition: la France dans le monde qui vient* (Paris: Seuil, 2008), 9–10; and Pierre Veltz, *Le nouveau monde industriel* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), 7.

9 A 2008 study of French cultural practices showed that 62 per cent of French people over the age of 15 had attended a street performance at least once in their lives, compared to 58 per cent who had attended professional indoor theatre, 46 per cent who had attended amateur theatre, 32 per cent who had attended classical or modern dance, 29 per cent who had attended a rock concert, 24 per cent who had attended a classical music concert, and 23 per cent who had attended the opera. Of these respondents, 34 per cent had attended a street performance at some point in the last twelve months, compared to 21 per cent for amateur theatre, 19 per cent for professional indoor theatre, 8 per cent for classical or modern dance, 10 per cent for rock concerts, 7 per cent for classical music concerts, and 4 per cent for opera. The survey also revealed growing audiences for street theatre when compared to the previous study in 1997; other live art forms, by contrast, experienced stagnation or decline in audience numbers. Data available from Ministère de la Culture, 'Fréquentation des équipements culturels,' *Les pratiques culturelles des Français*, www.pratiquesculturelles.culture.gouv.fr/08resultat_chap7.php. For full results and analysis, see Olivier Donnat, *Les pratiques culturelles des Français à l'ère numérique: enquête 2008* (Paris: La Découverte, 2009). For a summary of the results pertaining to street theatre, see Anne Gonon, 'Les publics des spectacles de rue: exploitation de la base d'enquête du DEPS "Les pratiques culturelles des Français à l'ère du numérique – année 2008,"' *Repères DGCA* no. 6–10 (2012), www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr/Documentation/Documentation-scientifique-et-technique/Les-publics-des-spectacles-de-rue.

10 Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 10.

11 Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, trans. Robert Bononno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003 [1970]), 18.

12 Sylvie Clidière, 'Définition: Arts de la rue,' *Rue libre!*, last modified 2010, last accessed 3 August 2015, www.ruelibre.net/Definition,444.

13 There are far too many examples to cite them all. As an indicative sample, see 'Les arts de la rue envahissent la ville,' *Sud Ouest*, 25 May 2017; 'Les artistes envahissent gaiement la "Rue libre,"' *Le Parisien*, 29 October 2016; 'Les arts envahissent les rues,' *Presse Océan*, 28 August 2015; 'Les arts de la rue prennent Cheverny d'assaut,' *La Nouvelle République*, 11 August 2010; 'Les arts de la rue prennent d'assaut le centre-ville,' *La Voix du Nord*, 4 October 2009; 'Rue libre: les artistes occupent le bitume,' *Le Télégramme*, 28 October 2007; 'Les saltimbanques urbains occupent le terrain,' *Le Monde*, 24 July 2003; 'A Châtillon, les arts occupent la rue,' *La Tribune*, 29 September 2000.

14 Susan Haedicke, *Contemporary Street Arts in Europe: Aesthetics and Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1.

15 Susan Bennett, 'Universal Experience: The City as Tourist Stage,' in Tracy C. Davis (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Performance Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 76–90.

16 Nicholas Ridout discusses the importance of free time to publics and politics in *Passionate Amateurs: Theatre, Communism, and Love* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013). For an excellent analysis of the politics of free time, waiting, and busy-ness more generally, see Sarah Sharma, *In the Meantime: Temporality and Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

17 Fiona Wilkie, 'Kinds of Place at Bore Place: Site-Specific Performance and the Rules of Spatial Behaviour,' *New Theatre Quarterly* 18.3 (2002): 250.

18 Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005).

19 See, for instance, Floriane Gaber, *Quarante ans d'arts de la rue* (Paris: Editions ici et là, 2009); Anne Gonon, *In Vivo: les figures du spectateur des arts de la rue* (Paris: Editions l'Entretemps, 2011); Haedicke, *Contemporary Street Arts in Europe*; and any number of materials published by the National Federation of Street Arts, *HorsLesMurs*.

20 Quoted in Philippe du Vignal, 'Les artistes catalyseurs de rencontres,' *Rue de la Folie* no. 8 (2000): 30.

21 Shannon Jackson, *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 16.

22 Christopher B. Balme, *The Theatrical Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 63.

23 Ibid., 48–9.

24 Ibid., 48.

25 Marvin Carlson remains the leading figure to discuss theatrical audiences' spatial perception. See Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003); and Marvin Carlson, 'Space and Theatre History,' in Charlotte M. Canning and Thomas Postlewait (eds), *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010), 195–214.

26 Haedicke observes something similar with regard to the spatiality of street theatre, but she places it in direct opposition to the spatiality of indoor theatre. She claims that, during street performances, '*fiction* does not work in opposition to *reality*; rather the *imaginary* re-frames, re-interprets, confuses, subverts, or challenges notions of the *real*. […] [Street theatre] *frames* the public space and the everyday with art.' Haedicke, *Contemporary Street Arts in Europe*, 1. I contend that street theatre's intermingling of spatial repertoires has more in common with the proscenium stage than even street theatre practitioners might like to admit. I take up these issues in more detail in Chapter 1.

27 Matthew Wagner, *Shakespeare, Theatre, and Time* (London: Routledge, 2012); Tracy C. Davis, 'Performative Time,' in Charlotte M. Canning and Thomas Postlewait (eds), *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010), 142–67.

28 Wagner, *Shakespeare, Theatre, and Time*, 32–3.

29 Hayden White, *The Practical Past* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014), 53.

30 Alain Badiou, *Rhapsody for the Theatre* (London: Verso, 2013 [1998]), 102.

31 Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 5.

32 Arthur J. Penty, *Old Worlds for New: A Study of the Post-Industrial State* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1917), digitized by University of Toronto, accessed 3 August 2015, https://archive.org/details/oldworldsfornews00 pent.

33 See, for instance, André Gorz, *Capitalism, Socialism, Ecology*, trans. Martin Chalmers (London: Verso, 2012 [1991]).

34 Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (New York: Basic Books, 2008 [1973]).

35 Alain Touraine, *La société post-industrielle: naissance d'une société* (Paris: Denoël, 1969).

36 For an overview of feminist approaches to affective labour, see Monique Lanoix, 'Labor as Embodied Practice: The Lessons of Care Work,' *Hypatia* 28.1 (2013): 85–100.

37 See Michael Hardt, 'Affective Labor,' *boundary* 26.2 (1999): 89–100; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, 'The Rod of the Forest Warden: A Response to Timothy Brennan,' *Critical Inquiry* 29.2 (2003): 368–73.

38 Sean Sayers, 'The Concept of Labor: Marx and His Critics,' *Science & Society* 71.4 (2007): 431–54.

39 See Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989).

40 Veltz, *La grande transition*, 148.

41 Hardt and Negri, 'The Rod of the Forest Warden: A Response to Timothy Brennan.'

42 Veltz, *Le nouveau monde industriel*, 41–2.

43 Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 121–7.

44 Diana Taylor conceives repertoire as a mode of knowing residing exclusively in the artist and requiring a clear act of transfer; she privileges the embodied over the discursive, relegating the discursive primarily to the realm of the archive (though both archive and repertoire are systems of knowing and *not* delineated spaces). Taylor is primarily interested in how individual elders or masters (e.g. oral storytellers or ballet masters and mistresses) act as embodied repositories of cultural knowledge. By contrast, following Tracy C. Davis, I define repertoires as 'multiple circulating recombinative discourses of intelligibility.' Repertoire for Davis is the unspoken and taken-for-granted fount of knowledge that allows us to process and comprehend new events or performances based on past experience. Repertoires reside (in potential) in both artists and audiences, who articulate, reconstitute, and exchange them, bilaterally and multiply, in performance. Davis' conception of repertoire accounts for the complex relationship between the residual and the emergent, and is thus of particular import for understanding the intelligibility of repurposed spaces. Taylor's conception of repertoire falls short in this regard. Taylor would require a direct act of transfer from factory worker to theatre artist and would be less interested in how visitors to a converted site understood and derived meaning from it. Taylor's understanding of repertoire remains relevant to my argument, however, because theatre companies, developers, and municipal governments might have a vested interest in claiming a direct act of transfer from factory worker to theatre worker (see Chapter 4). Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Tracy C. Davis, 'Nineteenth-Century Repertoire,' *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film* 36.2 (2009): 7.

45 For in-depth analysis and critique of such processes, see Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995). See also Grant Kester, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

46 Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

47 Massey, *For Space*, 110.

48 Jackie Clarke, 'Closing Moulinex: Thoughts on the Visibility and Invisibility of Industrial Labour in Contemporary France,' *Modern & Contemporary France* 19.4 (2011): 449.

49 Ibid.

50 Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 10.

51 Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott, eds, *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 2003).

52 David Byrne, 'Industrial Culture in a Post-Industrial World: The Case of the North East of England,' *City* 6.3 (2002): 280.

1

Theatre in ruins: street and theatre at the end of Fordism

1973 was an inauspicious year for France's economy and a surprisingly sunny one for its street performers. After the spring crash in the global property market but before the autumn oil embargo, Jean Digne, director of the Théâtre du Centre in Aix-en-Provence, and Charles Nugue, director of the city's cultural centre, organized a festival: *Aix, ville ouverte aux saltimbanques* (Aix, city open to street performers). The event brought tumblers, jugglers, fire-spinners, magicians, and busking musicians – the familiar denizens of 'the street' – together with visual artists and theatre troupes seeking to experiment with alternative modes of expanding and engaging with their publics. The festival ran for three subsequent summers and, in retrospect, assumed the status of a 'foundational moment' for contemporary French street theatre.[1]

It is historical coincidence that this foundational moment was so neatly bookended by two key episodes in the collapse of the Fordist compromise and the end of post-World War II economic growth. The spring property crash did not directly cause the summer street theatre festival any more than the summer street theatre festival caused the autumn oil embargo. But the deindustrialization, economic crisis, and urban change that ensued provide more than mere context for the development of French street theatre; they furnished contemporary street theatre with its material and symbolic conditions of possibility. The move away from high modernist urban projects after 1973 signalled a

return to what David Wiles has called a 'traditionalist public space' in which small-scale street performance could thrive.[2] France's new urban policy of the 1970s explicitly encouraged the 'reanimation' of public space, in a marked departure from the uniform tower blocks skewered by the likes of Henri Lefebvre, the Situationist International, and Jean-Luc Godard. From the 1980s onward, as deindustrialization accelerated and intensified, street theatre companies joined other artists in appropriating disused factories as studio, construction, and rehearsal spaces. Some of these sites later became officially sanctioned and well-funded centres of artistic creation, especially as formerly industrial cities and towns sought to use cultural projects to reinvent themselves to suit new economic circumstances.

During this period, French street theatre developed to include not only a loosely affiliated collection of aesthetic practices, but also a formalized set of professional institutions, publications, and events. These included Lieux Publics, a national centre for the creation of street arts founded by Michel Crespin and Fabien Jannelle in 1983; *Goliath*, a trade magazine for and directory of street theatre practitioners (first published 1985); prominent festivals at Aurillac (from 1986) and Chalon-sur-Saône (from 1987); and HorsLesMurs, a national resource centre for street arts, created in 1993. Throughout the 1990s there emerged, often in former industrial spaces, a network of *fabriques*, centres of street theatre creation that host companies in residence as they develop new work; these sites include Les Abattoirs in Chalon-sur-Saône (1991), Le Fourneau in Brest (1994), Le Moulin Fondu in Noisy-le-Sec (1996), and l'Atelier 231 in Sotteville-lès-Rouen (1998).[3] The names of these centres, and their collective designation as *fabriques*, recall their previous occupations while underscoring their continued status as sites of production: street theatre is *made* here, not simply disseminated.

In the introduction to this book I proposed that, in contemporary France, street theatre is working memory's privileged artistic form. In this chapter I explain why. It is not merely because, as outlined above, street theatre developed and professionalized amidst economic crisis, the new urban policy of the 1970s, and deindustrialization. This historical coincidence is necessary but not sufficient to explain French street theatre's function as working memory. Rather, street theatre is working memory's privileged artistic form because of how it engages space and time, its fraught relationship with Fordist-Taylorist modernity, and its ambivalence towards a mythologized, premodern urban ideal. These traits are *legible* in the prevailing origin stories that continue to govern French street theatre's production and reception, and *perceptible* in some of French street theatre's longest-running

and most iconic performances. Therefore this chapter brings together street theatre historiography and performance analysis. In doing so, it shows how street theatre's engagement with real and imagined pasts shapes persistent assumptions about its political efficacy and its relationship to theatre in purpose-built spaces. French street theatre's origin stories trace the form to the protests of May 1968 or link it to a premodern carnivalesque; in both cases, street theatre is supposed to transcend the atomization of bodies in space and time by eliminating the distinction between performer and spectator. I find this claim to be anti-theatrical, and also inadequate in its reductive account of street theatre's political, spatial, and temporal work. Ultimately, this investigation reveals that street performers might do more complex historiographic work in the theatrical event than these dominant origin stories would suggest.[4]

Street theatre's negative space

Contemporary French street theatre emerged concomitantly with what François Hartog calls a 'memorial wave' in the 1970s and 1980s.[5] French historians and film-makers released works that reckoned with the legacy of Vichy and Nazi collaboration.[6] The editors of immigrant magazine *Sans Frontière* (founded in 1979) created a regular feature, 'Mémoire Immigré,' dedicated to narratives of working-class immigrant lives, personal testimonies, and family histories.[7] Labour historians drew on oral histories of factory workers to write 'history from below.' Memoirs of rural and peasant life became national best-sellers, and in some cases their authors became television celebrities.[8] The proliferation and consumption of memory work responded to the imminent disappearance or radical transformation of the documented experiences: the aging and natural death of Holocaust survivors, a shift in the immigrant experience from temporary working arrangement to permanent family resettlement, the deindustrialization of urban areas, and the industrialization of agriculture.[9] Memorial work, the forging of a link between present and past, kept the recent past present before it could slip away.

The figure of the *saltimbanque*, so prominent in the name of the 1973 Aix-en-Provence festival and in the discourse of street theatre throughout the 1970s, operates somewhat differently. Though above I have conformed to current usage and translated *saltimbanque* simply

as 'street performer,' the image of the *saltimbanque* corresponds more precisely to the Italian *saltimbanco* or English mountebank: the early modern medicine man who peddled panaceas in the marketplace from atop a trestle stage, often accompanied by musicians or *commedia* actors.[10] The street performers at the 1973 Aix-en-Provence festival did not dispense medical advice, but they did (or were supposed to) embody a pre-industrial mode of urban sociality. As Jean Digne writes, 'the city in its incubator shell had not lived up to its potential since the Middle Ages.'[11] The celebration of the *saltimbanque* by proponents of the emergent form of street theatre does not preserve a repertoire in the process of disappearing (as was the case with much memory work of the 1970s) so much as it facilitates the *re*-emergence of a repertoire supposedly long since vanished. By resurrecting the *saltimbanque* as their 'figurehead,' street theatre practitioners bracketed French modernization.[12] The relationship to space and time embodied by the *saltimbanque* evoked both the pre-industrial past and more recent crises in Fordist modernity, including, crucially, the festive energies of May 1968.

Kristin Ross has called May 1968 the 'confirming afterthought' of France's postwar modernization.[13] During the postwar decades, France sought a 'third way' between American-style capitalism and Soviet-style socialism, neither of which was particularly attractive. But ultimately it became a consumer society in the model of the United States: mass production facilitated mass consumption, and a combination of job security and rising wages (both hard-won by unions) formed the basis of a compromise between labour and capital. But this compromise did nothing to resolve the problem of worker alienation. Inside the factory, the rhythms of the Fordist assembly line dominated the production process. Throughout the *Trente Glorieuses*, France's thirty continuous years of postwar economic growth, the general trend was towards deskilling labour. For many, automation and mechanization eliminated backbreaking work and complete physical exhaustion. But these were replaced by equally draining mental fatigue and repetitive tasks. Thus striking workers in May 1968 replaced conventional *quantitative* demands (pertaining to working hours, vacation time, rate of pay) with *qualitative* demands for a 'humanization of work.'[14] These qualitative demands were not necessarily revolutionary or fundamentally anticapitalist – though many were – but they rejected the tight regulation, close surveillance, and mechanical repetitiveness of Fordist-Taylorist factory production. Inside worker-occupied factories, strike committees organized music, dances, games, film screenings, and theatrical performances. Arts and festive practices undermined the rhythms and spatio-temporal compartmentalization of the Fordist factory.

The spectre of May 1968 looms large in French street theatre historiography; it is largely from 1968 that the discourse of street theatre inherits its persistent rhetoric of border crossing (see the Introduction). For Ross, May 1968 was a 'crisis in functionalism,' during which students and workers challenged the confines of their designated spaces and social roles.[15] The same was true of the theatre. Post-World War II cultural decentralization efforts had produced numerous 'popular' or 'people's' theatre buildings in working-class areas, but rather than nurturing new working-class audiences, these theatres tended to attract existing bourgeois audiences who were willing to make a pilgrimage to see noted directors' productions of Shakespeare, Molière, and Brecht. Faced with empty auditoria during May 1968, theatre-makers took to the streets or arranged with strike committees to perform in occupied factories.[16] The goal was not merely to find missing audiences, but also to join workers and students in challenging the compartmentalization of intellectual/ creative and manual/productive labour. Philippe Ivernel explains:

> More than the occupation of the Odeon, the major phenomenon [for theatre in 1968] is without doubt the desertion and closure of the auditoria. Real life is elsewhere, in the street, in the factories, in the occupied universities, everywhere the collective reappropriation of spaces of life and work is underway. This reappropriation, it must be stressed, does not promote new enclosures. If real life is somewhere, properly speaking, it is in the transgression of borders that in times of normalcy (that is to say, of normativity) partition different social spaces, isolate different activities: the economic, the cultural, the political.[17]

In May 1968 theatre endeavours to get closer to something called real life, not through mimetic fidelity but through physical proximity. This real life is at once *somewhere* – in the streets, in occupied factories and universities – and in the act of crossing to those somewheres from somewhere else.

Street theatre scholarship depicts this act of crossing not merely as a taking to the streets but as a *re*taking *of* the streets. As Emmanuel Wallon writes, 'since the end of the 1960s, theatre, music, dance, puppetry, circus, visual art, cinema and video, without forgetting pyrotechnics, have newly taken hold of public space, from which the authorities and their police, the academies, and other institutions had driven them after the age of fairgrounds.'[18] In this prevalent version of events, the late 1960s marked both a rupture (suggested by *newly*) and a return to a poorly periodized golden age of street performance (the vaguely Bakhtinian 'age of fairgrounds'). Philippe Chaudoir has suggested that street theatre practitioners and scholars claim a connection to medieval

performance practice in order to establish contemporary street theatre's artistic legitimacy.[19] But street theatre practitioners do not, and cannot, trace direct acts of transfer in the way that Shakespearean actors like Kean once did; histories of French street theatre rely on the gap between the mythologized *distant* past (the age of fairgrounds) and the mythologized *recent* past (May 1968). This break, the negative space of French street theatre historiography, allows street theatre practitioners to situate themselves as both traditional and radical, as legitimate claimants to the street and as sufficiently illegitimate to launch anti-institutional critiques.

As the 1973 Aix-en-Provence festival suggests, street theatre's boundary crossing is both spatial and temporal; it marks an attempt to access, if not other spaces and times, then other relationships *to* space and time, prior to the spatio-temporal abstractions and regimentations of modernity, and often described in shorthand as *festival*. The space-time of festival promises to bring the street back to life. A long-time concern of Henri Lefebvre's, festival, conceived as the ludic *use-value* of urban space (as distinct from its *exchange-value*), became an explicit goal of France's new urban policy in the 1970s.[20] Whether they are conscripts or volunteers, contemporary street theatre practitioners 'reanimate' the street (to borrow from Chaudoir) after periods of modern urban death characterized by the *grands projets* of Haussmannian demolition or postwar concrete utopias.[21] For Chaudoir, a scholar primarily interested in the sociology of public space, contemporary street theatre is the aesthetic component of an attempted return to the fundamentals of vibrant urban (or more accurately, village) life.

In France the oft-cited model for this reanimation is Rousseau. Chaudoir claims that street theatre 'seeks to renew a more Rousseauist tradition of festival; a paradox, when one considers that for Rousseau the festival is a specific characteristic of village sociability and is precisely opposed to urban spectacularity.'[22] Rousseau's anti-urban sentiment and his anti-theatrical prejudice sustain each other, and both resurface in the discourse surrounding contemporary French street theatre. Wallon writes that

> Jean le Rond d'Alembert was surely right to encourage the citizens of Geneva to construct theatres, buildings dedicated to representation, machines for effecting the symbolic break between actors and spectators, devices for separating poem from reality, rather than to content themselves, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau implored them to do, with the spectacle of a happy people dancing around a tree of liberty. These institutions of fiction, in which the seat occupied signals social rank, prospered again once the bourgeoisie had deposed the aristocracy.[23]

The imagery here distinguishes between unnatural separation, effected by 'machines' and 'devices,' and natural unity, the wholeness and wholesomeness of a community dancing around a tree. This distinction persists in street theatre historiography. If 1968 marked a rupture and a return, then in this particular version of the narrative the return was to a 'natural' state, free from artifice, prior to the political ascendance of the bourgeoisie. The negative space excluded by street theatre history is the space of theatre itself, at least the kind of theatre based on mimesis and representation and patronized by the bourgeoisie in which, to borrow from Nicholas Ridout, 'one group of people spend leisure time sitting in the dark to watch others spend their working time under lights pretending to be other people.'[24]

In a move repeated by too many writers on street theatre (or for that matter on theatre generally), Wallon conflates the absence of physical boundaries between actor and spectator with the absence of any distinction between their roles. If actor and spectator occupy the same space, the logic goes, then they are in communion. And in a fallacious reversal of that logic, any division of that space makes communion impossible. The separation anxiety pervading street theatre discourse serves a purpose, rewriting theatre history to make all street theatre appear politically radical in comparison to the theatre of purpose-built spaces.

According to Wallon, the possibility of communion between actor and spectator ended with the removal of stage seating: 'After the last banquettes were removed from the stage following the petition of Voltaire, this aesthetic of the "fourth wall" reigned supreme [*regna sans partage*]. The curtain materialises it. From its rise, the performance unfolds as if no one were attending it.'[25] There are two historical slippages at work here. First, although the removal of stage seating in the eighteenth century created a stricter physical divide between actors and spectators and facilitated greater illusionism, the fourth wall is a product of late nineteenth-century Naturalism.[26] Second, by ascribing the removal of stage seating to Voltaire, Wallon ignores the material reasoning behind the practice and its discontinuation. Voltaire (along with Diderot) did openly condemn the practice of stage seating, but theatres continued to sell banquette tickets for years, against the philosophers' strenuous objections. Stage seats were occupied and paid for handsomely by the wealthy and/or aristocratic, whose funds the theatres could not afford to refuse. The Comédie-Française finally removed its stage seating on 23 April 1759 after the Comte de Lauraguais offered the theatre a generous subsidy to compensate for lost revenue.[27] The presence of spectators on the eighteenth-century stage does not indicate a carnivalesque levelling of high and low, but is instead, much like the auditorium seats that

Wallon deplores, a signal of social rank. From their onstage banquettes aristocratic spectators could make themselves into objects of admiration and fascination and exhibit their wealth with ostentatious clothing. The self-styled libertines among them could also more easily slip backstage to pursue liaisons with actresses.[28]

Wallon's two historical slippages function together to equate physical separation between actor and spectator with economic class distinction; by conflating the physical separation between actor and spectator with Naturalist fourth-wall aesthetics, he is also able to position post-1968 street theatre as radical compared to a 'reformer' like Brecht. This version of street theatre's history erects a wall in the eighteenth century in order to break it down in 1968: 'Against the closure of representation, [the '68ers] proclaim the rupture of the fourth wall and an opening into the fresh air.'[29] The erosion of class distinction here is as simple as breaking through a wall that does not exist.

Contemporary French street theatre is then marked by legacies of anti-functionalism (inherited from May 1968) and anti-theatricality (inherited from Rousseau). The intermingling of these legacies is legible in Sylvie Clidière's definition of street arts for France's National Federation of Street Arts. As noted in the Introduction, she allows for the possibility of street theatre in the wings of a purpose-built proscenium stage. By this definition, street theatre may occur in predesignated spaces of theatrical labour, so long as that labour is nonrepresentational; the problem is less the exterior shell of the theatre building and more the role-play that occurs in one particular part of it. Street theatre, for Clidière, occurs '*hors lieux pré-affectés*.'[30] Although this translates roughly to 'outside preassigned or predesignated places,' the French verb *affecter* creates a semantic association between the rejection of functionalism and the rejection of theatricality. *Affecter* means to designate for a certain usage (especially in the case of requisitioned buildings, earmarked sums of money, or military personnel) *and* to affect in the more familiar English senses, first of feigning, simulating, or exaggerating, and second of acting upon, moving, or afflicting. To perform *hors lieux pré-affectés* is to perform outside of predesignated, purpose-built spaces, with the additional connotation of performing outside those spaces given over to affectation. Functionalist use of space thus becomes conflated with fakery. As a result, street theatre acquires a veneer of authenticity and truthfulness simply by leaving the stage.

Here again, the association between the physical separation between actor and spectator (theatre space) and the separation of actor and role (the mimetic gap) is inherited from Rousseau. But at the heart of Rousseau's anti-theatrical prejudice is a kind of functionalism that runs

counter to the political project of much contemporary street theatre. Rousseau opposes the actor to the orator, who 'represents only himself; he fills only his own role, speaks only in his own name, says, or ought to say, only what he thinks; the man and the role being the same, he is *in his place*; he is in the situation of any citizen *who fulfills the function of his estate*.'[31] The core problem for Rousseau is not just the physical divide between actor and spectator but the divergence between actor and role, between utterance and meaning or effect: a divergence or friction that threatens a version of democracy in which each citizen is in his or her proper place, performing his or her proper function and remaining true to it. Rousseau's problem, as Juliane Rebentisch points out, is with irony: '[T]he picture Rousseau paints of the actor coincides with the figure of the ironist. For the actor is a master less of dissimulation than of dissimulation marked as such [...] irony not only separates the man from his role, leaving the status of the man behind the roles undetermined. The indeterminacy of the man behind the roles in irony also affects the roles themselves.'[32] Rousseau does not claim that the hapless audiences of Geneva will mistake the actor for the role; he does not 'accuse [the actor] of being a deceiver but of cultivating by profession the talent of deceiving.'[33] For Rousseau, deception entertains the theatre spectator within the relatively safe confines of the theatre building, but threatens the workings of functionalist democracy (a place for everyone, and everyone in their place) when it infects the broader public sphere. In other words, it is all good fun until it leaves the theatre.

The foundational myths of contemporary French street theatre are at odds. This is not simply because one origin story dates the practice to a premodern period while the other dates it to May 1968; these origin stories work in tandem, presenting that May as rupture from urban-industrial modernity and a return to the lost village festivity of a loosely defined 'before' – a break from the destructive myth of linear progress.[34] The issue is rather that the anti-functionalism of May 1968, based on the dismantling of distinctions between different social roles and different spheres of activity, is fundamentally incompatible with Rousseauian anti-theatricality, despite Rousseau's apparent interest in wholeness and unity. Contemporary French street theatre is not the triumph of Rousseauian village festivity; there can be no unproblematic return to, or reanimation of, a pre-industrial, ante-urban utopia. Even if street theatre 'brings back' a traditionalist public space, it pulls the space of the (mythologized) past forward into the present through the filter of industrial modernity.

The long-running street theatre productions analysed below, *2CV Théâtre* (Théâtre de l'Unité, 1977–97) and *Bivouac* (Génerik Vapeur,

1988–), demonstrate two different ways in which this might occur. Founded by Jacques Livchine, Hervée de Lafond, and Claude Acquart in 1972, the Théâtre de l'Unité is France's oldest continuously operating street theatre company. For *2CV Théâtre*, the company transformed a Citroën 2CV into a two-seater proscenium theatre, parked it in a public square, and sold tickets to the show inside. Caty Avram and Pierre Berthelot founded Générik Vapeur in 1983; commentators now refer to it alongside Théâtre de l'Unité and other troupes (e.g. Royal de Luxe, Ilotopie, Délices Dada, Transe Express) as one of France's 'historic' street theatre companies.[35] In *Bivouac*, still part of the company's touring repertoire, performers caked in blue make-up toss, push, and roll empty oil drums through the streets, accompanied by a metal band that plays from atop a truck. Both *2CV Théâtre* and *Bivouac* have become emblematic of their respective companies thanks to their lengthy stays in the repertoire and the vast geographic extent of their tours. They have also become emblematic of contemporary French street theatre more generally because of *2CV Théâtre*'s parodic treatment of the rituals and codes surrounding the institutions of the French stage and *Bivouac*'s boisterous spirit of transgression. More importantly for the current study, these productions reveal that French street theatre's fraught relationship to Fordist-Taylorist modernity surfaces not only in historiography, but also in performance. At key moments in the emergence of contemporary street theatre, these productions take up the products and by-products of French industrialization and establish complex links to real and imagined pasts.

Complex nostalgia: *2CV Théâtre*

The 2CV theatre is painted to resemble the marble of a grand theatrical edifice, with veins of brown and green splintering across the vehicle's cream-coloured body. Heavy, natty red curtains hanging in the interior convey an atmosphere of faded elegance. A tiny chandelier dangles from the upholstered ceiling above two auditorium seats. These face the rear of the vehicle and the theatre's gilded proscenium arch, which frames a panel painted to resemble the drape of the theatre's curtains. The stage itself consists of a wooden board and curved apron installed across the width of the car's interior. For each performance of *2CV Théâtre*, Théâtre de l'Unité parked the 2CV in a public square and partially cordoned it off with a rope. A Republican guardsman (*garde républicain*) patrolled this

dividing line, occasionally drawing his sword in salute.[36] A duty fireman (Livchine) carried out his inspections to ensure that the 2CV theatre was safe for public use. A cantankerous usherette (Lafond) hawked the two, five-franc tickets to the eight-minute performance inside the car. The two paying spectators saw a fourth actor perform *L'Odysée des mulots du lac* (*The Odyssey of the Lake Field Mice*), a children's fable penned by Lafond, with substantial borrowing from Proust.[37] For the majority of spectators, however, *2CV Théâtre* was a free outdoor performance consisting of the largely improvised banter and physical comedy among the fireman, the usherette, and the mute guardsman, which continued outside the car throughout the show-within-a-show.

2CV Théâtre is an important case study for this chapter because of the symbolic clout it holds in narratives of street theatre's contemporary development in France, and because of French street theatre's fraught relationship with the period of Fordist-Taylorist modernity that produced the 2CV as material object and cultural icon. Counter to the prevalent origin narratives discussed above, performance analysis of *2CV Théâtre* suggests that we must resist both pitting a populist street theatre against an elitist, institutional indoor theatre and oversimplifying the former's nostalgia for vaguely premodern spaces and modes of sociability.

2CV Théâtre was originally a *spectacle d'annonce* (literally, an 'announcement show,' a kind of theatrical teaser) for the play *Dernier Bal* (*Last Dance*), written by Livchine about the closure of his father's factory.[38] *2CV Théâtre* responded to a double need. First, it was an attempt to attract audiences to a struggling show. Théâtre de l'Unité had recently experienced what Livchine remembers as 'traumatizing failures' during its production of Gogol's *The Government Inspector*.[39] Actors in that production had stood outside the theatre in costume in an unsuccessful attempt to lure audiences. When it became clear that *Dernier Bal* might not fare much better, the company adopted an even more proactive approach. Second, *2CV Théâtre* functioned as a boost to company morale through a combination of wish-fulfilment and healthy self-deprecation; rather than play to empty houses, the company would create a house that, with its two-seat capacity, was always full. 'This company that wants to be popular and has no audience' would transform the 2CV 'into a popular theatre for an elite public.'[40] *2CV Théâtre* is not working against the idea of institutional popular or people's theatres; rather, it was originally an attempt to reinvigorate the public for just such endeavours. *2CV Théâtre* began as what Christopher Balme would call an 'articulation': a discursive joint between a theatrical institution and a potential public.[41] Like the poster or playbill, the

spectacle d'annonce is designed to create a public for performance, but it operates outside the spatial boundaries of the theatre building and the temporal boundaries of the main theatrical event. Ultimately, *2CV Théâtre* overshadowed and outlasted the play it was created to promote. By 1980, when Théâtre de l'Unité brought *2CV Théâtre* to the Avignon Festival, all mentions of *Dernier Bal* had disappeared from the press coverage.[42] *2CV Théâtre* may have failed as articulation, but it triumphed as a theatrical event in its own right.

2CV Théâtre begins with a procession through town to the eventual performance space.[43] Footage of a 1981 performance in the aptly named commune of Joyeuse shows the actors moving slowly, solemnly, and silently through an open-air market, attracting smiles and stares. The guardsman skewers a few vegetables with his sword. The usherette holds aloft an impractically tiny red parasol. *2CV Théâtre* has already begun, although these initial moments are intelligible as a traditional preshow parade, a less boisterous version of the medieval and early modern practice of 'crying the play.'[44] The procession establishes the ritual, but also serves the pragmatic purpose of attracting additional spectators (originally the task of the entire performance). Innocent passers-by follow the troupe to the parked 2CV, where the in-the-know audience awaits.[45] The 2CV is partially cordoned off by a low-slung rope that physically separates performers from spectators, while orienting the spectators to the 'front' of the performance space (the right-hand side of the vehicle).[46]

The Republican guardsman officiously patrols the borders of the company's performance space, solemnly marching around the 2CV, turning in sharp right angles, and occasionally drawing his sword to perform a salute. France's Republican Guard, part of the National Gendarmerie, protects the residences of the president and prime minister and the Senate and National Assembly, but its most visible function is as ceremonial guard during official state visits. The guardsmen are conspicuously present at Paris museums and theatres during visits by the president or foreign dignitaries. The Republican Guard is itself a symbol of France, tasked with defending other national symbols. The gestures, mannerisms, dress uniform, and cultural connotations of the Republican guardsman in *2CV Théâtre* separate the performance space from the space of the everyday, marking it as significant and even linking it to state power. The guardsman also operates in tandem with the cordon separating performers from spectators, and prefiguratively elevates the status of those elect spectators who will eventually purchase tickets, cross the cordon, and enter the car. Crucially, however, the guardsman's turns are just a bit *too* sharp, his salutes *too* broad, his manner *too* ceremonious to be taken seriously. Even for an innocent

passer-by, there is no mistaking this guardsman – the fake symbol – for the real symbol, just as there is no mistaking the car's impressive paint job for actual marble.

In her role as the usherette, Lafond does most of the speaking. She introduces the actor who will perform *L'Odysée des mulots du lac* inside the 2CV. The actor, dressed in a tuxedo, waves and bows before disappearing into the trunk of the car to prepare. The usherette then demonstrates the functioning of the two wooden theatre seats, which have not yet been placed inside the vehicle. She describes them as 'two authentic seats from the Comédie-Française, 1936 versions.'[47] With her foot she repeatedly pushes down one of the folding seats and lets it snap back up, explaining the resulting clack as 'a typical sound, a sound of theatre seats, not of 2CV seats.' The usherette's speech oscillates between authentication and irony; she reassures the assembled spectators that they see before them 'a veritable theatre, in the grand French tradition … where one hears almost nothing, where one sees almost nothing.' Of course, one might level similar accusations at the street: although the cordon around the 2CV helps to establish sightlines, most spectators must adjust their positions and crane their necks for a better view, and in a (positive) review of a 1980 performance J. Leclaire complains that much of the dialogue is lost due to 'undesirable ambient noises,' such as cars, motorcycles, and nearby drumming.[48] The 'veritable theatre' is both the faux-marble automobile and the street itself. The duty fireman then installs the seats inside the 2CV and, at the request of the usherette, lowers the fire curtain. The usherette remarks that, with the fire curtain securely in place, 'either the actor will roast, or the spectators will.' The theatre might be a death trap, but the physical barrier between actor and spectator ensures that only a portion of the group would perish.

The usherette advertises the exclusivity of the theatrical experience even as she continues to refer to it as 'popular theatre.' After preparing and distributing the tickets, she readies the two paying customers to enter the 2CV theatre by adorning them with necessary accessories, selecting from a small stash of beaded necklaces, clutches, and cravats. Lafond puts these on the ticketholders herself, patting them gently and brushing real or imagined lint off their clothes while maintaining her distinctly unfriendly professional demeanour. The ticketholders then climb into the 2CV through the front passenger door. Before closing the door behind them, Lafond crows to the crowd that the performance is sold out. The lucky ticketholders, she explains, will now experience 'eight minutes, forty-five seconds of Culture.' Lafond's tone and brusque demeanour capitalize the 'C.'

For their five francs, ticketholders witness *L'Odysée des mulots du lac*. The painted front panel rises jerkily to reveal the actor sitting behind the stage. With a warm smile, speaking as if to children, the actor recounts the fable of the field mice. In this fable, a group of field mice are frightened away from their idyllic home on the shores of a lake by the arrival of a large cat. On one especially hot summer day, six young mice dare to venture into the water while the cat is snoozing. Seeing no response from the cat, the other mice join in, exclaiming joyfully that, because 'it's natural' for a cat to avoid the water, they may swim in safety. Finally the cat, having been awake the entire time, dives into the water and massacres the mice. The actor concludes, 'Go and tell this story throughout the world, so that the odyssey of the field mice of the lake remains forever inscribed in all memories. The moral: never say that nothing bad can come of tenderness, and do not say, "it's natural," for nothing is immutable.' The mice of the fable fall victim to the cat's talent for deception, its ability to put up a front and behave in a way counter to its intentions, and also to their own confidence in a natural order in which each creature remains in its proper place. The mice fail to understand how theatre works and thus pay dearly for their naïveté.

Livchine calls *L'Odysée* 'laboratory theatre.' The actor visualizes Lafond's fable using a classic demonstration of the surface tension of water. On the wooden stage in front of the performer a saucer of water represents the fable's lake setting. The actor uses a hand mill to grind black pepper flakes onto the surface of the water; these flakes play the mice. At the fable's climax, to represent the cat jumping into the lake, the performer releases a single drop of liquid soap into the saucer, which breaks the water's surface tension and sends the pepper flakes scattering to the edges of the dish.

Most who witness *2CV Théâtre* never see *L'Odysée des mulots du lac*. Instead, they are treated to the physical comedy and verbal sparring of the duty fireman and the usherette as they attempt to locate the Republican guardsman, who has gone missing in the process of getting the ticketholders inside the 2CV. This portion of the performance was entirely improvised, although it is likely that certain patterns emerged over the course of twenty years. Livchine and Lafond were never told in advance where the guardsman would reappear; it was up to the audience to point him out. Sometimes he would seem to materialize next to a statue or on a rooftop, and at least once he enlisted a young woman to appear with him in a window. The 1981 footage shows him apparently (but comically) trapped on a tiny, third-storey balcony. Children and adults in the audience laugh uproariously as the guardsman attempts to lower himself over the edge to safety, his ungainly efforts contrasting

with his earlier pomp and professionalism. The usherette hurls condemnations at the guardsman. The duty fireman frantically locates a public telephone and 'calls' the authorities to report the incident. The atmosphere outside the 2CV is more madcap and slapstick than that inside the vehicle, although it is likely that the laughter of the outdoor audience would have been audible inside the car. The ticketholders experience an aspect of the performance not available to the non-paying audience, but ticketholders would be aware that they were missing something also. At the conclusion of *L'Odysée des mulots du lac* the guardsman at last rejoins the duty fireman and the usherette, and the three release the ticketholders from the confines of the 2CV. The usherette urges the assembled audience to step back, shouting 'The mob is coming out!' The two ticketholders emerge from the vehicle into the crowd, the performers bow, and the show is over.

2CV Théâtre illustrates how street theatre might ironically proliferate boundaries between actor and spectator rather than eliminate them. The Unité performers over-identify with the elevated status of institutional French theatre for comic effect. In her review of the 1980 performance at the Avignon Festival, Nicole Collet observes that the performers' pompous antics make even the city's imposing Palais des Papes appear ridiculous: 'By pushing to the extreme the problem of elitism, the Théâtre de l'Unité works homeopathically.'[49] Collet, writing for the leftist newspaper *L'Humanité*, suggests that *2CV Théâtre* might cure institutional theatre of its elitism by playing it to the hilt. This critique of theatrical institutions operates *theatrically*: the Unité performers do not conflate economic class distinctions with the physical separation of actor and spectator or with the mimetic gap between actor and role. They are gleefully guilty of dissimulation marked as such, what Rebentisch would call irony and what Rousseau would call acting; they have not taken to the streets to escape theatricality so much as they have taken theatricality to the streets. This affectionate parody of French theatre institutions is particularly complex, because the performers dissimulating and marking their dissimulation are playing characters that, although affiliated with the theatre, normally operate outside the frame of dissimulation. Three of the four characters (usherette, duty fireman, Republican guardsman) are support staff of theatrical institutions; they also (in the case of the fireman and the guardsman) link theatrical institutions to other institutions with their own sets of codes. These three characters are played by actors who are intelligible as other than themselves. This is less apparent in the case of Lafond, who is fulfilling the function of an usherette as well as playing one, but she has clearly adopted a surly performance persona. As a character she puts spectators in their proper place; as a dissimulator

she threatens the stability and properness of such places. Only inside the 2CV theatre is irony dispensed with in favour of sincerity. The 'actor' here is a storyteller, recounting a fable. Although the delivery is heightened and enunciated, with an expressiveness not usually reserved for everyday speech, the actor is not pretending to be anyone else. The only things standing in for other things are the objects of the laboratory theatre: the pepper flakes, liquid soap, and saucer of water. In the case of *2CV Théâtre* the mimetic gap between performer and role applies more to the support staff outside the ostensible space of representation than to the actor-storyteller within it.

This does not mean, however, that the theatre interior becomes a space of truth and immediacy while the street outside is condemned as a space of deception. Inside the vehicle, objects do still stand in for other things, and even the moral of the recounted fable warns listeners not to take anything as natural and unchangeable or to assume that kind eyes presage kind deeds. The actor warns his or her audience not to take anything at face value. More importantly, the space created by *2CV Théâtre*, including both the car's interior and the surrounding area, is not as simple as a theatre interior set apart from the public exterior of the street. The cordon separating most of the assembled audience from the 2CV divides performers and spectators while joining them together in one performance space, the precise contours of which become more amorphous towards the back of the crowd. But this space is also intelligible at various moments as backstage space *and* front of house. *2CV Théâtre* does not dispense with the physical separation of actor and spectator; it does not attempt to break from performers' space into audience space and in so doing create a larger rupture between performance space and the world outside; instead, *2CV Théâtre* plays on and off of such distinctions. Benjamin Wihstutz refers to the 'dual differentiation' between actors and spectators and between theatre space and the everyday as 'the topology of theatre.'[50] As an area of mathematics, *topology* refers to the study of those properties of geometric objects that remain unchanged even when the objects are stretched, compressed, or otherwise distorted; these properties include 'categories such as inside and outside, open and closed.'[51] Wihstutz borrows the mathematical concept of topology to argue that, even if 'the divided space of performance can similarly be stretched, compressed, bent, or contorted,' the distinct groups of performers and spectators cannot 'be cut into two completely distinct halves or merged into a single one.'[52] *2CV Théâtre* does not disavow the dual differentiation between performer and spectator and between theatrical space and the everyday; rather, it multiplies these differentiations to form a manifold theatre topology.

The tension between populism and elitism, openness and enclosure, is complicated by the intelligibility of the 2CV as a mass-produced, affordable convertible. Against the enclosed environment of the daily commute, the 2CV promised a refreshing breeze. The car's canvas roll-top roof allowed it to carry unwieldy cargo and offer the liberating open-air drive of a more expensive luxury convertible. Citroën's 1963 promotional brochure for the 2CV depicts both possibilities: the 2CV pictured has room for a grandfather clock, a bicycle, beach toys, and an improbable number of smiling white people. The 2CV, the ad copy claims, is 'a car that liberates you … you have air, you breathe … the 2CV does not enclose you: it's a true convertible. It's the only one to offer this advantage at no extra cost.'[53] Like the post-World War II experiments in theatrical decentralization, 2CV advertisements from France's Thirty Glorious Years of postwar economic growth promised mass accessibility to an elite experience. *2CV Théâtre* played on the repertoires of the theatre industry *and* the automotive industry for comic and political effect, offering limited access to a popular theatre in a popular car. But the intermingling of theatrical and automotive repertoires also troubled any neat association between populism and openness or between elitism and enclosure; after all, the elite experience that the 2CV promised to make widely available was not shelter, but fresh air.

Ultimately, the history of the 2CV is a history of post-World War II French capitalism.[54] The car was an instrument of rural modernization and symbol of mass production. Citroën vice-president Pierre-Jules Boulanger intended the 2CV to modernize the French countryside, where even during the 1930s and 1940s many farmers continued to rely on horses and carts.[55] With the lightweight seats of the 2CV removed, a farmer had room to haul hay, large wheels of cheese, crates of wine, or two sheep. The suspension was famously designed to cushion a basket of eggs sitting in the passenger seat as the car traversed uneven country terrain. The 2CV promised convenience and practicality for rural dwellers and freedom for city folk on holiday. By the 1960s Citroën was marketing the 2CV as a means by which to access an unspoilt version of the very countryside to which Citroën had introduced the automobile.[56] The same removable seats that could make room for sheep could also serve as picnic chairs. Sales declined in the late 1960s due to increased competition from Renault and foreign manufacturers, but following the oil and economic crisis of 1973, the 2CV regained its popularity. It was cheaper and more ecologically sound than many other models on the market and soon developed a cultural association with students, environmentalists, and even the anti-nuclear movement. The 2CV offered a pragmatic individual or family response to the immediate effects of crisis

(as a cheap car with reasonable fuel mileage) while serving as a material artefact of the confident economic growth and casual mass production that that crisis had brought to a standstill. It was a symbol and product of French postwar modernization that also promised to shelter its users from the deleterious effects of the very processes that created it.

Thus by 1977, when *2CV Théâtre* debuted, Citroën's 2CV was already a complex object of nostalgia.[57] It embodied a cultural longing for the confident dynamism of the postwar Fordist compromise, and for the stability of an agrarian France simultaneously invented by modernity and dismantled by modernization. The Citroën 2CV and contemporary street theatre, then, are both shaped by discourses of rupture and return, progress and nostalgia, liberation and stability, populism and elitism, and openness and enclosure, and they do not map neatly onto each other either in alignment or tidy opposition. *2CV Théâtre* makes perceptible the messiness of this map and the creases and folds in the historiography of French street theatre. The historiography discussed in the previous section conflates physical separation between actor and spectator with a series of other divisions: the mimetic gap between actor and role, the Naturalist fourth wall, power differentials between performers and their audiences, and even socioeconomic class distinctions writ large. The effect of such conflation is to posit street theatre as inherently radical and yet traditional, as a rupture from modernity and a return to mythologized premodern forms of sociability. Already, in the late 1970s, *2CV Théâtre* demonstrates an alternative model of street theatre's spatial and temporal work. It proliferates boundaries between actor and spectator (and within a group of spectators), affectionately parodying French institutional theatre even as it rejects the simplistic political dichotomy between theatre indoors and out. The performance's intermingling of theatrical and automotive repertoires facilitates a reflective stance toward the past and the desire to return to it. *2CV Théâtre* suggests that street theatre does not remember premodern forms of sociability so much as it interrogates the desire to remember them; it does not break with Fordist-Taylorist modernity so much as it attempts to make sense of the aftermath.

Industrial waste: *Bivouac*

Like Unité's *2CV Théâtre*, Générik Vapeur's *Bivouac* (1988) began as a 'prelude' to another show, *Café Gazoil* (1988), but remained in the

company's repertoire as a standalone performance long after the disappearance of the main event.[58] Générik Vapeur performed *Café Gazoil* for three years but thirty years later continues to tour *Bivouac*. Staged in derelict factories or other disused buildings slated for demolition, *Café Gazoil* offered audiences a nightmarish vision of a post-apocalyptic society oriented around the worship of metal and oil. The show drew numerous comparisons to the *Mad Max* universe (*Mad Max*, 1979; *Mad Max: Road Warrior*, 1981; *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome*, 1985) for its thematic preoccupation with oil and its visual and sonic aesthetics: the performers, smeared in engine grease or coated in ochre dust, clad in hodge-podge combinations of black leather, fake animal hides, aviator goggles and chains, corralled hundreds of empty oil drums around the cavernous space, all to the live accompaniment of Marseille metal band Leda Atomica.[59] The programme listing for the 1989 Aurillac Festival performance reads:

> Metallic epic, industrial western. Capture of the last herd of barrels (200 heads, monochrome and loud) by the 'can boys' [English in original, a play on cowboys], cowherds for tinned goods [*boîtes de conserve*] – of the *Métal Hurlant* persuasion. The barrels roll, pile up, and clang together to the rock'n metal of Leda Atomica. Chaos and burlesque, absurdity and rock'n'shock, all about a strange civilization devoted to machines and engines: our own.[60]

Science fiction anthology magazine *Métal Hurlant* (*Screaming Metal*, published 1975–87) was renowned for visually striking comics that influenced the production designs of films such as *Star Wars* (1977), *Mad Max* (1979), *Alien* (1979), and *Blade Runner* (1982). The comparison would have supported the rest of the programme's description in preparing audiences for the fantastical commingling of multiple temporal and genre reference points. (It was not uncommon to see in the pages of *Métal Hurlant* a cyborg saddling up a pterodactyl for a ride across an alien desert.) *Café Gazoil* made derelict factories resonate once again with the deafening soundscape of heavy industry, but the labour it depicted evoked that *other* vanishing bastion of (white) working-class masculinity, the ranch. For all its aggression and noise, *Café Gazoil* had the atmosphere of a boisterous children's game: the performers (mostly, but not exclusively, white men) played at cowboys with the detritus of industrial society. As the Aurillac programme makes clear, the fruitless herding and cajoling of oil drums appeared absurd, but this civilization still so slavishly devoted to the trappings of industry was, in fact, 'our own.'

In its original incarnation, *Bivouac* prefigured the madcap fossil fuel Western of *Café Gazoil*; the 1989 Aurillac Festival programme describes

the prelude simply as, 'Capture of barrels by a tribe of "can boys."'[61] *Bivouac* effectively presented *Café Gazoil* in microcosm and outdoors: Générik Vapeur performers pushed, rolled, dragged, and tossed empty oil drums through the streets, while the musicians of Leda Atomica rocked out atop a monstrous truck laden with speakers and adorned with nonsensically placed ducts. The troupe led spectators on a winding route through town to a pyramid of eighty-six metal barrels, which the performers toppled in an explosion of music and noise. Even without the benefit of the Aurillac programme, *Bivouac* would have been intelligible as a chaotic, playful fusion of the agricultural and the industrial. The can boys were assisted in their shepherding duties by a metal 'sheepdog' built out of an open barrel, cans, and scraps and mounted on four wheels. Performers pulled the metal dog sculpture down the street on a chain and fed it by tossing flares into its belly. Light and smoke escaped through slits carved into the sides of its barrel body; it appeared both as working animal and as mobile furnace. Other barrels were carved to resemble sheep. Long after *Bivouac*'s decoupling from *Café Gazoil*, the dog remains, and the ranching imagery persists. Sonia Sarfati describes a 2001 performance of *Bivouac* in Montreal as a 'transhumance' in which 'shepherds guided by an incandescent metal dog lead a flock of metallic barrels to the rhythm of … industrial percussion.' Sarfati sees the corralled barrels as 'metallic flesh produced by an animalised industrial world.'[62] An anonymous write-up of a 2011 performance in Rouen refers to the barrels as sheep 'in a period of transhumance.'[63] *Transhumance*, a recurring image in reviews of *Bivouac* and in interviews with Avram and Berthelot, refers to the seasonal relocation of a herd to a new pasture.[64] Thus *Bivouac* produces an uncanny hybrid of agricultural and industrial imagery to conjure a sense of displacement, migration, and forced relocation, inextricably linked to changes in work and labour.

Bivouac begins with the appearance of eighteen performers wearing light grey suits and caked in heavy blue pigment. The make-up has dried to a bright cerulean on the performers' exposed skin but remains a wet, dark cobalt in their hair. The gloppy substance glues their coiffures into sticky mohawks and other punk formations. Most of the performers have paired their suit jackets with short trousers that extend just past the knee; their lower legs are smeared with the same shocking blue. They wear heavy duty work gloves (in a matching blue or a stark white) to protect their hands from the edges of the metal barrels that they will lift, roll, and toss during their procession. Their wing-collar shirts and cravats are white, though over the course of the performance their make-up will stain their collars and lapels. The make-up tends to crack

and smudge during the physically demanding show, revealing patches of the performers' skin tones.

One can never be sure exactly how the blue people will arrive. Sometimes the audience assembles at one location at an appointed time, only to be herded to a second location where the blue people stand silently atop their barrels, all facing the same direction. Sometimes the crowd gathers in a square or along a marked parade route, and the performers explode onto the scene at the same time as the truck that will carry the accompanying rock musicians along the designated path. The performance might begin in eerie stillness or frenetic movement, in near silence or deafening noise.

Noise triumphs once the procession begins. From atop their truck, which at a slow pace follows the blue performers through the streets, the musicians play aggressive rock on electric guitar, bass, and drums. When vocalists are used, they do not sing discernible lyrics; they carry megaphones rather than microphones and alternately belt vowel sounds in a heavy vibrato or chant rhythmic monosyllables: 'HA – ha ha HA – ha ha HA.' The chants generate a sonic effect somewhere between forced laughter and martial arts training session. In the early years of *Bivouac* the music was predominantly punk and metal, sometimes provided by Leda Atomica. As the show entered its second decade it began to incorporate elements of techno. The heavily amplified music competes with the grinding, banging, and scraping of the metal barrels.

The procession itself consists of periods of travel interspersed with images or stunts. Performers drag and scrape their barrels along the asphalt, widening their eyes and sticking their tongues out at spectators. They lift the barrels over their heads and flip them end over end or slam them back to the ground. In the early years of the show the movement was mostly individual and improvised, but Avram and Berthelot have gradually incorporated more group choreography. In unison the performers stand behind their barrels and rock them back and forth, edge to edge, to produce a rhythmic metallic sound, mirroring the walking motion of their barrels with their own swaying bodies. They crawl down the street, clambering over and under each other, only to rush back to retrieve their barrels, pausing momentarily to stand atop them and point in the direction of travel. In some iterations performers run part of the route as a race: they line up and, on the signal, push their barrels down the street as quickly as they can. They push the upright barrels from the bottom, running while bent double, creating a sickening grinding noise of metal on asphalt. At the finish line all racers collapse, exaggerating their exhaustion, in a pile of barrels and bodies, only to jump to their feet again to continue on their way. In other iterations the performers

line up a dozen or more of the barrels on their sides and send performers rolling across them, surfing down the street on their stomachs, arms outstretched. At one point, the performers stop for a picnic of raw greens (and, in some versions, raw eggs and bright blue beverages), shared wordlessly with spectators. Some onlookers have round lettuce politely handed to them. Others must be brave enough to bite off a chunk from a head of cabbage still gripped in a performer's mouth. Throughout the procession the performers light flares and throw smoke bombs to the ground, sending up rust-red plumes that contrast starkly with their blue skin and evoke clouds of desert dust. The omnipresent metal sheepdog, pulled along on its chain, continues to spark and smoke, flares burning in its belly.

Who are the blue beings of *Bivouac*? During the first three years of *Bivouac*'s existence, when the show was still a prelude to *Café Gazoil*, the company experimented with the costumes and make-up, at times retaining the ochre hues, black leather, and apocalyptic rust-punk aesthetic of *Café Gazoil*, but eventually settling on the blue pigment and grey suits that have since become iconic. Explaining the decision, Avram claims that the blue make-up is a 'universal' colour that evokes the sea, sky, and horizon.[65] She insists that the make-up resists any specific racial referent. Still, taken together, the performers' make-up, suits, gloves, and boutonnières bear striking similarity to tropes of blackface minstrelsy. *Bivouac* might not be blackface, but it is blueface: the simultaneous construction and parody of an Other against which a group might define itself as an isomorphic 'us.' This Other is the object of both allure and disgust.[66] Both affects surface in the dynamic between *Bivouac*'s actors and audience; the blue visitors' antics attract the fascination of the crowd even as they repel the audience to a safe distance (lest spectators be hit by tumbling barrels).

Avram describes the blue beings as an archaic 'nomadic horde' and recalls the descriptions of woad-dyed 'barbarian' warriors from accounts of Roman conquest.[67] But the vague nomadism of the performance also derives from a more recent historical source. For both *Café Gazoil* and *Bivouac*, Avram and Berthelot drew inspiration from the Zanoobia scandal, which in the late 1980s became a symbol of Western governments' gross negligence in the disposal of industrial waste. The 10,800 barrels of toxic chemical waste aboard the cargo ship Zanoobia originated in the Italian port of Carrara in February 1987. Jelly Wax, a Milan-based company, was hired to destroy the waste but instead shipped it to Djibouti, just one example of what environmental groups and the press identified as an increasing tendency in the 1980s for wealthy nations to dump the poisonous by-products of their industry

in the Global South.[68] Djibouti refused to accept the shipment, at which point the waste was sent to Venezuela. The Venezuelan port permitted the cargo to be unloaded, but the government ordered the waste to be reloaded and expelled from the country after the death of a child who had been playing near an open drum of the hazardous material. The waste then wound up in Syria, where it was transferred to the Zanoobia. The Zanoobia, dubbed the 'ship of poison' and even a 'leper ship,' sailed for four months without destination.[69] Turned away by Greece, it eventually returned to Carrara, the waste's point of origin. Between Greece and Carrara a crew member died. Six of the eighteen crew members would later be hospitalized after handling leaking barrels. From Carrara, the Zanoobia travelled just seven hours to what became its final destination, Genoa. The freighter moored outside the port on 26 April 1988 and was finally permitted to dock and unload on 29 May, more than a year after the waste first left Italy. Avram calls the Zanoobia a 'floating rubbish tip, a ship of fools' turned away from every port.[70]

Every performance of *Bivouac* alludes to the Zanoobia, in the only sequence that involves a recognizable word. Somewhere along the processional route, the performers stop their individual antics and assemble behind their barrels. They rock the barrels from edge to edge as first one blue being, then another and another, takes up the rhythmic chant: 'Za-noo-bee-ah. Za-noo-bee-ah.' The eighteen performers stand in for the ship's eighteen crew. As Sara Vidal writes, 'In ten years [at Vidal's time of writing] the flight of the *Bivouac* mutants pushing their enigmatic barrels from city to city has never found safe harbour. In ten years the desperate wandering of the ship Zanoobia and its crew has never ceased.'[71] Thirty years after *Bivouac*'s premiere, it is unlikely that most spectators would be familiar with the Zanoobia debacle. An audience member might understandably mistake the performers' chant for a sequence of nonsense syllables or interpret it as an invented alien language. But even in the absence of the show's most specific historical reference point, the blue pigment and dirty barrels coalesce in performance to link *Bivouac*'s complex interplay of otherness and itinerancy to the human and environmental devastation of toxic heavy industry. The blue make-up refers simultaneously to sea and sky, as Avram notes, *and* to the chemicals that pollute them. The performers simultaneously evoke an archaic 'nomadic horde' *and* the atrocities committed by Western governments and multinational corporations against the conveniently Othered. As in *Café Gazoil*, the strange society on display is ultimately 'our own,' even if it appears as a collection of, to use Vidal's word, 'mutants.' *Bivouac* stages in urban space the semiotic and affective

confluence of industrial and societal cast-offs: heavy industry produces waste, and global capitalism produces people *as* waste.

Bivouac culminates in a public square with two triumphant acts of destruction. In the first, an automobile painted to resemble a police car is crushed in a giant mousetrap. A mousetrap is a stationary device; it captures and kills only those unfortunate creatures that stray where they do not belong. Here it is the police vehicle, ostensibly a tool in the enforcement of public order, which is shown to have transgressed by entering the public square. In the second destructive act, the *Bivouac* performers topple a massive pyramid of eighty-six metal barrels. Sometimes they crash into the barrels with a car; in other iterations a performer kicks over the pyramid from above while suspended from a crane. The wall collapses, the barrels tumble to the ground, and the performers disperse. The show is over.

The precise political connotations of *Bivouac* have understandably varied over decades of touring. In a 2011 interview, Avram reminds that the show premiered prior to the reunification of Germany: in early performances, the destruction of a massive barrier in the middle of a public square would have been intelligible as the dismantling in effigy of the Berlin Wall.[72] Sylvie Clidière and Susan Haedicke also observe the visual similarity between *Bivouac*'s barrel pyramid and Christo's 1962 installation *Iron Curtain*, a protest against the then recently constructed Berlin Wall, for which the artist blocked a narrow Paris street with eighty-nine empty oil drums.[73] Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, and since the plight of the Zanoobia has faded from cultural memory, *Bivouac*'s initial political reference points have ceded to more diffuse evocations of the placeless or relocated, including, as Avram notes, homeless people, undocumented migrants, and refugees.[74] These connotations prevent the performance from becoming an uncritical celebration of border crossing. After all, for all its preoccupation with nomadism, the production is called *Bivouac*: these odd blue beings seek shelter. Even in its literal collapsing of walls, the performance is not simply and neatly about the eradication of boundaries. The *Bivouac* beings traverse space and time, yes, but in search of safe harbour or greener pastures.

Générik Vapeur has also made temporary adjustments to the performance to suit particular sites. The route for a 1993 performance in Clermont-Ferrand took spectators on a tour of that city's monuments, including statues of Vercingetorix (82–46 BCE), who united the Gauls against Rome during Caesar's wars; Pope Urban II (*c.*1035–99), who ordered the First Crusade; and General Louis Desaix (1768–1800), who led a division of Napoleon Bonaparte's expeditionary force in Egypt.[75] These monuments furnished the performance with historical

reference points from centuries of conflict and conquest, making the 'archaic horde' of *Bivouac* locally intelligible and adding additional layers of meaning to the performance's generalized atmosphere of invasion and nomadism. During a 1990 performance in Krakow, Poland, the company tossed worthless currency (blue slips of paper) into the air and tried to exchange their plastic boutonnières for real bouquets from a flower market.[76] This performance evoked the influx of Western capital into Eastern Europe following the break-up of the Communist bloc, and it emphasized the fictional equivalences on which capitalism is based. Company members still painted themselves blue and hurled metal barrels down the street, but in this instance it was perhaps more significant that they were Western Europeans in suits who swarmed a marketplace and tried comically to rip off local tradespeople.

Bivouac harks back to pre-industrial forms of labour – nomadic pastoralism, transhumance – and, through its subversive spatial practices and aggressive soundscape, to a pre-industrial form of protest: the charivari. Charivari, described by Natalie Zemon Davis as 'a noisy, masked demonstration to humiliate some wrongdoer in the community,' was simultaneously a form of subversion and a means of maintaining the status quo through the informal regulation of social norms.[77] From the late Middle Ages and even into the eighteenth century, young unmarried men, affiliated with the local youth-abbey, would gather before the home of the offending person or persons, usually someone who had entered into a second marriage, but occasionally an adulterer, an abuser, a married couple who had failed to produce offspring, or someone who had taken a much younger spouse.[78] The masked youths banged pots, pans, and tambourines and shook rattles and bells until the disgraced perpetrator paid a fine. Charivaris began in rural areas; as they infiltrated the cities in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries they retained their ties to domestic disputes but also began to challenge political authority, occasionally relocating from offenders' private homes to the public sites of local power. These demonstrations did not radically overturn the existing order, but rather threatened with disgrace those officials who abused their position. The performers of *Bivouac* have swapped masks for blue paint, and pots and pans for metal barrels, but through their festive and noisy display they subject symbols of authority to mockery (monuments in Clermont-Ferrand, money itself in Krakow) or destruction in effigy (the fake police car, the wall). As the preceding analysis makes clear, *Bivouac* does not target a single offender; instead it conjures a range of issues depending on time and place, from the irresponsible disposal of toxic waste to the despicable treatment of refugees. But, like the charivari, *Bivouac* shifts ambivalently 'between the mockery of

authority and its endorsement, the appeal to tradition and the threat of rebellion.'[79] It is a festive acting out, a condemnation of one authority that appeals to another: the judgement of the community.

Sara Vidal refers to the charivari tradition as an example of political potency that *Bivouac* fails to achieve. She observes that *Bivouac*'s spectators are not an impromptu gathering but a crowd assembled behind barriers for the express purpose of witnessing the performance, and that an 'armada' of municipal street sweepers follow some distance behind the performers to 'efface all trace of disorder and charivari. The city waits, smiling, for it to pass and resumes its activities as if nothing had taken place.'[80] Charivaris were always ephemeral and, as Zemon Davis and Thompson make clear, in some way responsible for maintaining the status quo; the goal was not to overturn the social order but to punish those who did not adhere to it, even if those offenders occupied positions of power. But Vidal implies that spatial and temporal containment preclude street theatre's political efficacy, which in this formulation would rely on the unannounced interruption of everyday activity and refusal to collaborate with municipal authorities. Street theatre, here, must spill over its circumscribed limits in order to make political change. I am tempted to ask somewhat cynically if it is counter-revolutionary to protect spectators from flying objects: would *Bivouac* be more radical if its audiences were crushed beneath tumbling barrels? To her credit, Vidal stops short of such absurdity. But her concerns reveal once again the preoccupation of street theatre discourse with the transgression of boundaries and the conflation of that transgression with political change.

Philosopher Denis Guénoun shares Vidal's concerns and extends them to street theatre more generally. For Guénoun, the street theatre festival shares with the factory occupation the task of reclaiming not merely a given space, but the purpose of space itself. Factory occupations and street protests diverted spaces from their workaday uses but restored to them their 'essential vocation,' namely a foundational sociality in which the public might constitute itself as a public.[81] Guénoun writes of factory occupations and union marches in the past imperfect, as events that *used* to occur, because he fears that these particular modes of being together, these affirmations in shared space and time of people's 'being-people,' are on the retreat. This suspicion leads him to another: 'Is not the new way of occupying the streets by making theatre there an effect of this retreat? Do we know yet how to deliver our spaces, not as fiction, in the circumscribed time of leisure, but in reality?'[82] Guénoun anxiously subscribes to a replacement narrative that relies on a distinction between uncontained, real, authentic protest (what we used to do) and circumscribed, fake, fictional protest (what we are left with).

Implicit in this replacement narrative is the common suspicion, most famously expressed by J. L. Austin, that theatre lacks performative force. For Austin, theatrical utterances, being mere citations without the contextual framework required of felicitous performatives, remain hollow and etiolated.[83] In similar fashion, Guénoun's replacement narrative posits contemporary street theatre as a mere citation of the 'properly' political factory occupations that swept France in 1936 and 1968. Whereas Rousseauian anti-theatricality claims that theatre does *too much* (undermining a functionalist model of democracy), Austinian anti-theatricality claims that theatre does not do enough, or at least does not do it properly. (These two apparently opposing anti-theatricalities collapse into each other when Austin goes on to claim that theatrical language is parasitic, which implies it might weaken the performative force of non-theatrical language.) But critiques of Austin's anti-theatricality from Jacques Derrida, Andrew Parker and Eve Sedgwick, and Diana Taylor invite reconsideration of the relationship between theatrical performance and political performative.[84] If, as Derrida contends, all language and thus all performative speech is inherently citational, and if, as Taylor argues, performatives 'masquerade' as statements of fact in fundamentally theatrical ways, then contemporary street theatre's echoing of the past might *do* more than Guénoun suggests and *be* more than a cheap knock-off of an older, better protest.

Scholars and practitioners of street theatre invested in the form's political clout have suggested, borrowing a Boalian formulation, that street theatre might constitute a 'rehearsal' for revolution.[85] Even Guénoun acknowledges that one might 'reverse' the replacement narrative by asserting that through street theatre we 'rehearse' for the 'great festival' to come, through which we will 'relearn how to change our cities, for real.'[86] Crucially, Guénoun ascribes to the future revolution the character of festival, which ameliorates the false dichotomy of play and politics even as it evokes yet again street theatre's apparent resurrection of a festive, pre-industrial past. This reversal of the replacement narrative, however, sidesteps the question of the performative force of the theatrical event itself, and, as Guénoun admits, it might simply replace melancholy with messianism. When we claim street theatre (or theatre of any kind) as a rehearsal for future revolution, we inevitably encounter the problem of perpetual deferral: performers and spectators prepare their sensory apparatuses interminably for the Rupture (or Rapture) that will never arrive.[87]

Bivouac neither prepares the way for the great Revolution to come nor attempts to rekindle a dead revolutionary flame. Rather, like *2CV Théâtre*, *Bivouac* attempts to make sense of the aftermath of

Fordist-Taylorist modernity. But in *Bivouac* that aftermath assumes the form of a continually unfolding catastrophe. Heavy industry is not, in fact, over, though its geography has shifted. In some cases companies have relocated production to the Global South to exploit cheaper labour and weaker regulations. In other cases, industrial production remains in the Global North, but local law or corporate preference transfers the burden of waste disposal to poorer nations. One country's aftermath is another's ongoing disaster. In *Bivouac*, toxic waste, the by-product of completed industrial processes, returns to haunt the cities and towns that expelled it, herded through the streets by performers who stand in for those bodies deemed disposable.

   Thus *2CV Théâtre* and *Bivouac* both stage failed escapes from the deleterious effects of modernization. In *Bivouac*, even more clearly than in *2CV Théâtre*, there is no recourse to the pre-industrial past, which appears in this performance as perverted and irrevocably polluted. *2CV Théâtre* and *Bivouac* acknowledge the allure of unspoilt authenticity while pointing to the impossibility of accessing it: after all, that vision of the past is an invention of the urban-industrial modernity from which it promises escape.

Out of ruins

Three main threads have run through this chapter: street theatre's *temporal* work, its invocation of industrial and pre-industrial pasts; street theatre's *spatial* work, its apparent transgression of boundaries and its distinctiveness compared to purpose-built stages; and street theatre's *political* work, or the persistent question of its efficacy. Street theatre has been assumed to be politically traditionalist by virtue of its alleged nostalgia for premodern labour and sociality and politically radical merely by virtue of its border-crossing. Neither assumption is accurate. Contemporary street theatre is not a populist form inherently opposed to the elitism of enclosed proscenium theatres. It does not eliminate the distinction between actor and spectator simply by crossing from one space to another. It is not an inherently radical, emancipatory form of spatial transgression that emerged *ex nihilo* from the rupture of May 1968, nor is it a return to the wholesome authenticity of the Rousseauian bucolic. Street theatre is neither inherently progressive nor inherently traditionalist. It is not immediate, even if it claims to be. At a particular historical moment characterized, post-1973, by cyclical crisis, street

theatre is the collective embodiment in public space of complex, reflective nostalgia that makes perceptible in performance its own gaps and discontinuities.

Contemporary street theatre emerges from ruins. It emerges from the perceived failure of the prevailing modes of producing and disseminating popular or political theatre. It emerges from the dead public spaces of high modernist urban planning. And it emerges from the literal ruins of industrial production, the derelict factories that come to provide workspace, raw materials, and aesthetic inspiration. Contemporary street theatre might emerge from ruins, but the processes that produced those ruins are not yet over. In subsequent case studies I take up the question of how street theatre makes historical sense of the ongoing situations of deindustrialization and redevelopment. In Corbigny, Villeurbanne, and Nantes, street theatre events and institutions order the past and imagine a future. That future is not necessarily the Revolution but rather the completion of a situation and its retrospective transformation into an event.

Notes

1 See, for instance, Anne Gonon, *In Vivo: Les figures du spectateur des arts de la rue* (Montpellier: Editions L'Entretemps, 2011), 26, and Floriane Gaber, *Comment ça commença: Les arts de la rue dans le contexte des années 70* (Paris: Editions ici et là, 2009), 204–8.

2 David Wiles, *A Short History of Western Performance Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 127. Wiles is writing of the English context here, specifically London's Covent Garden, but in this case his insights also apply to France. London's Covent Garden was redeveloped in 1973; the Centre Beaubourg (now Centre Pompidou) opened in Paris in 1977. The piazza in front of the Centre Beaubourg is explicitly designed for use by buskers and street entertainers. This example, though, illustrates some of the conundrums of designing traditionalist space: the city made room for the Centre Beaubourg and its piazza by razing the historic marketplace of Les Halles.

3 For a more detailed overview of French street theatre's professionalization in the 1980s and 1990s, see Gonon, *In Vivo*, 29–44.

4 Portions of this chapter first appeared in David Calder, '*2CV Théâtre*: Transgression, Nostalgia, and the Negative Space of French Street Theatre,' *Theatre Journal* 69.1 (2017): 1–20.

5 François Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité: Présentisme et expériences du temps* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2012 [2003]), 142.

6 Ibid. Hartog offers as examples the films *Le Chagrin et la Pitié* (dir. Marcel Ophuls, released 1971) and *Shoah* (dir. Claude Lanzmann, 1985), and

historical studies by Robert Paxton (*La France de Vichy*, 1972), Pierre Vidal-Naquet (*Les Assassins de la mémoire*, 1987), and Henry Rousso (*Le Syndrome de Vichy*, 1987).

7   Daniel A. Gordon, 'From Militancy to History: *Sans Frontière* and Immigrant Memory at the Dawn of the 1980s,' in Emile Chabal (ed.), *France Since the 1970s: History, Politics and Memory in an Age of Uncertainty* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 115–28.

8   Sarah Farmer, 'Memoirs of French Peasant Life: Progress and Nostalgia in Postwar France,' *French History* 25.3 (2011): 362–79.

9   Beyond French borders, too, the aging of Holocaust survivors in the 1980s is cited as a major impetus for the proliferation of oral history and the development of memory studies in the academy. See Astrid Erll, 'Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction,' in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünnin (eds), *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 1–15.

10 The event was a mixture of theatrical performance and pharmaceutical sales demonstration. 'Mountebanks often staged plays in the commedia dell'arte style to follow their vending of medicines: crowds gathered to see the play, and the purchase of medicines funded the enterprise. […] Mountebank theatre was a theatre of the body, for it paraded the grotesque nature of ageing and disease, and offered in return for money the dream of a physical cure.' Wiles, *A Short History of Western Performance Space*, 118.

11 Jean Digne, preface to Gaber, *Comment ça commença*, 7.

12 Floriane Gaber refers to the *saltimbanque* as the '*figure-phare*' of the 'nascent discipline' of street theatre. Gaber, *Comment ça commença*, 12.

13 Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 3–4.

14 Nick Parsons, *French Industrial Relations in the New World Economy* (New York: Routledge, 2005). See in particular 11, 75, 94–5, 157.

15 Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, 25.

16 They went in search of what Francis Jeanson, at a meeting of theatre practitioners in Villeurbanne, called the 'non-public.' The Villeurbanne declaration is reprinted in Marie-Ange Rauch, *Le théâtre en France en 1968: crise d'une histoire, histoire d'une histoire* (Paris: Editions de l'Amandier, 2008), 490.

17 Philippe Ivernel, 'Ouverture historique: 1936 et 1968,' in Jonny Ebstein and Philippe Ivernel (eds), *Le théâtre d'intervention depuis 1968* (Lausanne: Editions L'Age d'Homme, 1983), 22.

18 Emmanuel Wallon, 'Place au public,' preface to Gonon, *In Vivo*, 7.

19 Philippe Chaudoir, *Discours et figures de l'espace public à travers les 'arts de la rue': La ville en scènes* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000).

20 See Jean-Pierre Garnier and Denis Goldschmidt, *La comédie urbaine* (Paris: Maspero, 1978) and Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, 'Lost in Transposition – Time, Space and the City,' introduction to Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, trans. and ed. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (London: Blackwell, 1996), 35. For Henri Lefebvre's treatment of *festival* as use-value, see Henri Lefebvre, 'Right to the City,' in *Writings on Cities*, 66.

21 Chaudoir, *Discours et figures de l'espace public à travers les 'arts de la rue'*, 21. Haussmann's razing of the Boulevard du Crime features prominently in prehistories of contemporary French street theatre as a moment when street performers were banished from public space. Post-World War II urban reconstruction forms a more immediate backdrop for the experiments of street performers during and after May 1968.

22 Ibid., 23.

23 Wallon, 'Place au public,' 9.

24 Nicholas Ridout, *Stage Fright, Animals, and Other Theatrical Problems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6.

25 Wallon, 'Place au public,' 8–9.

26 Jean Jullien coined the term in passing in his 1892 *Le théâtre vivant* (*The Living Theatre*). Wallon is not alone in his anachronism; Paul Friedland refers to the breach of a fourth wall in Revolutionary France. See Paul Friedland, *Political Actors: Representative Bodies and Theatricality in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002). By contrast, Dan Rebellato argues persuasively for the fourth wall's historical specificity, even linking the invisibility of the fourth wall to the Haussmannian reconstruction of Paris (namely, that the demolition of buildings left neighbouring structures with entire walls missing, thus allowing passers-by to peer into bourgeois interiors). See Dan Rebellato, 'I'm Looking Through You: Second Thoughts on the Fourth Wall,' paper presented to Alternative Victorians and Their Predecessors: New Directions in Nineteenth-Century Theatre and Performance Research, University of Warwick, 14 May 2016, available at www.danrebellato.co.uk/news/2016/5/14/im-looking-through-you.

27 See Marvin Carlson, *Voltaire and the Theatre of the Eighteenth Century* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, 1998), 113–16.

28 On the relationship between the eighteenth-century French stage and aristocratic libertinism (*la vie galante*), see Lenard R. Berlanstein, 'Women and Power in Eighteenth-Century France: Actresses at the Comédie-Française,' *Feminist Studies* 20.3 (1994): 475–506.

29 Wallon, 'Place au public,' 9.

30 Clidière, 'Définition.'

31 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Politics and the Arts: Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theatre*, trans. Allan Bloom (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1960), 80–1 (emphasis added).

32 Juliane Rebentisch, 'Rousseau's Heterotopology of the Theatre,' in Erika Fischer-Lichte and Benjamin Wihstutz (eds), *Performance and the Politics of Space: Theatre and Topology* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 145–6.

33 Rousseau, *Politics and the Arts*, 80.

34 As Bruno Latour writes: 'The idea of an identical repetition of the past and that of a radical rupture with any past are two symmetrical results of a single conception of time'; see his *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 76.

35 Julie Bordenave, 'Utopie ou divertissement poétique?' *stradda* 6 (2007): 4; Christiane Dampne, 'Transe Express: Mission transmission,' *stradda* 26 (2012): 43; Fred Kahn, 'Le théâtre de rue comme transport en commun,' *stradda* 29 (2013): 38.

36 Christian Blanc, Philippe Sturbelle, Christian Roy, and Dominique Trichet each played the guardsman at some point over the production's twenty-year tour.

37 Over the course of *2CV Théâtre*'s twenty-year run, Michel Valmer, Emile Salvador, Isabelle Caubère, Françoise Boyer, and Jocelyne Ricci all filled the role of the fourth actor.

38 Livchine's father, a Citroën subcontractor, manufactured wheel nuts for the 2CV.

39 Jacques Livchine, personal communication with the author, 11 August 2015. Théâtre de l'Unité did not begin its institutional life as a street theatre company; it produced the kind of work that it made sense to produce based on its goals and available resources. This is true of many companies of the 1970s and 1980s and today: that hybrid practice is more common than disciplinary purity.

40 Ibid.

41 Christopher B. Balme, 'Reciprocal Articulations: From Playbills to Blogs,' in *The Theatrical Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 47–73.

42 Nicole Collet, 'La 2 CV est dans la rue,' *L'Humanité*, 7 August 1980; J. Leclaire, 'Théâtre de rue: des avantages, mais un inconvénient, le bruit,' *Le Dauphine*, 21 July 1980; 'Théâtre dans la rue,' *La Marseillaise*, 25 July 1980; Jean-Pierre Thibaudat, 'La rue en rut: Trois spectacles de l'Unité et Cie égaient le macadam,' *Libération*, 29 July 1980.

43 The performance description that follows is a composite based on numerous sources, including though not limited to personal communications with Jacques Livchine. All quotations of dialogue come from television news reports containing partial video footage of performances. The archives holding these features have digitized them. See 'Théâtre de l'Unité: La 2CV Théâtre,' TF1 (1981), digitized by HorsLesMurs, available at http://rueetcirque.fr/app/photopro.sk/hlm/detail?docid=301062; and 'Théâtre de l'Unité, La 2CV Théâtre,' JT FR3 Franche Comté (24 May 1978), digitized by En Scènes, Institut National de l'Audiovisuel, available at http://fresques.ina.fr/en-scenes/fiche-media/Scenes00622/theatre-de-l-unite-la-2cv-theatre.html.

44 Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 37.

45 Théâtre de l'Unité does advertise its performances, including *2CV Théâtre*. The audience is always a mixture of the informed and the innocent – neither experience should be taken as superior to the other. (By calling certain unsuspecting spectators *innocent* I risk implying that informed audience members are somehow guilty or tainted. I ask that readers interpret this

word choice not as an endorsement of Rousseauian anti-theatricality, but as a celebration of impurity.)

46 This is common practice at France's major street theatre festivals in Aurillac and Chalon-sur-Saône. As crowds gather before a scheduled show, striped emergency tape or even aluminium construction barriers are used to ensure that the performers will have sufficient space on their arrival and to alert spectators to the show's sightlines.

47 The year 1936 would be intelligible to French audiences as the year of the leftist Popular Front and (prior to 1968) France's largest wave of factory occupations. Theatre, musical, and variety performers toured occupied factories throughout France to entertain striking workers.

48 Leclaire, 'Théâtre de Rue.'

49 Collet, 'La 2 CV est dans la rue.'

50 Benjamin Wihstutz, 'Introduction,' in *Performance and the Politics of Space: Theatre and Topology* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 4.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

53 Citroën, '1,000,000 connaisseurs,' brochure (1963), Conservatoire Citroën, Aulnay-sous-Bois.

54 In France (as in the United States) automobiles more generally became a symbol of postwar economic prosperity, social mobility, and progress, even as they brought with them the horrors of the crash and the commute. See Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

55 Although the car was initially scheduled to debut at the 1939 Paris auto show, the declaration of war cancelled the festivities. Boulanger and Citroën president Pierre Michelin delayed production and guarded the 2CV plans closely, fearing military application by the Nazis.

56 In his 1973 polemic 'The Social Ideology of the Motorcar,' André Gorz condemns the automobile's circular logic: 'Everyone wants to escape from [the city], to live in the country. Why this reversal? For only one reason. The car has made the big city uninhabitable. It has made it stinking, noisy, suffocating, dusty, so congested that nobody wants to go out in the evening anymore. Thus, since cars have killed the city, we need faster cars to escape on superhighways to suburbs that are even farther away. What an impeccable circular argument: give us more cars so that we can escape the destruction caused by cars.' Gorz also dismisses the car as a luxury good, impossible to democratize, and that loses its value once everyone has one. See 'The Social Ideology of the Motorcar,' *Le Sauvage*, September–October 1973, available at http://rts.gn.apc.org/socid.htm.

57 Svetlana Boym and Elizabeth E. Guffey (among others) have done much to salvage the concept of nostalgia. Boym distinguishes between restorative nostalgia, the stuff of nationalist myth-making, and what she calls reflective nostalgia, which pairs the desire to return to the past with an interrogation of that desire. See Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York:

Basic Books, 2001), 41–56. Guffey describes the emergence of nostalgia for modernity in Elizabeth E. Guffey, *Retro: The Culture of Revival* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 12–22.

58   Sylvie Clidière, 'Générik Vapeur ou l'art du déplacement,' *Rue de La Folie* 3 (1999): 39–41.

59   Reviewer Mathieu Benedicte called the performance's style 'Mad Max of the French.' Mathieu Benedicte, 'A Aurillac, la magie du théâtre de rue,' *Le Monde* 30 August 1989. See also Bim Mason, *Street Theatre and Other Outdoor Performance* (London: Routledge, 1992), 162. The comparisons have persisted into the twenty-first century: see Hélène Michelet, 'Furies en folie!,' *L'Humanité* 12 June 2009.

60   *Eclat*, Festival Européen de théâtre de rue d'Aurillac, 23–7 August 1989, programme, 6.

61   Ibid.

62   Sonia Sarfati, 'Bivouac de bruit et de lueurs,' *La Presse* (Montréal), 20 July 2001.

63   'Désordre poétique,' *Paris Normandie*, 27 September 2011.

64   Transhumance normally refers to movement between fixed seasonal pastures, particularly between highland and lowland. It is often used interchangeably with nomadic pastoralism, which entails continuous migration and is thus far more precarious.

65   Avram refers to sea and sky in M. B., 'C'est rock'n'choc,' *Paris Normandie*, 7 October 2011, 35. She describes the colour as universal and links it to the horizon in Clidière, 'Générik Vapeur ou l'art du déplacement.'

66   I am drawing here on both Eric Lott, *Love & Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) and Douglas A. Jones, Jr., 'Black Politics but Not Black People: Rethinking the Social and "Racial" History of Early Minstrelsy,' *TDR: The Drama Review* 57.2 (2013): 21–37. Lott draws on psychoanalytic theories of desire to account for how and why America's white working class apparently celebrated black culture while constituting itself as the 'white working class' in opposition to that culture. In this account, the white working class (particularly the white working-class man) looks on the racial Other with both envy and repulsion. In contrast, Jones contends that the 'blackness' constructed by white minstrel performers had little to do with actual black people. It was instead a third race, neither black nor white, that allowed white minstrels to differentiate themselves both from white elites and from actual African Americans. My goal here is not to minimize the differences between Lott and Jones. Nor would I claim that the history of blackface in France is identical to that of blackface in the United States. But I believe that these two processes – the commingling of desire and repulsion, and the invention of a racial identity – come together provocatively in the performance of *Bivouac*.

67   Clidière, 'Générik Vapeur ou l'art du déplacement.'

68   Jeff Kunerth, 'Third World Becoming a Dump,' *Orlando Sentinel* 21 June 1989, available at http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1989-06-21/

news/8906210137_1_toxic-waste-tons-of-toxic-hazardous; 'Toxic waste comes home to roast,' *New Scientist* 9 June 1988.

69 Associated Press, 'Ship Prepares to Unload Toxic Wastes Refused by Four Countries,' 29 May 1988, available at www.apnewsarchive.com/1988/Ship-Prepares-To-Unload-Toxic-Wastes-Refused-by-Four-Countries/id-5014842f545243750598b05e5aedb138; Andy Crump, 'Hazardous Waste,' in *Dictionary of Environment and Development: People, Places, Ideas and Organizations* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), 122.

70 Clidière, 'Générik Vapeur ou l'art du déplacement.'

71 Sara Vidal, *Bivouac: Générik Vapeur*. Paris: Sens & Tonka, 2000, 56.

72 M. B., 'C'est rock'n'choc,' *Paris Normandie*, 7 October 2011, 35.

73 Clidière, 'Générik Vapeur ou l'art du déplacement'; Susan Haedicke, *Contemporary Street Arts in Europe*, 30.

74 Sylvie Clidière, 'Générik Vapeur ou l'art du déplacement.'

75 Vidal, *Bivouac*, 96.

76 Ibid., 112–13.

77 Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France,' *Past & Present* 50.1 (1971): 42.

78 Elements of charivari persist after the eighteenth century. E. P. Thompson traces how their most socially conservative aspects continue throughout the nineteenth century and even cross the Atlantic to inform the rituals of the Ku Klux Klan. See E. P. Thompson, 'Rough Music Reconsidered,' *Folklore* 103.1 (1992): 3–26.

79 Thompson, 'Rough Music Reconsidered,' 7.

80 Vidal, *Bivouac*, 109.

81 Denis Guénoun, 'Scènes des rues,' in Claire David (ed.), *Aurillac aux limites: théâtre de rue* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2005), 26.

82 Ibid., 27.

83 J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, second edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 22.

84 See Jacques Derrida, 'Signature Event Context,' in *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988 [1972]), 1–24; Andrew Parker and Eve Sedgwick, 'Introduction to Performativity and Performance,' in Henry Bial (ed.), *The Performance Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2007), 200–7; Diana Taylor, 'Bush's Happy Performative,' *TDR: The Drama Review* 47.3 (2003): 5–8.

85 See, for instance, Haedicke, *Contemporary Street Arts in Europe*, 47. Boal proposes theatre of the oppressed as a rehearsal for the revolution in Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1993).

86 Guénoun, 'Scènes des rues,' 27.

87 I draw here on Grant Kester's critique of avant-garde shock aesthetics. See Grant Kester, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 46–54.

2

Reincorporation: putting the countryside back to work

A man in worker's blues speaks into a megaphone as his comrades distribute tracts to the assembled crowd. This task completed, the men climb atop a truck laden with empty oil drums. They rhythmically strike the drums with mallets and sticks and touch their edges with power saws and belt sanders, creating fountains of sparks that burn starkly against the deepening indigo of the evening sky. These men are members of street theatre company Metalovoice, performing as hosts of the *Ouverture* festival. It is 2011, and we are in Corbigny, a small town (population 1,681) nestled among the rolling hills of the Nièvre in Bourgogne. We have gathered here to celebrate the grand reopening of a factory, or rather the grand opening of a factory reinvented as something else.

In 1961, a leather camera case wholesaler aptly named Photosacs relocated its manufacturing activities to Corbigny from the outskirts of Paris to take advantage of government decentralization incentives and cheaper labour costs. The factory closed in 1987. In 2011, the much-renovated structure reopened as La Transverse, a street theatre production centre and arts venue, as part of an ongoing effort to refashion Corbigny as a rural cultural hub. La Transverse offers residencies to visiting theatre companies and performing artists throughout the year and serves as the permanent base of operations for Metalovoice. Founded in 1995 after splitting from drumming group Tambours du Bronx (Drums of the Bronx), Metalovoice creates multimedia performances inspired

by labour history, punk music, agitprop, working-class literature and cultural practices, and troupe members' family experiences in mining and metallurgy. Most Metalovoice performers hail from the Nièvre industrial towns of Fourchambault and Varennes-Vauzelles, roughly 60 kilometres southwest of Corbigny. Metalovoice relocated to Corbigny from Nevers, the departmental prefecture, in 2005, working out of the unconverted Photosacs factory until renovations began in 2009.

In this chapter I analyse the 1961 installation of Photosacs, its conversion into La Transverse, and the 2011 *Ouverture* festival in order to determine how a street theatre institution and a street theatre event produce the 'after but not over' of the postindustrial in a rural environment that might seem, at first glance, as though it had never been industrial in the first place.

Monique de Certaines writes in her history of the town that, 'Corbigny has never had an industrial vocation.'[1] It is true that Corbigny's industrial history is primarily that of failed twentieth-century factory relocations; the town never developed the prominent metallurgical industries of other Nièvre communities like Fourchambault and Varennes-Vauzelles. The small industrial enterprises that did flourish in Corbigny tended to support the agricultural sector. At the time of writing, Corbigny continues to employ more of its workforce in agriculture (10.8 per cent) and less of its workforce in industry (10.6 per cent) relative to the French national average (just 2.9 per cent agricultural employment, 13.8 per cent industrial employment). But in keeping with national trends, Corbigny employs the majority of its workforce in the sectors of 1) public administration, education, health, and social services (30.3 per cent compared to a national average of 30.9 per cent) and 2) commerce, transportation, and other services (39.1 per cent compared to a national average of 45.4 per cent).[2] Much of Corbigny's land continues to support agriculture (particularly cattle grazing), but the town's jobs have shifted overwhelmingly to the tertiary sector.

Like that of so many rural communities, Corbigny's population steadily declined from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1970s as France urbanized and industrialized. Since the early 1980s, however, the populations of some French rural areas have stabilized or even slowly grown as city-dwellers (often retirees, but also young working people) leave dense urban centres in search of improved quality of life. These 'neo-rurals' seek a lower cost of living and proximity to natural green space, but they also tend to relocate to those rural communities that can offer the cultural amenities of a larger city.[3] As a result, Corbigny and other small towns in France have begun to use cultural projects to compete in an emerging rural market of place. The discourse

of the creative economy – a model in which artists must create jobs, generate revenue, and contribute to local attractiveness and spatial differentiation – has expanded beyond its urban origins to reorganize the countryside as well.

Thus, like Photosacs, La Transverse relinks Corbigny to an urban-rural production chain. Photosacs employees, most of them young women, had previously worked on their parents' farms or taken jobs as cleaners or cashiers to supplement family income. Industrial decentralization, specifically the installation of Photosacs, rendered rural space and rural workers differently productive, networking Corbigny to Photosacs' company headquarters in Montreuil and to major buyers Kodak and Gevaert. As I demonstrate in this chapter, La Transverse, too, promises to generate surplus value and jobs, and to relink Corbigny to other localities both urban and rural. La Transverse is supposed to strengthen Corbigny's position in France's (and Europe's) street theatre production chain, which operates via a network of residencies and festivals. Funding for street theatre is typically attached to particular spaces. A company like Metalovoice will conceive a performance and then apply to multiple residencies in order to develop, refine, and realize a full production. If a production centre agrees to partner financially with Metalovoice, a number of company members (typically around ten) will spend two to three weeks in residence there. The production centre absorbs all costs incurred during the company's residency, including room and board; the financially strongest (and most competitive) residencies also include a small salary for company members. Metalovoice and the town council of Corbigny hope to make La Transverse into such a centre of street theatre creation. The functions of Photosacs and La Transverse are equal but not identical; at the risk of stating the obvious, street theatre performances are not camera cases, and street theatre-makers are not toiling on the assembly line. But neither does La Transverse represent the tidy replacement of industrial manufacturing by a postindustrial creative economy.

As performers, Metalovoice company members deploy their own bodies – material, signifying, and relocated – to connect Corbigny's history to a broader narrative of working-class history and activism. As events, the *Ouverture* festival and other Metalovoice performances facilitate the re-emergence and reframing of real and imagined industrial pasts. This chapter examines how the institutions and events of street theatre organize bodies in space and time and how they organize spaces and times through the body. I am less interested in tension between official narratives and subversive practices or an overly pat opposition between strategy and tactics, and more interested in a unified if

improvisatory logic according to which institutions and events structure time, space, and experience. I call this reincorporation.

For improvisers, reincorporation describes how performers lend structure to an exercise by returning to material provided at the start of a scene. Information the audience thought insignificant returns, retrospectively alters the meaning of prior action, and closes the circle of the improvisation.[4] Like repertoire, reincorporation makes the present intelligible based on recognition of existing tropes.[5] Unlike repertoire, however, reincorporation suggests the end of a process, thereby lending that process the character of an event. The conclusion is not planned in advance but becomes apparent following the unexpected re-emergence of past material.

Performance scholars of the anthropological persuasion encounter reincorporation as a synonym for reaggregation, the post-liminal phase of a rite of passage, in which the initiate is readmitted into the community as a member of a different but clearly defined status.[6] Reincorporation suggests that we have at last arrived at an endpoint, that we have settled back into order following liminal instability. This liminal period is only comprehensible *as* a period in light of the reincorporation that brings it to an end. In both its technical and its quotidian sense, to reincorporate is to bring back into the fold, to reunite as one body, or as the OED would have it, 'to make (something) a part of something else once more.' If to incorporate is, in municipal administration as in baking, to make something coherent and therefore governable, then to reincorporate is to salvage that which has, through accident or design, become incoherent and therefore ungovernable. Reincorporation offers security and comfort but, in doing so, might bolster the prevailing social order.

The etymology of the term is both bodily and spatial: the Latin *corporare*, meaning to form into or furnish with a body, is readily visible, and historically the word has served to describe the readmission or reabsorption of a geographic area into a larger body politic. I am not merely interested in reincorporation as deployed in the study of improvisation or ritual. I am concerned here with a re-embodiment that facilitates the reorganization of space and the restructuring of time. To reincorporate is to embody again and differently, to link up spaces again and differently, to bring back something from the past for use in the present and to change the meaning of past *and* present in the process. As an operation of working memory, reincorporation ultimately describes how spaces, times, and bodies become manageable, in both the technocratic and therapeutic senses of the term. But reincorporation remains improvisatory, even slipshod, and thus is itself less manageable than we might like.

In what follows, I analyse the reincorporation of Corbigny into an urban-rural production chain, first as part of industrial decentralization, then as part of a creative economy. I then consider how Metalovoice reincorporates Corbigny's industrial past in performance. Ultimately, reincorporation expresses how these various relinkings of spaces, bodies, and times are founded on the same folded logic. Reincorporation characterizes both the workings of the rural creative economy and Metalovoice's commemoration of the industrial past. It forms a conceptual bridge between the economic function of a street theatre institution and the historiographic function of a street theatre event. I proposed in the introduction to this book that working memory refers to a provisional, paradoxical link between forms of work that keeps the past present while simultaneously making it intelligible as past. Reincorporation offers one model of how such a link is forged.

From Photosacs to La Transverse: the scenario of development

Even after its renovation, La Transverse looks more like a factory than an arts centre. Journalist Jean-Mathias Joly describes it as 'a vast hangar, spacious, modern, which could be that of a newly established enterprise.'[7] When Photosacs relocated its manufacturing activities to Corbigny in 1961, the company took over an existing concrete structure of 450 square metres on land owned by the municipality. Thanks to increased demand from Kodak and Gevaert, Photosacs was able to triple its productive surface area; two additional structures of identical footprint were added behind the original building (see figure 2.1). To convert Photosacs into La Transverse, project architect Patrick Warnant opted to preserve the two rear additions and raze the original building facing Route Saint-Saulge. This structure's low ceiling limited what Metalovoice could actually rehearse in the company's rehearsal space. But Warnant designed the new rehearsal and performance space to fit in the footprint of the original Photosacs factory. The result resembles an extensive facelift: a gleaming hangar of corrugated steel attaches to two stained concrete factory buildings from the 1960s (see figure 2.2). The rear structures retain their original rooftops of serial triangles, a telltale feature of modern European industrial architecture that allowed for the venting of fumes.

Figure 2.1 The former Photosacs factory prior to its conversion into La Transverse, Corbigny, 2003.

Figure 2.2 La Transverse, Corbigny, 2011. This new structure occupies the footprint of the Photosacs factory's original building and is attached to the two remaining workshops.

The intelligibility of La Transverse as a newly arrived industrial enterprise extends beyond the building's visual aesthetic. Metalovoice and Corbigny's municipal government have reincorporated – in the sense of incorporating again and incorporating differently – this specific site and Corbigny more generally into an urban-rural production chain. But this act of reincorporation risks re-enacting the urban-rural relations that undergirded the initial installation of Photosacs. Those relations exemplify what I call a scenario of development.

Like a narrative or a script, a scenario makes intelligible culturally specific tropes that surface repeatedly over time.[8] Unlike narratives, however, scenarios account for embodied, improvisatory practices that may alternately sustain or subvert them. A scenario is both place and process. In a scenario of development, the metropole, be it global city or imperialist nation-state, *activates* a less industrialized, less urbanized periphery, be it rural province or far-flung colony, by putting its inhabitants to work or by changing the nature of the work that they do, ostensibly for their own good but most often to the advantage of the metropole. As Grant Kester observes:

> The relationship between developed and developing nations is paralleled at the regional level by a discourse that constructs the 'rural' as the degraded antipode of the 'urban.' In each case, we encounter a set of oppositions that define the rural, or developing, culture as the parochial counterpart of an implicitly superior metropolitan culture. Insight and emulation can flow in only one direction: from the enlightened core to the blighted periphery.[9]

This was precisely the tenor of French decentralization policies from the 1950s through the 1970s; the period was characterized by the economic and cultural subordination of low-paid rural workers to a concentrated urban hub.

A defining feature of scenarios is their persistence over time; industrial and cultural decentralization efforts of the mid-twentieth century were far from the first iterations of France's scenario of development. In the nineteenth century, France cited the assumed superiority of French culture to justify its imperial projects as missions of education, enlightenment, and uplift. Such rhetoric persisted well into the twentieth century. And, as Kristin Ross has convincingly demonstrated, France's mid-twentieth-century modernization efforts effectively internalized colonial administration.[10] As colonies and overseas departments liberated themselves from metropolitan French rule, the scenario of development relocated to a smaller stage: Paris retained its position as cultural hub and cast rural French provinces in the newly vacated supporting roles once played by the Maghreb, Indochina, West Africa, and the Francophone Caribbean. The French government's coalescing strategies of industrial and cultural decentralization form a historical bloc: concurrent shifts in the spatiality of industrial and creative work are twin movements in France's scenario of development.

Economic decentralization became an explicit goal of the French government during the Fourth Republic. In 1947, geographer Jean-François Gravier diagnosed the Parisian macrocephaly in his devastatingly titled *Paris and the French Desert*. He cautioned that the

French capital's astronomical growth occurred at the expense of the surrounding provinces; as Paris claimed an ever increasing share of industrial jobs and highly centralized government work, the economic growth of France's other regions would stagnate.[11] The book became a touchstone for French decentralization policy. By 1950 the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism, formed to administer postwar rebuilding projects, included a division devoted to regional planning. In 1954 the French legislature approved a series of subsidies and tax breaks to encourage businesses to relocate to designated areas outside the Ile de France, and by 1956 businesses required special dispensation to expand their Parisian operations.

Yet Paris remained the hub of creative decision-making in industrial decentralization schemas. The French government used subsidies and tax breaks to encourage industrial enterprises to relocate outside of Paris, but these businesses retained their headquarters in the capital and relocated only their low-skilled, low-paid manufacturing jobs. These enterprises were not exploiting loopholes in a subsidy system; the French government promoted manufacturing, not management, as the key to regional economic development. In this way early decentralization efforts marked a return to (or simply the reinforcement of) a productivist model of urban-rural relations in which an unskilled workforce in the countryside produced goods of low added value for the profit of merchants in the city.[12] The same mechanization processes that deskilled industrial labour also caused the price of machinery to skyrocket, to the benefit of larger corporations and financial institutions. Increased financial concentration enabled Parisian corporate headquarters to manage multiple production sites spread over vast geographic areas, wherever the unskilled labour was cheapest and most plentiful. Ultimately, French 'decentralization' proved a misnomer.

The October 1961 relocation of the Photosacs factory from Montreuil to Corbigny exemplified early Fifth Republic decentralization efforts and the scenario of development. Following the 4 July 1961 cornerstone ceremony with which construction began on the Photosacs factory, a reporter for the *Journal du Centre* observed, 'For years Corbigny hoped for "its" factory: for years it was evident in conversation the intense desire of the population to see established in Corbigny a factory, a source of jobs and revenue to confirm Corbigny's vitality.'[13] Corbigny hoped for 'its' factory because other regional and rural towns already had theirs thanks to more than a decade of incentivized industrial decentralization. And the population desired to see 'a' factory established because any factory would do, so long as it provided the town with jobs and revenue. In keeping with the broader historical phenomenon of French industrial

decentralization, the Photosacs factory had no logical connection to the land, history, or available skill sets of its new home.[14]

In Montreuil, a commune just outside Paris, Photosacs managers faced a labour market favourable to workers (many of them unionized). The company could no longer find there the twenty-five employees necessary to maintain constant production levels. And when Kodak doubled its order from Photosacs, the business needed to hire even more workers. An array of factors made Corbigny an attractive choice for the Photosacs relocation. The first, Corbigny's proximity to Paris, seems to run counter to the spirit of decentralization. But as Jean Lorit observes in his 1964 report on decentralization in the Nièvre, a decentralized business was rarely totally so: 'It still continues to think [*sic*] in relation to Paris, where it often retains its commercial services and headquarters.'[15] Decentralization policy 'penalizes the first industries to leave the Paris region. Insofar as all major commercial transactions continue to take place in Paris, the industrialist must keep one foot in the capital.'[16] Even with the relocation of its manufacturing plant to Corbigny, Photosacs kept its headquarters and commercial functions in Montreuil to facilitate transactions with its major buyers Kodak and Gevaert, both of which based their French operations in the Ile de France. Corbigny's proximity to Paris ensured that transport costs would not negate the benefits of relocation.

Corbigny, and the Nièvre more generally, also offered a labour reserve then largely untapped by the secondary sector: young, rural women. Photosacs transferred just four of its twenty-five employees to Corbigny and immediately hired thirty-one employees locally, eighteen of them women. These women were primarily young and unmarried and looking to provide supplemental family income. Photosacs saved money by paying these 'unskilled' rural women substantially less than their Montreuil counterparts: 2.75 francs an hour compared to 4.00 or 4.50 francs. But this low wage was still able to lure employees away from other jobs that paid only 1.90 francs an hour. The average Photosacs salary amounted to between 350 and 500 francs a month. Thanks to these low rural salaries, Photosacs cut its production costs by 10 per cent. The company's total revenue doubled between 1960 and 1964, leading Lorit to declare the Photosacs relocation a decentralization success story.[17]

If French decentralization policy relied on the mobility of goods and capital, it also relied on the immobility of workers. In the case of Corbigny, Lorit observes that Photosacs experienced regular and substantial employee turnover. Formerly unskilled workers trained by the factory could leave for a higher-paying job in Nevers or Paris. And the young rural women recruited by Photosacs sometimes stopped working

outside the home and farm once they married or once the supplemental income became unnecessary.[18] Lorit remarks that Photosacs' workforce was not sufficiently beholden to the low monthly salary offered by the factory:

> It is certain that this mobility gravely harms any serious project for the expansion of the business. It seems due in large part to the rural character of the workforce, to the fact that, in contrast to what goes on in cities, the women employed [by the factory] are not accustomed to salaried work and do not yet feel the need for the salary they could earn. Industrialists must work to fix this 'floating labour force.' It seems the first thing to do would be to offer decent salaries, perhaps by a provisional lowering of the 'norms,' which would have the best psychological effect.[19]

Lorit adopts a paternalist tone, suggesting that (male) factory owners and managers know what is best for their (predominantly female) workers. Even if the training provided by the factory enables the workers to take jobs elsewhere, Lorit argues that such a risk is outweighed by industrialists' responsibility to uplift rural populations through work: '[the workforce] possesses no qualifications and, from an educational point of view, it is good that it receives [in the Photosacs factory] an embryo of schooling.'[20] According to this paternalist (and self-pitying) formulation, the male industrialist had a responsibility to bestow the new gifts of pay and education on downtrodden rural women, even if the thankless among them might abandon their saviours for higher salaries elsewhere. The installation of Photosacs in Corbigny connected the town to a network of industrial capital. But networks are not 'flat' as Thomas Friedman might claim; some agents and objects enjoy greater ease of movement than others.[21]

Concurrent cultural decentralization policy crafted by André Malraux provided the spiritual counterpart to industrial decentralization's paternalist model of educational and financial uplift. Malraux, an anti-fascist intellectual of the 1930s and long-time ally of Charles de Gaulle, became de Gaulle's Minister of Cultural Affairs – a newly created position – in 1959. Malraux dedicated the resources of this new ministry to the creation of *Maisons de la Culture* [houses of culture], regional cultural centres housing museums, galleries, theatres, and concert halls, 'so that any sixteen-year-old, no matter how poor, might have real contact with his/her national patrimony and with the glory of the spirit of humanity.'[22] Malraux's dual nationalist-humanist conception of culture became Ministry dogma. 'The mission of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs is to make the capital works of humanity, and first of France, accessible to the greatest possible number of French, to assure the vastest audience

for our cultural patrimony, and to encourage the creation of works of art and the spirit that enriches them.'[23] Cultural decentralization as enacted by Malraux entailed the democratization of access to official high culture, and not an expansion of culture as a category.

In Malraux's formulation, humans possess an innate capacity to appreciate and understand artistic masterpieces; there is something universal in the great works that makes them accessible to (and the property of) all. These masterpieces, though, were almost always the product of canonical, white, French men. Baudelaire, Hugo, and Racine became the model of high culture to which all humanity deserved access. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs sought to expose the greatest number of French people to the greatest works of humanity and the greatest portion of humanity to the greatest works of the French. In the tradition of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, Malraux hegemonically universalized a white, French, male subject position. In doing so he effaced both racial and sexual difference *and* class struggle. He did so explicitly: 'I replaced [the notion of] the proletariat with [that of] France.'[24] As Minister of Cultural Affairs to a conservative president, Malraux overcame attacks from the Right and secured substantial state subsidies for the arts by positing high culture as the safeguard of a mythic national unity.

Malraux conceived the Maisons de la Culture as sites of distribution and not of production, centres in which regional audiences could experience great works of art deemed worthy of their Parisian counterparts. Contemporaneous industrial and cultural decentralization efforts of the 1950s and 1960s effectively established paternalism on a national scale: Paris, the benevolent patron, provided menial labour to regional townsfolk and entertained them after hours with instructive and uplifting cultural exports.

Soon after his election in 1981, Socialist president François Mitterrand – the first president of the Fifth Republic to fall left of centre – doubled France's national cultural budget. But Paris continued to account for a full 50 per cent of cultural spending. Municipal governments were responsible for at least half of their respective cultural budgets, which meant that even outside Paris cultural activity became concentrated in the largest and wealthiest of the regional cities. Mayors of these cities favoured monumental prestige projects and highly publicized festivals over more diffuse cultural spending. Thus France's regional cities largely pursued the policies established by Malraux.

In the 1980s, Jack Lang, Minister of Culture to Mitterrand, substantially revised the Malraux model of cultural decentralization to foster the development of previously unfunded, popular forms. Subsequent

commentators describe the shift from Malraux to Lang as the shift from Culture (singular, with a capital C) to cultures (plural, lowercase, and mutable). *Animation* and *création* became buzzwords of Socialist cultural policy. Both referred to attempts to blur the distinction between cultural producers and consumers, though 'animation' implied spontaneity and active group learning and 'création' implied longer processes.[25] Whereas Malraux had attempted to democratize cultural consumption, so that all could consume the same high-quality cultural products, Lang attempted to democratize cultural production, so that popular and emergent forms could receive funding alongside museums and opera houses. The French government began to subsidize cartoon and comic exhibits, hip-hop music and dance festivals, and, with the 1983 establishment of the *Centre national de création pour les arts de la rue*, street theatre. 'The new Socialist concept of culture was that of a liberating force – one that blurred the distinction between creator and spectator, that separated art and innovation from the profit motive.'[26] Lang intended public cultural funding to stimulate the innate creativity of all as a kind of refuge from mass-produced commodity spectacle and the (American) culture industry.

In their 1991 report, *The Future of French Rural Space*, French senators Jean François-Poncet, Hubert Haenel, Jean Huchon, and Roland du Luart propose combining elements of Malraux's and Lang's cultural policies to promote rural development and ameliorate the disparity in quality of life between urban and rural dwellers. The senators argue that the revitalization of rural culture must operate via two simultaneous movements: the movement outward – equal access to contemporary culture – and the movement inward – a local cultural renaissance. This dual movement carries double risk: first, the imposition of a distinctly urban culture on non-urban populations, and second, the development of cultish nostalgia for a sanitized agrarian past. The authors conclude their report by identifying two functions of culture in rural space: 'to fix young rural-dwellers to the area, or to attract the *cadres* [young professionals or middle managers] the area so desperately lacks' and 'to contribute, autonomously or in league with the tourism industry, to the *creation of jobs and employment*.'[27] Thus, by 1991, Lang's Socialist vision of art and innovation divorced from the profit motive had already fallen apart, even if his vision of culture as a liberating force remained intact: according to the logic of this report, culture liberates precisely *because of* its ability to stimulate flows of capital; it liberates (or rather, could liberate) rural areas from the fetters of economic stagnation. Between 1982 and 1991 French cultural policy shifted from a conception of individual creative impulse as resistance to capitalist homogenization to a

conception of individual creative impulse as the key to further capitalist development. The presence of a Socialist in the Elysée Palace did not prevent France's participation in the development of neoliberalism and what Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello have called the 'new spirit' of capitalism.[28]

In *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, Boltanski and Chiapello distinguish between two critiques of capitalism that undergirded twentieth-century protest and leftist theory: the social critique, emphasizing worker exploitation, and the aesthetic critique, emphasizing alienation of both producers and consumers. Boltanski and Chiapello argue that contemporary capitalism has successfully absorbed the aesthetic critique into its normal functioning. Management literature now stresses the importance of worker input. More obviously, marketing campaigns present consumerism as the truest expression of personal choice and self-determination. Boltanski and Chiapello acknowledge the potential benefits of such developments in management literature – they have little love for marketing – but caution that corporations can continue worker exploitation (the object of the social critique) thanks to their successful rhetorical push against alienation (the object of the aesthetic critique).

In the early twenty-first century, the kind of interactivity promoted by Lang as Socialist cultural policy – encouraging a society of cultural producers rather than consumers – has become a rhetorical staple of rural development literature, which heralds a 'post-productivist transition' or a shift to a 'transactional' model of urban-rural relations, characterized not by a unidirectional flow of resources but by ongoing negotiation between city and country.[29] The transactional model captures the complex blend of economic activities at work in contemporary rural France. Local development projects now enact two intertwined movements: first, a reorganization of rural spatial scales and their networked interaction, and second, a move toward interactivity in both work and leisure. Contemporary rural development projects attempt to enact what I call, drawing on Boltanski and Chiapello, a 'new spirit of rurality' characterized by the marriage of the natural landscape with advanced technology, the attraction of urban tourists, and most importantly the activation of local creative potential.[30] Just as management literature has incorporated the 'aesthetic' critique of capitalist alienation, so rural development literature has adopted the tactics of Socialist cultural decentralization efforts founded on creation and animation rather than dissemination. Contemporary rural development efforts present themselves not as more equitable distribution of wealth, but as an activation of latent creative capacity – translated as untapped entrepreneurial

drive.[31] The trend has the advantage of recognizing the complexity of rural life. But it also exemplifies the neoliberal impulse to ignore structural inequality in favour of fostering individual entrepreneurial spirit. Local development efforts help those who help themselves. Thus, though the transactional model of urban-rural relations describes a change in France's scenario of development, what remains constant is the assumption that rural dwellers must be activated, or, more precisely, that they must activate themselves given proper stimulus.

If, as I have demonstrated above, industrial and cultural decentralization efforts are twin components of a historical bloc, contemporary rural cultural projects like La Transverse risk becoming intelligible as iterations of the scenario of development. Corbigny mayor Jean-Paul Magnon argues that the Transverse project represents 'direct and indirect employment,' noting that Metalovoice 'functions with permanent and short-term employees and welcomes other companies in residence. These residencies stimulate restaurants and a certain number of local businesses.'[32] Metalovoice artistic director Pascal Dores frequently notes that only the presence of a cultural project enabled Corbigny to seek funding from the European Union to refurbish the derelict factory. The EU's European Fund for Regional Development (FEDER) furnished 25 per cent of the project's total cost. The town of Corbigny contributed 30 per cent, with the remainder provided by the Nièvre department and by the Ministry of Culture through its regional Bourgogne directorate. Thanks to these outside sources of funding, the total cost to Corbigny for the Transverse project proved less than that of simply demolishing the whole factory. (FEDER will not pay to raze a building.) Crucially, Magnon refers to Metalovoice's relocation from Nevers to Corbigny as a diversion of capital. It is money that has come to the town: 'Money that used to be spent in Nevers has come to Corbigny'; as beneficiaries of state financing, Metalovoice 'would have been funded, wherever they were based.'[33] Just as, for Mayor Havoué in 1961, any factory would do, so for Mayor Magnon fifty years later any street theatre company would do, so long as that company brought along external funding and outside audiences prepared to dine, shop, and inject cash into the rural tourism industry.[34]

Metalovoice was based in Nevers from its founding in 1995 until 1998, when it relocated to Nord-Pas-de-Calais. The company then returned to Nevers in 2003. In the summer of that year, France's *intermittents du spectacle* (contract performing arts workers), a category encompassing performers, directors, and designers whose income depends on fixed-term contracts or grants, declared a strike, effectively shutting down the country's summer festival season (including the prestigious Avignon Festival) and demonstrating the profound economic impact of

performing arts workers.[35] In Nevers, Metalovoice and other companies participated in the strike by boycotting the city's 'Zaccros d'ma rue' festival. These companies occupied public squares not with their previously scheduled shows but with open forums on the *intermittents*' action.

Didier Boulaud, who in 2003 was serving both as a French senator and as Mayor of Nevers, claimed to support the cause of the *intermittents* but condemned the boycott of the Nevers festival as the work of 'a few manipulative local activists who took advantage of the *intermittents* crisis to take Nivernais spectators hostage, to unleash their aggression and their hatred of the environment that nourishes them.'[36] Boulaud then threatened to discriminate in his next budget 'between those companies that have done a disservice to [*ont desservi*] the Nièvre and those that have done what is necessary to serve it [*la servir*].'[37] Boulaud's distinction between disservice and service is linked to his claim that the Nièvre has 'nourish[ed]' street theatre companies. The French verb *desservir* literally translates as 'un-serve'; it refers primarily to the clearing away of plates. Thus Boulaud implies that non-striking street performers brought food to the table as fair payment for the nourishment already given them. By contrast, striking performers denied the people of Nevers their necessary sustenance. (How apt that Metalovoice was at this point working out of a former slaughterhouse.) In denouncing the boycott, Boulaud conflated bread and circuses, with profound implications for artistic labour. In an open letter responding to Boulaud, local Maghrébin music group Saalek Orkestar brought to the fore the assumption, undergirding the mayor's argument, that culture work is subject to the same 'minimum service' requirements as the medical profession or public transport.[38] In this instance the importance of the arts to local economies had the effect of making creative labour mandatory.

Jean-Paul Sêtre, architect of Corbigny's cultural policy, took advantage of Boulaud's animosity toward the striking *intermittents* to expand Corbigny's cultural offerings. Initially Sêtre offered Metalovoice and another striking Nevers-based company, TéATR'éPROUVèTe, space in the Saint Leonard Abbey, an eighteenth-century Benedictine abbey repurposed as a cultural centre. TéATR'éPROUVèTe accepted the offer and is now based in the abbey alongside dance troupe Les Alentours Rêveurs and numerous local associations. The abbey also displays rotating exhibitions of contemporary art. Ultimately, though, Sêtre and Metalovoice agreed that the former Photosacs factory better fitted the company's logistical needs and its industrial aesthetic.

The conservative opposition on Corbigny's town council denounced the Transverse renovations, circulating a tract entitled '*Halte au gaspi*' ('Halt the waste'). Part of the problem was the connection (embraced

by Magnon, Sêtre, and Metalovoice, but exploited by the opposition) between La Transverse and the repurposed Saint Leonard Abbey. According to Metalovoice's official website, the abbey and La Transverse, 'twins in their differences, symbolize what is at stake in the territory: to use heritage to develop new activities that create jobs and added value.'[39] In an attempt to de-monumentalize the imposing abbey and rescript it as freely accessible public space, in 2009 the town council of Corbigny and the Bourgogne regional department of cultural affairs commissioned a piece from conceptual artist Lawrence Weiner, born and based in New York, to adorn the repurposed abbey's façade and its interior staircase. Weiner's work, *Au Pays*, consists of a series of meditative rhyming phrases painted in bold primary colours directly onto the walls. *Au Pays* provoked intense criticism and led to the creation of a local heritage preservation society, the Group for the Defence of the Patrimony of Corbigny (GDPC). Members of the association demanded 'the restoration of the façade of the Saint Leonard Abbey, classified monument, to its initial state, that is, without the tattoos.'[40] Numerous other heritage preservation societies in France joined with the GDPC to protest against what they called the degradation or even desecration of the abbey's façade.

Critics noted the protected status of the abbey as a historic monument, but they reserved much of their ire for the working methods of Weiner himself. Weiner conceived the piece in New York and passed along detailed instructions to a Corbigny sign painter, who then painted the text onto the surface of the abbey in accordance with Weiner's design. Corbigny and the region of Bourgogne paid Weiner €50,000 for conceiving the work. For actualizing the work, the local sign painter received substantially less. In a petition disseminated on its website, the GDPC condemned the payment of €50,000 to Weiner, 'who did not even complete the work himself!'[41] Signatories to the petition rejected Weiner's conceptual labour and focused instead on the manual labour required to paint the words on the abbey wall. Of course, in the tradition of conceptual art as it emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, actualization is secondary to conceptualization. From Weiner's perspective, he could simply have described to Corbigny residents what the painted text *would have* looked like, and his work would have been just as complete. Conceptual art is conjugated in the conditional tense.

The development scenario helps to explain the strong negative reaction to Weiner's installation. *Au Pays* sparked such controversy not only because it modified the façade of a local monument, but also because it gave easily identifiable material form to the geographic division of labour that has long subordinated rural areas to urban hubs of information and

innovation. Weiner, the urban (worse, New York) conceptual artist, sent orders to be carried out by a supposedly unskilled tradesperson, a sign painter paid substantially less for the job than Weiner. Weiner's disembodied conceptual non-presence re-enacted 1) stereotypes of urban intellectual elitism, and 2) the flow of information from and capital to the world's global cities.

Heritage preservation societies tend to ascribe less symbolic weight to mid-twentieth-century factories than to eighteenth-century abbeys; as the 'Halt the waste' tract indicates, the controversy surrounding La Transverse concerned not the protection of the Photosacs factory but the simple existence of public arts funding and the value of art's work. Metalovoice and its allies responded to these criticisms by stressing the financial viability of the Transverse project and the project's integration into the community. Dores agreed with Magnon that the arts benefit the town's economy, and he insisted on Metalovoice's integration into local life. The two claims are discursively linked by the verb *investir*. The verb neatly translates as 'to invest.' Like the English, it encompasses investments of time, energy, emotion, and money. But when the French verb appears in the discourse surrounding cultural conversions of derelict industrial space (as it does frequently), it fuses 'invest' with 'inhabit.' Theatre companies invest (in) a space, both making the space their own and giving themselves over to the space. Prior to La Transverse's inauguration, journalist Joly acknowledged that Metalovoice had for years 'invested in [*a investi*] this abandoned building.'[42] In an interview with Ariane Bouhours, Jean-Paul Magnon differentiated between locally unpopular conceptual artist Lawrence Weiner and Metalovoice, a company that 'puts a lot into [*s'investit dans*] local life.'[43] And in our 2011 interview, Dores remarks that his company's approach is 'investment [*investissement*], to commit oneself [*s'investir*], to be there with people.'[44] To invest, here, is to dedicate not only time, money, or other resources, but also the self, to allow oneself to become entrenched in and shaped by the community.

The model here is not the low-risk investor with the ability to withdraw at a moment's notice and leave a community in the lurch. The model, rather, is the artisan. Dores explains:

> I want to belong to the town. I'm like an artisan. I'm an artist, an artisan, I am a citizen, someone normal. The artist is somebody normal. Don't worry! […] We always sacralize the artist. You become completely untouchable, and I don't want that at all. On the contrary, I think more and more that the artist has to integrate himself [*sic*] into society, be one with [*faire corps avec*] that society. Critique it, of course, and not necessarily be to everyone's taste, but be there, be present, and do one's work here.[45]

Dores gestures back in time to the proto-industrial figure of the artisan, the skilled craftsperson rather than the unskilled labourer. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, artisanal labour remained more evenly distributed throughout the countryside than industrial manufacturing, even if rural artisans also ventured to urban markets to sell their goods. Writing from and about an English context that, in this particular instance, also applies to France, E. P. Thompson observes that rural artisans could be better educated and of higher social status than urban workers.[46] And, perhaps because of their higher level of education and need to protect their skill sets against technological developments, artisans were quicker than other workers to radicalize.[47] The figure of the artisan appears to challenge the subordination, so familiar to Corbigny locals, of rural periphery to urban hub. With recourse to a past form of labour organization, Dores attempts to reassure the other residents of Corbigny that he is not there to uplift or activate them.

Dores claims the artisan as a de-sacralized version of the artist, someone integrated into the community, someone skilled and creative working manually to produce objects of use as well as beauty. Historically, though, artisans needed to sacralize themselves in order to charge custom prices. Though master artisans tended to control the means of production, their most valuable property was 'mystery,' the tricks of their trade, tightly controlled secrets passed from journeyman to apprentice.[48] The comparison to the artisan simultaneously situates the artist firmly within the realm of everyday concerns and retains for the artist a shred of mystery that imbues artistic work with added value (and contributes to radical activism). In Dores's formulation, this dual move allows for the possibility of critique from artists fully integrated into the body politic. I would not suggest that this statement from a 2011 interview is a direct response to Nevers mayor Didier Boulaud's remarks from 2003, but nonetheless a comparison between the two is illustrative. Boulaud argued that local surroundings nourished street performers and that street performers owed sustenance to their community in return. Dores acknowledges that artists must be integrated into the body of [*faire corps avec*] the community, but he reserves the right not to be to everyone's taste: occasional indigestion is necessary.

Whereas Dores resurrects the figure of the artisan to make his company's work appear both valuable and accessible, Magnon accuses La Transverse's critics of dwelling in the past: 'We no longer distinguish between economic activity and culture. That is a vision of the 19th and 20th centuries, not of the 21st.'[49] Here Magnon echoes the assumptions undergirding the creative economy: first, that artistic production is an economic activity, and second, that this is somehow innovative, a

progressive departure from a nineteenth-century tendency (exemplified in varying ways by Romanticism and Symbolism) for art to retreat from capitalist modernity or a twentieth-century tendency (exemplified by Adorno and the Frankfurt School) to police the border between high art and the culture industry.

Magnon's insistence that Corbigny townsfolk look forward into the twenty-first century rather than back to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries suggests a need to move on, to move beyond the past, to establish an after that is different from before. But the working memory of Corbigny locals is strong, and, like the town's other cultural projects, La Transverse threatens to become intelligible as just another iteration of a scenario of development. To counter this interpretation, Pascal Dores brings forward the figure of the artisan in a turn to the past that works in tandem with Magnon's turn toward the future. Working memory makes Metalovoice and La Transverse familiar to Corbigny locals. They might be depressingly familiar, like the momentarily diverted capital flow of the development scenario, or they might be comfortingly familiar, like the skilled, creative – and mythologized – artisan.

La Transverse relinks Corbigny to an urban-rural network of production and consumption, putting the countryside back to work. This is reincorporation primarily in its spatial sense: rural space is brought back into the fold in a process intelligible as part of a longstanding scenario of development. In both published interviews and casual conversation, Pascal Dores resurrects the image of the artisan to make his company's relocation and creative work differently intelligible as sustained investment of the self. In the previous chapter I observed that industrial modernity forms a constitutive gap within street theatre histories; contemporary street theatre thus appears as both rupture and return to a mythologized, vaguely premodern carnivalesque. Dores's insistence on his artisanal status works in tandem with Magnon's rejection of '19th and 20th centur[y]' divisions between economic activity and culture, with similar effect. Something (or someone) from the past returns to make sense of the present as both familiar and new, and to lend to the more recent past the character of completed event. Here the temporal aspect of reincorporation comes to the fore. But Metalovoice's industrial aesthetic and its treatment of working-class history complicate this process of reincorporation. The following section addresses the culture of making at the origin of Metalovoice's work and considers how *Ouverture*, the 2011 inauguration of La Transverse, reincorporates the industrial past in the event of performance.

Ouverture: cultures of making, industrial aesthetics

The founding members of Metalovoice split from Tambours du Bronx in 1995. Before the official founding of Tambours du Bronx in 1987, the group existed as what Pascal Dores calls a 'band' of friends who identified with the working-class origins of British and American punk culture; they would regularly come together in the early 1980s under the name *Les Gars de Vauzelles* (The Vauzelles Boys) to play covers of The Clash and to write their own punk music.[50] As punk musicians, the eventual members of Tambours du Bronx (and later Metalovoice) performed a working-class identity in crisis. Jayna Brown, Patrick Deer, and Tavia Nyong'o argue that punk emerged from 'political and economic wreckage.'[51] And Mary Russo and Daniel Warner explain that, in punk's initial heyday, '"working class" was increasingly … the "unworking class," the "disoccupied," the marginal leftovers of late capitalism.'[52] Thus the work of the artist was what remained after another form of work had disappeared, an attempt to make do with ruins and traces in the aftermath of rupture.

For the Vauzelles Boys, this 'making do' eventually involved setting aside their guitars and appropriating the massive metal oil drums that formed such a familiar part of the industrial landscape in which their families lived and worked. The SNCF (French National Railway Company) workshop in Varennes-Vauzelles donated the drums (many still slick with oil), and the Vauzelles Boys began their sonic experiments. The group renamed themselves the Tambours du Bronx, joking that working-class Varennes-Vauzelles was the Bronx to Nevers' bourgeois (if much smaller) Manhattan. Because their early work attempted to recreate the soundscape of the railway, they dubbed their aesthetic 'SNCF Rock.' The SNCF threatened legal action, so the group reframed their music, first as 'Railway Rock,' then as 'Industrial Percussion.'

Pascal Dores identifies his and his friends' early artistic experiments as the natural extension of a local culture of fabrication, binding art workers and industrial workers together in a shared culture of making. He explains, 'these towns [Fourchambault and Varennes-Vauzelles] had industrial origins due to the Loire, to these axes of circulation which were so important at the time. And so, naturally, we fabricated [*on fabriquait*] things.'[53] Fabrication suggests skilful production, the careful shaping of as yet unfinished material, and, in its derogatory sense, wholesale invention, even lying. Fabrication is a creative act.

Dores's rhetorical move relies on familial lineage and childhood incul-cation: the parents and grandparents of Metalovoice artists worked in the metal shops of Fourchambault and Varennes-Vauzelles, and all of the eventual members of Metalovoice grew up surrounded by the sights, sounds, and smells of a heavy industrial landscape. The claim to working-class identity here is both genealogical and environmental. It also places the emphasis on 'working' in its transitive sense, as an action performed in relation to a direct object: farmers work land, bakers work dough, potters work clay, and the (male) relatives of Metalovoice company members (used to) work iron and steel. The working of mate-rial offers the possibility of continuity in the face of rupture, a connec-tion between art work and industrial work amidst economic crisis and deindustrialization.

But this culture of making suffers from a gendered inequality of access. In a 2006 television news feature on Metalovoice's relocation and the repurposing of the Photosacs factory, former Photosacs employee Jean-Paul Le Menac guides reporter Anne Berger through the uncon-verted building and explains how it used to operate. Though Le Menac recalls the overpowering noise of the machines and the distinctive smell of leather and glue, he fondly observes, 'You made that case from begin-ning to end. […] You had the impression of fabricating something [*de fabriquer quelque chose*].' The opportunity to create gave this man a sense of pride in his work, linking him to the culture of making evoked by Dores and apparently shared by artists and industrial workers. However, I viewed this 2006 footage with another former Photosacs employee, Isabelle Arnaud, who remembered notable differences between the experiences of men and women working at the factory.[54] She claimed that, while men could move from one post to another, women remained at the same station, even having to raise their hands for permission to take toilet breaks. Film footage from a 1967 local television news story on the Photosacs factory illustrates the proxemics of the shop floor and the gestural repertoire of Photosacs employees. The women shown in this footage are almost all hunched over and looking down at the objects they are working on. For the most part their gestures remain close to the body, their elbows pressed against their sides or against their work surface. Though the women engage many muscles to remain in these positions for ten hours straight, the perceptible motion of their labour is confined mostly to their fingers, which move swiftly and nimbly over the leather cases they assemble. By contrast, the few men visible in the film footage appear at the edges of the shop floor, not subject to the same level of surveillance; all are in the process of moving from one part of the factory to another.

In Volume I of *Capital*, Marx observes that the capitalist relies on 'the more pliant and docile character of the women and children employed' in machine work to offer minimum resistance to automation.[55] If, as I have demonstrated above, French decentralization policy mapped paternalism onto urban-rural spatial relations, its implementation relied on the presumed docility of all rural workers, but especially of women. Drawing on theories of gender performativity, Leslie Salzinger rightly argues that the docile femininity of women factory workers does not pre-exist industrial employment, but is produced and reproduced on the shop floor through strategies of discipline and surveillance.[56] Managerial practice at Photosacs attempted to produce feminine docility, first by confining each woman worker to one assembly station, thereby artificially limiting her repertoire of transferable skills (despite Lorit's claim that at Photosacs she might receive 'an embryo of schooling'); second, by minimizing her movement within the space, keeping her at her table in the centre of the room, under the watchful eye of the foreman.[57] Arnaud remembers the foreman referring to women workers by misogynist names. When he sounded the bell to signal the start of a shift, he would joke that it was time to 'bring in the cattle' [*faire entrer les bétails*].[58] By equating Photosacs workers with Corbigny's main agricultural product, the foreman conflated femininity, animality, rurality, and docility.

In her 2006 report, Berger connects the Photosacs factory's past and present uses, observing that 'the former factory is once again becoming a site of production, but this time of artistic production.' I asked Arnaud what she made of the conversion of Photosacs into La Transverse, and whether she saw a link between the work of Metalovoice and her time at Photosacs. 'It has nothing to do with it,' she said. But for her, this was not necessarily a problem. She explained that, while she wasn't happy when the factory closed, she was relieved: 'I just couldn't any more.' Le Menac remembers making something from start to finish and enjoying a sense of accomplishment; Arnaud remembers repeating the same minute gestures for ten hours a day and being treated like meat. My aim here is not to claim that one or the other is mistaken, but to point out how shop floor practices might exclude women from the culture of making on which Pascal Dores relies to connect his company's creative work to industrial labour. The disparities between Le Menac's and Arnaud's memories and between the gestures of men and women in the 1967 footage evoke a distinction, observed by Leslie Salzinger in her study of Mexican *maquiladoras*, between an assembly process, marked as feminine, and a manufacturing process, marked as masculine.[59] Or, in Arnaud's words, 'we didn't create anything [*on n'a rien créé*].'[60] (Arnaud does insist that Photosacs workers 'innovated': in 1977 they became the

first in Corbigny to unionize. In this one crucial way, at least, managerial attempts to produce docility proved unsuccessful.) Pascal Dores unites artistic work and industrial work in a shared culture of making, but the divergent memories of Arnaud and Le Menac suggest an inequality of access. If a culture of making does connect the labour of theatre workers to that of factory workers, it does so unevenly, and it risks obscuring the mind-numbing repetitiveness typical of some factory workers' experience.

Metalovoice artists draw on their own personal histories to establish a connection between artistic and industrial work, but this connection does not yet extend to the work of (all) Photosacs employees. Thus Metalovoice must link the history of Photosacs to the company's present creative work via the bridge of a distinct industrial history to which the company more readily has access. During the inauguration of La Transverse, Metalovoice deployed its trademark industrial aesthetic, a production from its existing touring repertoire, and a multimedia performance by visiting company KompleXKapharnaüM to reincorporate Photosacs and Corbigny into a metanarrative of industrial delocalization and to create gestural links across space and time.

On the evening of the inauguration Metalovoice arrived on the scene quietly, almost inconspicuously. The more observant among the assembled audience alerted the rest of us to the slow approach of Metalovoice's trademark truck, a navy blue relic laden with suitcases and trunks. These were labelled in white paint with the names and dates of Metalovoice's past performances. The company members had packed their bags, loaded their truck, and were ready to move into their newly renovated home, accompanied by scores of their neighbours and more than a few out-of-town guests. The truck, along with seven company members on foot, herded us down the road toward La Transverse (see figure 2.3).

Venturing to La Transverse from the town centre, one leaves the dense, cosy cluster of steep-roofed residential and commercial structures and passes by open fields, an open-walled tractor shelter, derelict agricultural buildings, and a dormitory for National Guard trainees. The walk from the town centre is not particularly far (subsequent journeys took me on average fifteen minutes), but the lack of pavements forces one to walk on the road itself or in the adjacent grassy ditch. The road is safe to walk on, as few cars pass by; those that do slow down and gently honk their horns or shift across the yellow line into the opposite lane. La Transverse itself sits just opposite a large slaughterhouse that contributes to the area's substantial veal industry.

Route Saint-Saulge has a long history of housing the toxic and foul-smelling activities expelled from the town centre: from 1842 to 1956 this

Figure 2.3 Metalovoice company members approach the assembled crowd for the inauguration of La Transverse, Corbigny, 2011.

sparsely built, peripheral stretch of road also led to numerous cement factories; a M. Boulet, founder of the first cement factory on Route Saint-Saulge, won a medal for his innovations at the 1855 Exposition Universelle.[61] La Transverse invites Corbigny residents to leave the town centre and journey (for fifteen minutes, at least) to the periphery; it establishes Route Saint-Saulge as a road of cultural pilgrimage rather than, or in addition to, one of garbage removal. Perhaps most significantly, a trip to La Transverse requires residents to cross the train tracks – what Joly calls in his review of the *Ouverture* festival 'the symbolic barrier' that separates the town from the outside world even as it connects Corbigny to other towns and cities.[62] By walking en masse to the former Photosacs factory, attendees of *Ouverture* reincorporated the structure within the phenomenological boundaries of Corbigny. Photosacs workers tended to walk or cycle to the factory not from Corbigny town centre (few of them lived there) but from surrounding farms and even smaller villages. The commute to Photosacs established the boundaries of Corbigny centripetally. By contrast, the journey to La Transverse operated centrifugally, propelling attendees outward from the centre and expanding the lived, affective territory of Corbigny in the process.[63]

Halfway to La Transverse, our caravan came to a halt. Pascal Dores began recounting the history of the company into a megaphone. The other performers walked among the assembled attendees distributing

flyers that listed Metalovoice's production history. The dramaturgy of
this portion of the performance, alluded to at the start of this chapter, was
that of a strike, political rally, or agitprop sketch, with one figure speak-
ing into a megaphone as others circulated through the crowd handing
out tracts. Most of the performers also wore dark blue jumpsuits or cov-
eralls typical of French auto or other factory workers, heightening the
effect. With the history lesson concluded, the performers climbed onto
the truck and seemed to disappear into crevasses in the heaps of luggage,
only to reappear on top of the pile. Atop the truck the company began
one of its trademark musical and pyrotechnic displays. Some performers
pounded on oil drums with mallets and drumsticks. Others touched the
drums with power saws and belt sanders, sending up showers of sparks
(see figure 2.4).

Metal percussion has remained a constant in Metalovoice's produc-
tion history even as its aesthetic has shifted away from the frontally
presented musical concerts of Tambours du Bronx. The percussive
activity of striking metal is talismanic, what W. T. Lhamon would call
the 'fetishized gesture' of a lore cycle:

> Lore composes the basic gestures of all expressive behavior, from moans
> to narratives, signs to paintings, steps to dances. Part of this lore acquires
> a special status. Certain of these gestures separate from the others. These

Figure 2.4 Metalovoice performers send sparks into the night along the
Route Saint-Saulge, Corbigny, 2011.

particular motions of the hands or mouth represent a group to itself and to outsiders, and they are recognized for their representation. Groups do not acknowledge all their gestures in this same way. Rather, they choose to emphasize some gestures as abiding tokens of their membership.[64]

The lore cycle of industrial percussion predates Metalovoice and Tambours du Bronx and extends beyond French borders, as evidenced by the hammer that in Communist and Soviet symbolism metonymically represents all industrial labour. Lhamon observes that the fetishized gestures of a lore cycle are 'continually embedded in further activity.'[65] The percussive striking of metal that stands in for all industrial labour now also stands in, more locally, for the *oeuvre* and aesthetic first of Tambours du Bronx and then of Metalovoice. By striking oil drums atop a truck laden with suitcases bearing the names and dates of all their past performances, Metalovoice company members managed to re-enact their entire production history – and their own personal histories – in a matter of minutes.

The atmosphere was triumphant and festive as the Metalovoice truck, now exploding with light and sound, drove us onward toward La Transverse. We came to a vast meadow where tractors and farm equipment were lit in shocking oranges, greens, and reds. The performers of visiting company KompleXKapharnaüM (a company I turn to in the next chapter) were there to usher us to a set of three square projection screens, the first stop of their processional piece *Au travail* (*At Work*, or *To Work*). The first images to appear were of the same meadow in which we were standing, but blanketed in snow, devoid of human activity. Standing in front of the video screens, KompleX's artistic director Stéphane Bonnard explained that this snowy meadow was the sight that greeted him and his team when they first arrived in Corbigny to conduct research for the performance. Such documentary authenticating gestures are characteristic of KompleXKapharnaüM, which always incorporates the labour of making performance into the performance itself. For this piece the move was particularly effective, as *Au travail* went on to establish gestural connections between the embodied labour of theatre-makers, former Photosacs employees, and other Corbigny locals.

The rest of the video triptych featured some of the everyday agricultural labour common to Corbigny (including upsetting footage of a local farmer euthanizing a gravely ill cow). Over these images, Bonnard described his company's initial meetings with town residents. He and his company then led us from the meadow to La Transverse. As we moved en masse toward La Transverse, KompleX performers ran ahead

of, around, and among us, carrying portable projection units attached to iPods. The performers would pause here and there to project new images or videos on the walls of nearby buildings. Sound for the videos, along with added sonic texture and effects, came from other artists and engineers pushing massive speakers and mixing equipment on wheeled carts.

Several major elements dominated the video projections. Two women emerged as protagonists; these were former Photosacs employees who described standing or sitting at their workbenches for ten hours a day, repeating the same minute gestures of cutting and stitching. A Tambours du Bronx musician also reappeared throughout, demonstrating various drumming techniques. These recurring interlocutors situated La Transverse at the intersection of two histories: the past life of the site (Photosacs) and the past life of Metalovoice as a company (Tambours du Bronx). Adults from Corbigny mimed the gestures that they routinely performed at work, while their children mimed gestures of what they imagined their parents' work to be. Because most of Corbigny's workforce is now employed in the tertiary sector, the gestures performed by interlocutors and projected onto the walls were primarily gestures of sitting, typing, speaking on the telephone, or operating a cash register (as just a few examples). Some local residents answered the question, 'what did you want to be when you grew up?' (or what do you want to be, for children); others answered 'what is work?' Answers to this last question rarely involved money: for these respondents, work was something fulfilling, a way to contribute to society, a way to give one's life meaning. Such responses exploded the myth of the lazy worker, while starkly contrasting with the repetitive gestures described and re-enacted both by former Photosacs employees and by present service industry workers.[66]

Finally, we reached La Transverse. Armed with buckets and brooms, KompleX performers pasted massive sketches of Photosacs workers to the façade of the converted factory. Projections continued over the sketches and the performers' bodies (see figure 2.5). The performers were thus marked both by their strenuous gestures and by the projected gestures of others. As the activity reached its peak, the massive sliding doors on the front of the building rumbled open. We cheered and made our way inside, shuffling our feet the way one does in a slowly moving crowd, first on dirt and sparse grass, then on the smooth concrete floor of the building.

From our entrance into La Transverse, we spectators witnessed an excerpt from *Virée(s) vers l'est*, a production created by Metalovoice earlier in 2011 that had already toured eleven towns (ten in France, one in Germany) during the summer festival season. (*Virée(s) vers l'est*
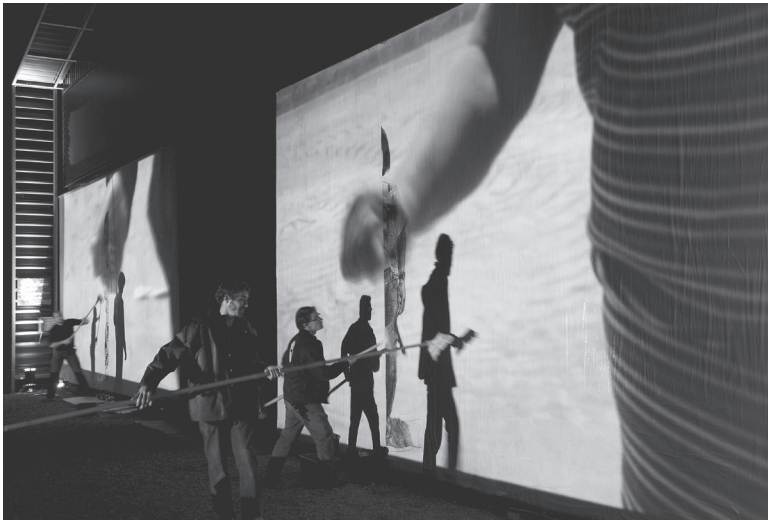
Figure 2.5 KompleXKapharnaüM performers fix images to the exterior wall of La Transverse as projections play over them, *Au travail*, Corbigny, 2011.

translates to *Turned toward the East*, but *virer* also suggests 'to chuck,' 'pitch,' 'toss,' and 'to pay by bank transfer.') Each iteration of *Virée(s) vers l'est* addresses a local factory closure. Each performance is a collaboration between Metalovoice and a town's local wind band, and features found text and music alongside original compositions. The press pack for the production states that the goal of *Virée(s) vers l'est* is to '[s]tart from a local history to link it to the rest of Europe. Start from personal sentiment to give it communitarian perspective. Start small to rejoin the grand planetary movement.'[67]

Though the production's title suggests that delocalization shifts industry to the east, pieces of found text incorporated into the performance challenge any simplistic attempt to blame Asia (much less Asian workers) for the decline of European manufacturing, suggesting instead that capital always has its gaze turned aside, greedily eyeing the next market. In global capitalism, there is always more east. (Indeed, in the 1960s Corbigny played the role of 'the east' that lured capital away from the unionized Parisian suburbs.) Just as importantly, *Virée(s) vers l'est* does not treat industry solely as beneficent job creator. Even if industry *has* relocated to India and China, the performance suggests, this simply represents the exportation of exploitation, both of people and of the environment: 'the disappearance of a polluting, energy-sucking, people-crushing factory, isn't it a good thing for a city? […] But the problem is

still there … it's just moved … elsewhere they [still] exploit, they pollute, they pillage, they scorn, they don't give a toss.'[68] Performances of *Virée(s) vers l'est* acknowledge the trauma of factory closures as challenges to financial stability and collective identity, but they refuse to sanitize local industrial histories, insisting instead on trans-local solidarity with the unseen workers now being exploited overseas.

At the far end of the long, rectangular, barely lit space, a Metalovoice company member stood atop a large platform in front of a row of metal pipes that resembled both a pipe organ and factory smokestacks (see figure 2.6). He slowly sounded the pipes with the hammers he held in each hand, sometimes filling the space with a resonant tone, other times producing a clank reminiscent of the railway, a mine, or a construction site. The performer assumed a wide, powerful stance and fully extended his arms with each strike of the hammer. Here again Metalovoice re-enacted the fetishized gesture of striking metal. By bookending the KompleXKapharnaüM performance – in which past and present Corbigny workers performed the minute and meticulous gestures of their labour – with its trademark industrial percussion, Metalovoice attempted to expand membership access to an industrial, working-class lore cycle.

KompleXKapharnaüM's *Au travail* created visual associations between the gestures of Photosacs workers and those of contemporary Corbigny service workers and juxtaposed that shared bodily repertoire with reflections on what work ought to be, thereby illuminating a gap between mundane reality and fulfilling ideal. Thus one might inter-pret the shift (back) to Metalovoice's striking of metal as yet another iteration of the aesthetic valorization of masculine (and especially white) muscularity and mastery over material that has historically emerged in response to the deskilling – perceived as feminization – of work.[69] The rest of the performance, however, undermined any uncritical valorization of virile working-class masculinity. The black curtains on either side of the oversized chimes were pulled back to reveal a singer and small wind band, who began to accompany the Metalovoice per-former (see figure 2.7). These musicians were part of Corbigny's all-volunteer Harmonie Municipale, an amateur ensemble intelligible to local residents as part of a longstanding tradition of working-class cultural production stretching back to the wind bands and choral socie-ties of the nineteenth-century Orphéon movement.[70] The conductor of the Harmonie Municipale directed his orchestra with broad, flowing motions that engaged his entire body and complemented the gestures of the Metalovoice performer.[71] Overlaying the band's underscoring, another Metalovoice performer ascended a small, cubical dais and read aloud the names of Photosacs' former employees, occasionally pausing

Figure 2.6 A Metalovoice performer strikes pipes with a mallet, *Ouverture*, Corbigny, 2011.

Figure 2.7 The full stage picture of Metalovoice's *Ouverture*, Corbigny, 2011.

to intone, 'it was you, here, at Photosacs.' The names were primarily, though not exclusively, women's, and though most sounded typically French I heard a few that hinted at the history of Italian migration to the area. Pascal Dores replaced the first speaker on the dais and methodically and emphatically recited excerpts from a text by Belgian playwright Jean-Marie Piemme:

> I have roots. I am from factory country.
> There, where black smoke floats over the chimneys of the steel mills like so many grimy curtains.
> I am from that country there. I am from factory country.
> I say it without pride. You are not proud of a black dust that forever falls on your schoolbooks. You are not proud of a colourless landscape. You are not proud of the hardness you perceive at times in the eyes of the grown-ups, without yet understanding, because you are little, the why of it all. I am from factory country. I say it without pride but I say it also without bitterness. Because once you leave this country, you are not indifferent to it. There is a kind of knowledge that comes to you from that life. A knowledge that no one teaches you. A knowledge, a filter, a point of view. No need to ask what the class structure is. You know it intuitively, you have it in your blood.[72]

The performers' 'roots' tie them to the heavy industrial landscapes of Fourchambault and Varennes-Vauzelles, and to older generations.

Because the class structure circulates 'in [the] blood,' working-class identity persists even though the performers have never worked in heavy industries themselves and have now left the 'factory country' of their childhoods. Most importantly, through Piemme's text Metalovoice performers claimed their lineage with neither pride nor bitterness, distancing themselves from any real or imagined crisis in masculinity and the reactionary celebration of male bodily strength that might ensue. The 'hardness' remembered by Metalovoice performers is emotional rather than (purely) physical.

The inauguration of La Transverse constructed numerous links, some stronger than others. *Au travail* linked the repetitive gestures of Photosacs workers to those of current Corbigny workers and to the trained, rhythmic movement of drummers. The excerpt from *Virée(s) vers l'est* fused factory and concert hall in its costume, movement, and soundscape, and it physically positioned Metalovoice performers alongside a longstanding local cultural institution, the Harmonie, with working-class origins. By staging an excerpt from its existing touring repertoire, Metalovoice initiated La Transverse into the street theatre production chain. By including Piemme's text as part of that excerpt, Metalovoice reiterated its members' genealogical and environmental claims to working-class identity. Such authenticating gestures differentiated Metalovoice from an artist like Lawrence Weiner, even as Piemme's text disavowed uncritical working-class pride. By reciting the names of Photosacs workers as part of this iteration of *Virée(s) vers l'est*, Metalovoice incorporated Photosacs workers into the theatre company's production history and *re*incorporated them into the 'grand planetary movement' that *Virée(s) vers l'est* purported to engage – namely, a French, European, and even global delocalization of industry and a potential activist response to it.

To reincorporate is to link up bodies and spaces again and differently. The imagery of Piemme's text, the stage picture of the Metalovoice performer striking pipes with hammers, and the resonant metallic soundscape worked in concert to evoke the mines and metallurgical industries scattered throughout the Nièvre. The recitation of Photosacs employees' names, the refrain of 'it was you, here, at Photosacs,' and the simple fact of the performance's location created an association between those mines and metallurgical industries and the labour that once occurred in the Photosacs factory. Corbigny does not share the particular industrial heritage of the Metalovoice performers' home towns, but the inauguration of La Transverse attempted to establish Photosacs and forge as part of a shared lineage, one from which both theatre company and community could draw. Nonetheless, the 'colourless landscape' referred to in Piemme's text hardly describes the verdant, bucolic surroundings

of Corbigny, and aesthetically the heavy industries of mining and metal-
lurgy share very little with the manufacturing activities of Photosacs.
Reincorporation can offer a group political or symbolic clout by virtue
of affinity, but it might also efface that group's specificity.

The 1961 installation of Photosacs marked the reincorporation of
Corbigny and surrounding rural areas into a production chain. I claim
this initial factory installation as *re*incorporation because Corbigny was
already part of urban-rural economic networks. Photosacs reincor-
porated Corbigny in the sense of linking up spaces again and linking
up spaces differently. Photosacs also reincorporated young women
who were already contributing to the local economy in other capaci-
ties, whether as unpaid help on family farms or in other remunerated
jobs. The arrival of Photosacs did not mark the invention of a labour
force but, to borrow again from Lorit, an opportunity to 'fix' a 'floating'
labour force.[73] Photosacs brought rural women into the fold of industrial
production in an attempt to make them (differently) manageable and
governable.

The conversion of Photosacs to La Transverse reincorporated a dere-
lict structure into the daily life of Corbigny residents and reincorporated
Corbigny into a different sort of production chain. For the inauguration
of La Transverse, Metalovoice reincorporated the work of Photosacs
employees. In order to celebrate Photosacs workers, Metalovoice gave
them the same aesthetic treatment as workers in the Nièvre mining
and metallurgical industries. The members of Metalovoice deployed
their own relocated bodies to link Corbigny's present to other towns'
pasts, relocating Photosacs workers in industrial history. Metalovoice
company members used their own performing bodies as conduits
through which obscured industrial histories might join the grand nar-
rative of French industrial heritage, but this act of reincorporation was
itself guilty of obscuring some of the (gendered) specificities of local
factory work.

As an act of reincorporation, *Ouverture* gave intelligible narrative
structure to Corbigny's industrial history, offering closure (despite
the performance's title) while playing on the familiar. But the material
brought back from the past to make sense of the present, to close the
Photosacs circle, was partially borrowed and partially invented. Here, as
elsewhere, the production of the postindustrial is also the invention of
an alternative industrial past.

The conversion of the Photosacs factory – the reincorporation of
Corbigny into an urban-rural production chain – makes sense *as* an
iteration of an ongoing scenario of development. Pascal Dores coun-
ters with an effective rhetorical move: by comparing himself and his

company to artisans, he brings back a figure from the past to (apparently) punctuate the subordination of rural periphery to urban hub, in an attempt to make the scenario of development itself intelligible as over and done with. The event of *Ouverture* makes sense *of* ongoing change by linking Corbigny to other spaces in the Nièvre and their industrial histories, by, as the press pack suggests, linking 'local history' to 'the rest of Europe,' 'personal sentiment' to 'communitarian perspective,' one small community to 'the grand planetary movement.' The street theatre institution's participation in ongoing change – its 'making sense *as*' – and the street theatre event's ordering of that change in performance – its 'making sense *of*' – are bound together by the folded logic of reincorporation.

Playwright Mark Ravenhill cites reincorporation as one of the most useful tools in the storyteller's kit: 'beginners,' he writes, 'often keep on adding new elements to a story, whereas a few simple elements established early and reincorporated later make for a much more satisfying tale. If there's a gun in the first act, have someone fire it in the third. That's pure Chekhov.'[74] Reincorporation, however, does not refer to the careful and purposive laying down of breadcrumbs to be picked up later. Reincorporation is not the start of a process, but its serendipitous end.[75] From the perspective of the audience, too, there is a difference between reincorporation and foreshadowing. Foreshadowing hints at a future still to come; reincorporation hastily digs up the past to make it appear as though the future has arrived. Foreshadowing confidently announces a plan. Reincorporation exclaims, with a mixture of pride and disbelief, 'why yes, that was my plan all along!'

Keith Johnstone describes the improviser as 'a man [*sic*] walking backwards. He sees where he has been, but he pays no attention to the future. His story can take him anywhere, but he must still "balance" it, and give it shape, by remembering events that have been shelved and reincorporating them.'[76] The position of the improviser mirrors that of Walter Benjamin's angel of history, inspired by Klee's *Angelus Novus*, looking back at the ever-accumulating wreckage as the storm of progress hurls him into the future.[77] For Benjamin, the angel's perspective is not our own: '[w]here a chain of events appears before *us*, *he* sees one single catastrophe.'[78] By contrast Paul Virilio, in his analysis of what he perceives as the acceleration of everyday life, has suggested that the angel's perspective 'has become the vision of each and every one of us.'[79] Reincorporation corrects that vision by distorting it, giving shape to the wreckage of history. By lending to catastrophe the structure of a chain of events, it makes the present situation intelligible and manageable.

Notes

1 Monique de Certaines, *Corbigny: hier et aujourd'hui* (Magny-Lormes: La Tour du Bailly, 1990), 270.

2 Data compiled from French statistical agency INSEE, www.insee.fr (accessed 13 August 2018).

3 For more on rural French demographic shifts and their impact on local and cultural development, see Stoyan Antonov et al., *Patrimoines, tourisme, dynamiques sociales: étude comparative de nouveaux usages en Europe*, scientific report, ed. Denis Cerclet (Lyon: Agence universitaire de la Francophonie, 2006); Jean-Jacques Bavoux, 'Structuration du territoire bourguignon: de l'île à l'isthme,' *Revue Géographique de l'Est* 46.1–2 (2006). Web: http://rge.revues.org/1195 (accessed 13 August 2018); Thierry Brossard and Robert Chapuis, 'The Demographic Evolution of Rural France (1968–1982),' *Journal of Rural Studies* 5.4 (1989): 357–65; Délégation interministérielle à l'aménagement du territoire et à l'attractivité régionale (DATAR), *Quelle France rurale pour 2020?* (Paris: DATAR, 2003); Mohamed Hilal et al., *Typologie des campagnes françaises et des espaces à enjeux spécifiques (littoral, montagne et DOM): synthèse* (Paris: DATAR, 2012); Martin Vanier, 'Rural-Urbain: Qu'est-ce qu'on ne sait pas?,' in Samuel Arlaud, Yves Jean, and Dominique Royoux (eds), *Rural-Urbain: Nouveaux Liens, Nouvelles Frontières* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2005), 25–32; Martin Vanier, 'La Relation "ville/campagne" excédée par la périurbanisation,' *Cahiers français* 328 (2005): 13–17.

4 See Keith Johnstone, *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre* (New York: Routledge, 1981), 112–15, and Theresa Robbins Dudeck, 'Keith Johnstone's "Circle of Probability": A Concept for Creating Stories That Engage Audiences,' *Theatre Topics* 23.1 (2013): 45–51.

5 Here I refer to repertoire as understood by Tracy C. Davis: 'multiple circulating discourses of intelligibility.' See Tracy C. Davis, 'Nineteenth-Century Repertoire,' *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film* 36.2 (2009): 6–28.

6 See, for instance, Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Piscataway, NJ: Aldine Transaction, 1996), 94–6.

7 Jean-Mathias Joly, 'Une ouverture aux arts de la rue,' *Journal du Centre*, 22 September 2011.

8 My use of 'scenario' comes from Diana Taylor, who analyses scenarios of discovery. See Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 28–33, 53–64.

9 Grant Kester, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 15.

10 Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995), 7–9.

11 Jean-François Gravier, *Paris et le désert français* (Paris: Portulan, 1947).

12 Vanier, 'La Relation "ville/campagne" excédée par la périurbanisation.'

13 'M. Havoué a posé la première pierre de l'usine "Photosacs,"' *Journal du Centre*, 8 July 1961.

14 Though Corbigny farmers did raise cattle, they did not produce leather, and the materials for the manufacture of the camera cases came from elsewhere.

15 Jean Lorit, 'Deux exemples de décentralisation dans la Nièvre.' Archives Départementales de la Nièvre, Nevers, 1964, 12.

16 Ibid., 3.

17 Ibid., 1.

18 Doreen Massey describes similar trends following industrial decentralization to the Fenlands of East Anglia in the 1960s and 1970s. Massey demonstrates that the arrival of factory jobs did not substantially change gender relations in that rural area. See Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 204–6.

19 Lorit, 'Deux exemples de décentralisation dans la Nièvre,' 12.

20 Ibid., 9.

21 Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Globalized World in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Allen Lane, 2005).

22 André Malraux, 'Présentation du budget des affaires culturelles, 17 novembre 1959,' Assemblée Nationale. Web: www.assemblee-nationale.fr/histoire/andre-malraux/discours/Malraux_17nov1959.asp (accessed 8 May 2014).

23 From a decree made by André Malraux on 24 July 1959, cited in Bernard Gournay and Robert Wangermée, *Cultural Policy in France* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1991), 27.

24 Original statement from 'André Malraux s'explique…,' *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 14 October 1968; cited in David Wachtel, *Cultural Policy and Socialist France* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 14.

25 Wachtel, *Cultural Policy and Socialist France*, 27.

26 Ibid., 10.

27 Jean François-Poncet et al., *L'avenir de l'espace rural français* (Paris: Economica, 1991), 194. Emphasis in original.

28 Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2007).

29 On the post-productivist transition, see Andrea Boscoboinik and Hana Horáková, 'Contested Rurality: Rural Areas in the Post-Industrial Age,' in Andrea Boscoboinik and Hana Horáková (eds), *From Production to Consumption: Transformation of Rural Communities* (Zurich: LIT Verlag, 2012), 9–19. On the transactional model, see Vanier, 'La Relation "ville/campagne" excédée par la périurbanisation.'

30 See Boltanski and Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*.

31 As just one example, see Anne Algret-Georges and Christian Paul, 'L'innovation numérique en milieu rural, vers un Pays 2.0,' project proposal, Pays Nivernais Morvan, Corbigny, 2010.

32 Ariane Bouhours, 'Un lieu dédié aux arts de la rue,' *Journal du Centre*, 21 June 2011.

33 Ibid.

34 Though Metalovoice is well known throughout France and has a successful track record of grants and residencies, the company is hardly flush with cash. At La Transverse there is insufficient funding to offer salary and board to visiting artists. The spartan lodging in the newest section of La Transverse can house three or four visiting company members; any additional guests would have to stay with Metalovoice members in their homes or find alternative housing elsewhere. Metalovoice also lacks the financial resources to feed and pay visiting companies, though resident companies have full access to the Transverse kitchen. In order to fully welcome resident companies, Metalovoice members sometimes pay themselves for only three or four days for every five days worked. Thus, despite public funding from the various levels of government, Metalovoice members must take pay cuts in order to provide the town of Corbigny with the free benefits of a street theatre production centre, benefits that include local economic growth.

35 For an in-depth sociological analysis of the *intermittents* as a professional category and the contributing factors to the 2003 crisis, see Pierre-Michel Menger, *Les intermittents du spectacle: sociologie d'une exception* (Paris: Editions de l'EHESS, 2005).

36 'Accrocs verbaux après les Zaccros,' *Journal du Centre*, July 2003.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Metalovoice, 'Le Lieu Avant,' www.metalovoice.com/Le-lieu-avant (accessed 8 May 2014).

40 Groupement de Défense du Patrimoine Corbigeois (GDPC), 'Pétition: contre la dégradation de la façade de l'Abbaye de Corbigny,' www.lapeti tion.be/petition.php/Defense-du-Patrimoine-culturel-de-Bourgogne/6849 (accessed 5 September 2018).

41 Ibid.

42 Joly, 'Une ouverture aux arts de la rue.'

43 Bouhours, 'Un lieu dédié aux arts de la rue.'

44 Pascal Dores, interview with the author, 13 December 2011.

45 Ibid. Dores observed that the 'artisan' is the comparison he regularly makes in conversation with his fellow Corbigny residents; it is not a comparison he made for the first time in this interview.

46 E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin, 2013 [originally published 1963]), 260.

47 In addition to Thompson, see Denis Woronoff, *Histoire de l'industrie en France* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1994).

48 Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 253.

49 Bouhours, 'Un lieu dédié aux arts de la rue.'

50 Pascal Dores, interview with the author, 13 December 2011.

51 Jayna Brown, Patrick Deer, and Tavia Nyong'o, 'Punk and its Afterlives: Introduction,' *Social Text* 31.3 (2013): 1.

52 Mary Russo and Daniel Warner, 'Rough Music, Futurism, and Postpunk Industrial Noise Bands,' *Discourse* 10.1 (1987–88): 69–70.

53   Pascal Dores, interview with the author, 13 December 2011.

54   Isabelle Arnaud, interview with the author, 2012. At the interviewee's request, I have not used her real name. Isabelle Arnaud is a pseudonym.

55   Karl Marx, 'Capital, Volume One,' in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, second edition (London: Norton, 1978), 405.

56   Leslie Salzinger, *Genders in Production: Making Workers in Mexico's Global Factories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 6, 10.

57   Lorit, 'Deux exemples de décentralisation dans la Nièvre,' 9.

58   Isabelle Arnaud, interview with the author, 2012.

59   Salzinger, *Genders in Production*, 26.

60   Isabelle Arnaud, interview with the author, 2012.

61   de Certaines, *Corbigny: hier et aujourd'hui*, 270.

62   Jean-Mathias Joly, 'Une ouverture et des surprises,' *Journal du Centre*, 23 September 2011.

63   On the second day of the festival, spectators had to retrace their steps from the opening ceremony and make their own way to La Transverse for the first performance. In subsequent years, the territory of the street theatre festival expanded outward and featured events in smaller neighbouring towns. The growth of the festival has spatially and symbolically reinforced Corbigny's status as a burgeoning cultural hub for the area.

64   W. T. Lhamon, *Raising Cain: Blackface Performance from Jim Crow to Hip Hop* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 69.

65   Ibid.

66   For more on the gestural links between industrial workers and employees in the tech and service industries, see Sarah Angliss and Caroline Radcliffe, '*Revolution*: Challenging the Automaton: Repetitive Labour and Dance in the Industrial Workspace,' *Performance Research* 17.6 (2012): 40–7; and Donna Haraway, 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,' in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1991), 149–82.

67   Metalovoice, 'Le Métalorchestre / Virée(s) vers l'est,' press pack, 2011.

68   Ibid.

69   Ava Baron offers a useful overview of male working-class embodiment and historians' analyses of the cult of masculinity. 'The economic and social transformations believed to have disrupted men's stable sense of manhood resulted in the valorization of a rough and tough masculinity. As the independent manhood of the property-owning farmer and self-employed craftsmen gave way to deskilled manual laborers and salaried office workers men's bodies took on new significance. […] [Working-class men] valorized muscularity as its relevance waned.' Ava Baron, 'Masculinity, the Embodied Male Worker, and the Historian's Gaze,' *International Labor and Working-Class History* 69 (2006): 146–7.

70   For more on the historical development and cultural connotations of wind music in France, see Vincent Dubois and Jean-Matthieu Méon, 'The Social Conditions of Cultural Domination: Field, Sub-Field and Local Spaces of

Wind Music in France,' *Cultural Sociology* 7.2 (2012): 127–44; Jane Fulcher, 'The Orphéon Societies: "Music for the Workers" in Second-Empire France,' *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 10.1 (1979): 47–56; Paul Gerbod, 'L'institution orphéonique en France du XIXe au XXe siècle,' *Ethnologie française* 10.1 (1980): 27–44; and Paul Gerbod, 'La musique populaire en France dans la deuxième moitié du XXe siècle,' *Ethnologie française* 18.1 (1988): 15–26.

71 In other performances of *Virée(s) vers l'est* – though not at the inauguration of La Transverse – the conductor's costume was a tailcoat seemingly cut from the same blue cloth as workers' jumpsuits, fusing the dress codes of factory and concert hall.

72 Jean-Marie Piemme, 'Je suis du pays de l'usine,' in *Virée(s) vers l'est*, performed by Metalovoice, directed by Pascal Dores, La Transverse, Corbigny, 24 September 2011. Unfortunately my English translation fails to capture the rhythm and occasional rhyme of the original French, exemplified by the first line: 'J'ai des racines. Je suis du pays de l'usine.' In his delivery, Dores paused briefly after 'J'ai' and 'Je suis'.

73 Lorit, 'Deux exemples de décentralisation dans la Nièvre,' 12.

74 Mark Ravenhill, 'At Last, I Meet the Man Who Made Me a Playwright. And We Talk About Peeling Bananas,' *The Guardian*, 2 March 2009.

75 This is not a criticism of Ravenhill. Insofar as Ravenhill is describing the initial writing process, he is correct to use the term reincorporation. A playwright drafting her final scenes might indeed be surprised by the early material that returns and gains new significance. But in the process of revision she refines that reincorporation, thereby transforming it into foreshadowing.

76 Johnstone, *Impro*, 116.

77 Walter Benjamin, 'On the Concept of History,' in *Selected Writings*, volume 4: *1938–1940*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2003 [originally published 1940]), 392. I am not the first to observe the similarity between Johnstone and Benjamin. See Gary Peters, *The Philosophy of Improvisation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 18.

78 Benjamin, 'On the Concept of History,' 392.

79 Paul Virilio, *A Landscape of Events* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000), xiii.

3

Excavation: the imaginary archaeology of redevelopment

Vaulx-en-Velin, May 2012. I have reached the end of the line. I alight from the subway train at Vaulx-en-Velin La Soie, the 'multimodal' transit hub that since October 2007 has connected this far-flung eastern banlieue to Lyon city centre. Diffuse light from frosted skylights bathes the underground platform in a soft glow. Warm-toned woods and evenly spaced palm trees set this station apart from the older, workaday concrete models I left behind in Lyon and Villeurbanne. In the years following this visit the redeveloped neighbourhood above will come to match the station's contemporary aesthetic, but in 2012 the station stands in stark contrast to the vast expanses of asphalt that come into view as I ascend the stairs to ground level. I have the impression that I have left a model home and wandered into a surrounding construction site, or that I have stepped off a polished stage set and entered the scene shop. I am walking through a work in progress: the Carré de Soie (Silk Square) redevelopment project, an initiative of the Greater Lyon metropolitan area. The Carré de Soie encompasses the Villeurbanne neighbourhoods east of Boulevard Laurent Bonnevay and the Vaulx-en-Velin neighbourhoods south of the Canal de Jonage. Initiated in 2004, the project reimagines this disparate collection of brownfields and social housing as the eastern centre of leisure and business for a growing European agglomeration.

KompleXKapharnaüM, the street theatre company discussed in

this chapter, is based in a former metal parts factory on rue Francia, a short walk past the city limits in Vaulx-en-Velin's western neighbour Villeurbanne but within the boundaries of the Carré de Soie.[1] In the mid-twentieth century the workers in this small metal shop, then owned by limited liability company DELMA, produced parts for the complex machinery of local synthetic textile factories. Like other small mechanical and metallurgical enterprises in the area, DELMA persisted after the 1980 closure of the city's largest rayon factory by producing metal parts for healthier industries. DELMA finally closed in 1995, the year KompleXKapharnaüM was founded. The theatre company has occupied the workshop since 2002. KompleX has dubbed the space EnCourS (In Progress), a fitting name for a site in which the company develops its own multimedia performances and hosts visiting companies for residencies of up to several months. The company has expanded its workspace to include the neighbouring derelict glass workshop, La Vitrerie. The former glass workshop and former metal parts factory open onto a small courtyard in which members of KompleXKapharnaüM and their guest artists-in-residence share lunch each day.

KompleXKapharnaüM call themselves '21st century archaeologists.'[2] The company's production process typically involves archival research and ethnographic interviews about the history of a neighbourhood or building. In performance, company members project these primary materials onto the exterior walls of the neighbourhood or building in question. This chapter takes up two of KompleX's artistic interventions into industrial space, *PlayRec* (2006–08) and *SPP* (short for *Sentier Pédestre Périphérique* (Peripheral Pedestrian Path), 2011–12). For *PlayRec*, a touring production, KompleX developed site-specific performances that engaged with derelict or converted industrial sites throughout Europe. One such site was the Cusset hydroelectric plant a few blocks from the company's workshop in Villeurbanne. KompleXKapharnaüM developed and staged a performance there in June 2007, just before major construction began for the Carré de Soie redevelopment. Four years after the Cusset version of *PlayRec*, KompleXKapharnaüM began *SPP*, a series of local performances by KompleX and visiting companies that marked the first phase of KompleX's ongoing engagement with the Carré de Soie project. These two productions present a rare opportunity to observe how a theatre company engages with a working-class, industrial neighbourhood immediately before and during redevelopment.

PlayRec and *SPP* restage the excavation of the industrial past. Archaeologists recognize excavation as both destructive and creative. Anxiety about the destructive nature of archaeological work pervaded the field's scholarly discourse throughout the twentieth century.

Archaeologist Gavin Lucas identifies 'a critical paradox of intrusive fieldwork, that in order to understand something, we have to destroy that very thing in the process. Excavation therefore comes to possess a double meaning, as the recovery and understanding of archaeological remains and, at the same time, the destruction of the context and integrity of those remains.'[3] Excavation might damage the very artefacts archaeologists would hope to unearth or forcibly remove those artefacts from the surroundings that would make them intelligible. But the physical removal of layers of sediment also allows for the accumulation of layers of meaning. Michael Shanks refers to 'the construction of archaeological knowledge' as a 'creative event.'[4] In his collaborations with theatre scholar-practitioner Mike Pearson and with fellow archaeologist Randall McGuire, Shanks argues for a 'performative model of the construction of archaeological knowledge.'[5] Rather than simply discovering or unearthing something called 'the past,' the archaeologist engages in 'a practice of cultural production,' making something new by recontextualizing material residues. (Thus excavation shifts from decontextualization to recontextualization.) From this relocated matter the archaeologist constructs 'a meaning, a narrative, an image' that 'stands for the past in the present.'[6] To excavate is to hollow out, but meaning and narrative are fabricated (rather than found) within the void.

PlayRec and *SPP* offer two models of theatrical archaeology, both of which play on the constructedness of urban and industrial memory while remaining faithful to a materialist metanarrative. By this I mean that the theatrical revelation of memory's constructedness – or even the theatrical re-enactment of memory's construction – does not presume radical polyvocality; it neither dispenses with material reality nor ignores the power dynamics that determine which memories circulate with greater or lesser ease. Here I echo Randall McGuire's critique of post-processualist archaeology:

> Divorced from any theoretical metanarrative that would provide insight into the relevance of competing knowledge claims, post-processualist archaeology is devoid of the power to contest interpretations that uphold existing conditions. […] Multivocality has the danger of denying or masking the power of the powerful. We must be able to judge some voices as pernicious.[7]

Without falling prey to positivism, KompleXKapharnaüM retains the right to identify certain memorial constructions as more distorted than others, or at least distorted to serve particular political and economic purposes. KompleX's archaeological experiments demonstrate the power dynamics at work in the creation of knowledge, narratives,

and images of the past. *PlayRec* deployed montage and distancing techniques in an attempt to generate theatricality, a sympathetic breach with social processes – in this case, the social processes that construct official memory.[8] By contrast, *SPP* operated via what Amber Day has called 'ironic authenticity,' a kind of parody that does not remove audiences from the sphere of politics but actually practices engagement.[9] Ultimately the divergent production processes, performance aesthetics, and audience experiences of *PlayRec* and *SPP* point to the unique artistic and rhetorical tactics that become necessary when a theatre company embeds its work in an ongoing redevelopment project.

PlayRec: memory made strange

With *PlayRec*, KompleX sought to commemorate working-class and industrial heritage by creating site-specific performances on and around derelict factory spaces. In each performance the company explored not only the history of each industrial site, but also how local residents remembered and transmitted industrial heritage. The production's title, *PlayRec* – derived from the 'play' and 'record' buttons on a video or voice recorder – implied a double, folded temporality: a linear progression from start to finish but also, simultaneously, the documentation of that progression for future use. *PlayRec* consisted of the documentation of performance and the performance of documentation. According to press materials prepared by the company, *PlayRec* performers constructed '[a] version of history that disregard[ed] the "grand narrative" to focus on the wealth of individual recollections.'[10] I offer a friendly amendment by suggesting that *PlayRec* did not disregard the grand narrative so much as challenge its hegemony and even stage its conditions of production. *PlayRec* posed the question, 'What do we keep of yesterday to build tomorrow?'[11] KompleX's project was not simply to oppose impersonal historical narrative to personal testimony; rather, the company's production process and aesthetic choices re-enacted for the audience how individual experiences are taken up and put to cultural use.

Crucial to this project is the distinction among individual memory, official memory, and collective memory. Pierre Duforeau, co-artistic director of KompleXKapharnaüM, identifies only two kinds of memory, 'that called official [memory] and then personal memories [*souvenirs*]. […] For *PlayRec*, we want to confront the two types of memory […]

We claim the notion of anecdotes, tales, and fables, which are also modes of transmission of memory [*mémoire*].'[12] The distinction between *mémoire* and *souvenir* resurfaces in both the reception of *PlayRec* and the French scholarly literature on urban redevelopment and industrial heritage. *La mémoire* (as opposed to the masculine indefinite *un mémoire*, a memoir) refers to memory in the abstract – I have a good memory – or the unquantifiable totality of individual memories, *souvenirs*. *Mémoire* is always singular, whereas one might speak of a single *souvenir* or a collection of specific *souvenirs*. My *mémoire* is the sum total of recollections throughout my life. As part of that *mémoire*, I have numerous *souvenirs* of clearly delimited events, e.g. road trips, first dates, weddings, funerals. As in the Anglophone world, a souvenir also refers to a material object, e.g. a seashell or snow globe. Interaction with this material object in the present produces a connection between present and past, between the here and now and a spatio-temporal elsewhere/when. Souvenirs do not evoke the past as lived; rather, they interact with human subjects to create a third temporality in the present moment. I harp on the distinction between *mémoire* and *souvenir* – and on *souvenir*'s materiality – because Duforeau suggests that *souvenirs* persist as *mémoire* fades or is altered. 'We perceive that bits of *la mémoire* are totally swept away even though the *souvenirs* are still quite real.'[13] In the literature on industrial heritage and urban redevelopment, *souvenirs* refer to individuals' experiences of a site, whereas *mémoire* refers to the memory of the site itself. The memory of a site is subject to political whim. Individual *souvenirs*, too, are political, but they are not as easily changed by a facelift and a public relations campaign. The project of *PlayRec* is to piece together *souvenirs* to reconstruct – both in the sense of building again and building differently – a *mémoire* that is collective without being official, processual rather than fixed. The *souvenirs* at play are the individual testimonies of former factory workers and the materiality of each specific site.

All of KompleXKapharnaüM's performances are site-specific; the company's 'tours' involve extensive residencies in the host communities. Thus what they tour is not a completed cultural product but rather a set of methods and methodologies. These too remain open to change: 'This approach differs from a sociological or historical approach based on a particular methodology. It is more of a sensitive approach whereby the artists attempt to remain open and responsive to their environment.'[14] Of course, sociologists and historians too (should) allow the fieldwork or archival environment to shape their research methodologies. Despite the stated contrast to a 'sociological or historical approach,' what the company describes here is simply sound research practice. If some contemporary theatre scholars engage in performance as

research, KompleX's multidisciplinary artistic team engage in research as performance.

To create each site-specific iteration of *PlayRec* required four phases: preliminary investigation, residency, rehearsal, and rendition. First, the company identified a former industrial site emblematic of its host community. Usually this was a derelict factory building slated for repurposing or demolition, though occasionally the company selected an operational industrial site that had undergone dramatic change such as automation. Practical limitations included structural integrity and age. The company required 1) a structurally sound building and 2) living former factory workers who could provide written, oral, and/or video testimony. Second, the team resided in the host community for several weeks as its members gathered the materials for the performance. These included historical and contemporary photographs of the site, archival documents and ephemera, and testimony from the factory's former employees. Company members researched employment records, studied neighbourhood demographics, posted public flyers, placed advertisements in local papers, and went door to door to find people who had worked in the factory and witnessed its demise. From this research, KompleXKapharnaüM chose one former factory worker whose narrative would serve as the through-line of the performance. As co-artistic director Stéphane Bonnard recounted in our 2010 interview:

> We always looked for a first time storyteller, someone who had never told his or her story about the industry or the factory or the site. There's always that one person that everyone sends you to – oh, you want info on that factory, talk to so and so – […] the keeper of all official memories. We didn't want to talk to that guy.[15]

KompleX also contacted local associations, community centres, and squatters' groups to gather information about the local socioeconomic landscape. The company always enlisted the help of a local team to navigate permissions and translate where necessary. Throughout the residency, company members maintained a logbook describing their production process, their encounters with interviewees, and their explorations of the city. Third, following this residency period, rehearsals began. Company members shaped a coherent narrative from the materials they had gathered over the course of the residency. 'It is a period during which the documentary material is exchanged, shared, acted out, interpreted and finally transposed into the fictional world of the intervention.'[16] The company shared its original text with the primary witness from each location; because the testimony of the primary witness acted as the through-line for the performance, he or she had veto power over

KompleX's final script. Fourth and finally, KompleX staged the theatrical event three times for an audience of approximately 500 people each night.

KompleX conceived and performed eight iterations of *PlayRec* from 2006 to 2008: at Estacion Esperanza, a derelict train station in Valladolid, Spain, for the Festival Internacional de Teatro y Artes de Calle (May 2006); at Les Etablissements Cosserat, a former textile factory in Amiens, for the city's Fête dans la Ville (June 2006); at Les Sucreries de Bourgogne, a former sugar refinery in Chalon-sur-Saône, for the renowned Chalon dans la Rue street theatre festival (July 2006); at Reininghaus, a former brewery in Graz, Austria, for the Strada festival (August 2006); at the Trafalgar Street Arches, former site of the famous Isetta 'Bubble car' factory in Brighton, for the Streets of Brighton festival (May 2007); at the Usine Hydroélectrique de Cusset, an active hydroelectric plant in the company's home town of Villeurbanne, for the festival Les Invites (June 2007); at Zajezdnia Gajowa, a tramway maintenance shop in Poznan, Poland, for the Malta festival (June 2007); and finally at La Condition Publique, a former wool treatment plant in Roubaix, for the festival Pile au Rendez-Vous (May 2008). As this itinerary indicates, KompleXKapharnaüM was invited to perform not by municipal governments but by the organizers of arts or cultural festivals. All eight performances occurred during the European summer festival season between May and August. This meant that in 2006 and 2007, KompleX was working on multiple iterations of *PlayRec* simultaneously. The residency in Poznan, for instance, occurred between the Brighton residency and the Brighton performances. Post-residency rehearsals took place at EnCourS in Villeurbanne or at one of France's numerous street theatre production centres, which also provided additional funding.

In what follows I offer a performance analysis of KompleX's 2007 staging of *PlayRec* at the Usine Hydroélectrique de Cusset. The Cusset hydroelectric plant stretches across the Canal de Jonage separating northern Vaulx-en-Velin from the easternmost neighbourhoods of Villeurbanne, and thus falls under the purview of the Carré de Soie redevelopment project. At the time of the *PlayRec* performance in June 2007, Greater Lyon had already selected developer Altarea's proposal for the construction of the Carré de Soie shopping and recreation centre (discussed in more detail below), though construction would not begin until September 2007. The new transit hub and metro extension linking the Carré de Soie to central Lyon would open in October 2007. No other projects had broken ground, but Greater Lyon had chosen architect and urban planner Bruno Dumetier to oversee the area's overall redevelopment in 2004; thus, proposals for various plots of the Carré de Soie

had been circulating for some time. Spectators attending the *PlayRec* performance at Cusset would be likely to have seen these proposals as they were widely disseminated and debated in the local and regional press. These conditions of reception are crucial for the analysis I propose below. As with all iterations of *PlayRec*, the 2007 Cusset performance explicitly thematized the surrounding neighbourhood. In the case of Cusset, that surrounding neighbourhood was about to change dramatically, even if the exact nature of the change remained uncertain.

The performance consisted of an assembly period, a prologue, and two distinct acts separated by a brief acrobatic interlude. For the duration of the performance, the audience stood between the façade of the hydroelectric plant and the makeshift light and sound booths of KompleX's technicians. These booths were actually *bricolage* machines cobbled together from various ordinary objects. As one review notes, 'Yesterday's tools carry within them [*portent en eux*] the most sophisticated apparatuses. The video projector is concealed in a machine full of rust.'[17] The interplay of mechanical and digital technologies, which would become a major feature of the performance, was already apparent during the assembly period. As the audience gathered, Stéphane Bonnard stood before a stand microphone on a platform in front of the hydroelectric plant. He held his script (loose, creased printouts) and a battery-powered clip light by which to read. It was night; apart from the reading lamp and the red work lights of the technicians positioned behind the audience, the only light came from a projection on the wall of the hydroelectric plant behind Bonnard, video footage of birds on the Canal de Jonage. This projection provided the assembly period's only soundtrack: the ambient sounds of the birds' calls and wind passing through rushes.

Once all of the spectators stood in a group in front of Bonnard and the plant, Bonnard spoke into the microphone to cue the technicians and begin the prologue: 'We begin with some images of Jérôme, a bit of history.' The projected footage of the canal was momentarily replaced by a software window as the projectionist switched to another video. KompleX did not hide the tools of their trade. The many videos projected and mixed during *PlayRec* were not cued to seamlessly follow one another; the projectionist had to close one video, offering the assembled spectators a brief glance at the company's video editing software, and select the next video to play. Bonnard did not typically look behind him to see what was being projected, though several times he openly looked to his colleagues in the dark behind the audience for confirmation that he could proceed with his spoken text. At times he even asked, 'We're good?' before continuing. Bonnard spoke in a measured, slow,

informal style and was not afraid to stop and correct himself, giving the impression that his text was half-read, half-improvised from notes.

The projectionist selected and played a video in which Bonnard interviewed a man, presumably Jérôme (his last name was not given), standing in view of the hydroelectric plant in daylight. Bonnard said to Jérôme, 'So, the Grand History of *Les Forces Motrices du Rhône* [the electric company based in the Cusset hydroelectric plant].' Jérôme then explained the history and function of the factory when it was first built in 1894, concluding, 'the electrification of Lyon came from here.' This brief projected conversation between Bonnard and Jérôme functioned as a foil for the rest of the performance, as an official and widely circulated narrative to be complicated and nuanced by subsequent individual testimony. This first projected interview also placed the audience in the same position as KompleXKapharnaüM company members at the start of their research process.

After the interview, Present Bonnard (whom for the sake of clarity I distinguish from the Projected Bonnard of the pre-recorded video footage) began the first act by announcing to the audience, 'We are called KompleXKapharnaüM, and we are preparing a show on the history of the Cusset hydroelectric plant, at least, a certain history, between what we keep, what we forget, what we sanctify, what we toss … certainly a slightly partisan history.' Of course, when Present Bonnard read these words aloud in performance, the company was no longer 'preparing' the show; it was performing it. As a theatrical event, *PlayRec* conjugated the past into the present tense. The company's production schedule – with residencies and rehearsals from autumn to spring, performances during the summer – ensured that each performance was a *return* to the derelict site rather than an initial encounter. KompleXKapharnaüM positioned themselves alongside their witnesses as the performance occasioned a revisit to an abandoned or transformed space.

Present Bonnard explained to the audience that the company created a flyer to solicit testimony from former employees of the plant. The projectionist switched to video footage of Projected Bonnard taping flyers to various local buildings. Some of this footage was recorded and edited for comic effect. In the first shot, Projected Bonnard approached the graffiti-tagged doors of a shuttered workers' residence and affixed a flyer to the door handles with two pieces of tape. The camera lingered on the flyer, allowing the audience to read it and then to see it fall off the door and fly away in the wind mere moments after Bonnard left. In another shot, Projected Bonnard attempted to attach a flyer to a bicycle rack but had trouble getting the tape off his fingers. In a third, an elderly woman approached Projected Bonnard as he was taping a flyer to a

column. He greeted her, but she ignored him, read the flyer in silence, and walked away, expression unchanged. The video footage undermined any impression that Bonnard and his troupe were intrepid explorers, dogged reporters, or saviours of a lost history. If anything, Projected Bonnard came across as a lovably hapless clown, an impression reinforced by the man's gangly, beanpole frame and his pile of frizzy hair. In these clips, Projected Bonnard needed the help (even pity) of local residents, not the other way around.

As the spectators watched Projected Bonnard trudge across town taping flyers to columns, Present Bonnard listed his itinerary, dropping the names of familiar local landmarks. Some of these were (at the time) future landmarks, like the construction site that since this 2007 performance has become the Carré de Soie shopping centre. Projected Bonnard's wandering and Present Bonnard's spoken text worked in concert to construct a narrative in which the company circled closer and closer to locals with distinct memories of the hydroelectric plant. Present Bonnard named these witnesses, and with a pointed finger cued a technician behind the audience to play the corresponding audio file. The first examples were quite vague: the audience heard the recorded voice of a woman who recalled that her uncle once took her inside the plant; she remembered everything being shiny and impressive. But Present Bonnard explained that these early witnesses were able to direct the company to another witness, then another, until they met Aimé Henry.

Henry's recollections of his time working in the hydroelectric plant served as the through-line for the Villeurbanne iteration of *PlayRec*. Present Bonnard gave the audience precise details of his initial meeting with Henry. He was scheduled to meet Henry in front of the factory at 2:30 in the afternoon, but at 2:45 Henry was still not there. Bonnard correctly guessed that Henry had already gone inside to the management offices, so he rang the buzzer and said to the voice on the intercom that he was there for a meeting with Aimé Henry, 'as if he still worked there.' Bonnard and his camera operator were buzzed into the building and told that Henry was in the command centre. Bonnard came across an employee in the building's front hall and asked for directions to the command centre, mentioning that he had a meeting with Aimé Henry. The employee replied with a smile, 'Aimé is here?' In performance, this detailed anecdote served as an authenticating gesture. The seemingly extraneous information established Aimé Henry as a beloved presence at the factory and, by extension, a valuable witness.

While Present Bonnard recounted the story of the company's meeting with Henry, the projectionist cued up the next video sequence, which

showed Henry's tour of the plant. By projecting a tour of the factory interior onto the factory exterior, KompleX offered the audience a meta-phorical window into the building before them. Henry, 80 years old, worked for eighteen years maintaining the rotors of the hydroelectric plant. When Bonnard took him back to the plant, he had not been inside since his retirement in 1987. Everything had been automated. The plant, which in Henry's time had employed forty mechanics, electricians, and machinists, now employed just six salaried workers who monitored the plant from a control room. In KompleXKapharnaüM's video footage, one of these employees told Henry that he would not recognize any-thing: 'It's all been modernized.' The kind of repair work that Henry did for eighteen years was now contracted out to external companies.

In the video footage projected onto the wall of the plant, Henry moved slowly but confidently through the plant, pointing out its features to Projected Bonnard and explaining the activities that filled his working life for eighteen years. Henry also inadvertently demonstrated the savoir-faire of an electrical plant worker, as Olivier Bertrand remarks in his 2007 performance review: 'Savoir-faire is disappearing. Passing close to a machine, Aimé remarked that it was not turning at the right speed. No one had realized. He recounts that, that machine having always been badly behaved, the old mechanics used to give the ball bearing a small, precise tap with a mallet, to fix it.'[18] Henry's tone when recounting this story was not one of smug self-satisfaction; he was simply offering advice to today's hydroelectric plant workers, who appeared more comfortable in front of computer screens and instrument panels than under a rotor with a mallet.

After clips of Henry's guided tour, Present Bonnard told the audience that he and the camera operator returned with Henry to his home for a sit-down interview. The projectionists played brief excerpts of this inter-view while Present Bonnard spoke, so that Projected Henry appeared to respond conversationally to Present Bonnard:

Present Bonnard:	He shares with us some anecdotes.
Projected Henry:	Back then it was all manual.
Present Bonnard:	His boss used to compliment him because he always properly ironed his blues.
Projected Henry:	Well, for me that wasn't a problem.

In this quick and humorous sequence, the past – Henry's pre-recorded interview – appeared to react and respond to the present – Present Bonnard's live speech. The projectionist then played a longer excerpt of Aimé Henry's in-home interview. The projectionists cut the video feed for the conclusion of the performance's first section, in which Present

Bonnard recounted at an accelerating pace his company's wanderings through the changing industrial neighbourhoods of Villeurbanne. He concluded with their return to their base of operations at EnCourS on rue Francia:

> We meet, we chat, we put forward our questions, we listen, it reassures us, warms us up. At times we feel cleaned out, empty in the face of the old folks, their stories, which we don't always know what to do with, the content of the past, a whole era, what do I keep, what do I toss, recycle – an archaeologist is just that, that choice, what I prefer to pitch, what I want to save, in order to tell this time, without it becoming nostalgia.

The choices of artist and archaeologist – what to jettison, what to preserve – would have been intelligible to *PlayRec*'s Villeurbanne audience as the choices facing the urban planners of the Carré de Soie. The various proposals for the derelict industrial sites of Villeurbanne and Vaulx-en-Velin offered different answers to the same questions. Bonnard's speech evoked the destructive and creative capacities of excavation, which involves both the removal of that deemed 'excess' and the repurposing of that deemed 'significant.'

The performance's entr'acte began in darkness. Pastel turquoise light then came up on a wall of the factory, revealing a male figure in silhouette. This acrobat fell backward onto a trampoline and propelled himself halfway up a wall of the hydroelectric plant; he ran up the vertical surface before falling back onto the trampoline and repeating the stunt again. The videographers of KompleXKapharnaüM captured the acrobat's movement and projected multiple distorted, slow motion copies of his tumbling silhouette onto other walls of the plant (see figure 3.1). A clarinettist and a saxophonist, standing in elevated sound booths placed amongst the audience and lit in shocking green, improvised slow, meandering jazz over digitally produced rhythms. KompleX video editors played and rewound their footage of the acrobat's movement in rapid succession, in time with the heavy beat, creating the illusion that they were 'scratching' their digital video footage as a DJ might scratch vinyl. The distortion process served to 'emphasize the manipulation of which the spectator is daily a victim.'[19] As the live acrobat continued his gravity-defying feat, a dozen copies of his shadow jumped back and forth at odd angles across the walls of the factory.

After a few moments of this, Present Bonnard (relocated by then to a technical booth placed among the assembled audience members) spoke over the music into a microphone. He addressed Aimé Henry, who may or may not have been present as one of the spectators: 'We're there, Aimé. We're going to tackle [*s'atteler à*] your story, choose voluntarily

Figure 3.1 An acrobat's image is captured, multiplied, and projected onto the wall of the Cusset hydroelectric plant in *PlayRec*, Villeurbanne, 2007.

what we keep, what we toss.' The audience laughed, recognizing the performance's refrain – 'what we keep, what we toss' – and perhaps appreciating the stakes of these archaeological decisions when applied to a specific individual's life history. With their knowing laughter, the audience permitted KompleX's artistic licence. Bonnard then compared the nineteen KompleXKapharnaüM performers to 'nineteen little children, ready to machine [*usiner*] your memories in an act of reconstitution, an homage, a celebration, an anniversary, a commemoration, a monument, a statue, a guided tour.' Bonnard's litany of commemorative objects and events began to sound like hip-hop against the increasingly heavy, irregular electronic beat. Like the video footage of Projected Bonnard posting flyers that portrayed the artistic director as hapless, this section of text asked the audience to excuse KompleX's creative choices as innocent child's play. But the text also prepared the audience for the manipulation of memory to follow. Present Bonnard's text and the simultaneous manipulation of the acrobat's movement were complementary audio and visual components that introduced the audience to the process of commemoration and to the rules of the performance's second half: present, embodied acts and material traces would be recorded, multiplied, distorted, played back, cut, scratched, and skipped.

In *PlayRec*'s second act, numerous activities occurred simultaneously in order to produce layers of material and virtual images, some still,

some moving, on the wall of the hydroelectric plant. The press release for *PlayRec* describes the resulting mural, dubbed the *Fresque-Manifeste* (Fresco-Manifesto), as 'a kind of cave-drawing,' a 'giant fresco manifesto, like an illegal poster stuck to the main pillar of the Museum of the 21st Century, which is definitely going to rise up one of these days.'[20] Some of the KompleX performers re-enacted the company's research and production process in two-person teams. One company member, the researcher, would rifle through a box, binder, or album of archival materials as another performer, the recorder, captured this action with a digital video camera connected to a live feed. The documents (along with the hands of the researcher) appeared projected on the walls of the hydroelectric plant and could then be manipulated in real time by KompleX video editors, just as the acrobat's silhouette had been (see figures 3.2 and 3.3).

Spectators could focus their attention on the factory's façade or abandon the frontal arrangement to watch the two-person research teams at work. Some spectators remained fixed in one position, occasionally turning their heads to see what was transpiring around them, while others opted to walk from performer to performer to investigate the archival materials being 'rediscovered.' Other company members dressed in white jumpsuits fixed black and white images directly onto the wall of the plant with push brooms and buckets of paste. The gestures

Figure 3.2 KompleXKapharnaüM performers excavate archival materials in *PlayRec*, Villeurbanne, 2007.
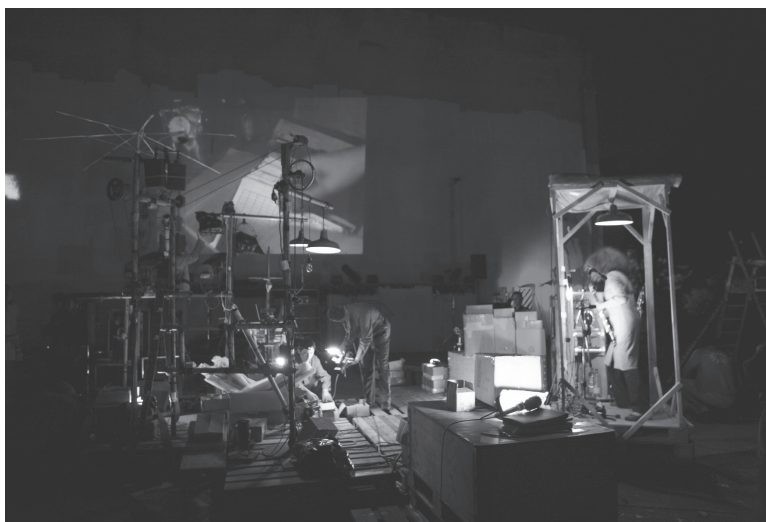
Figure 3.3 Footage of a KompleXKapharnaüM performer's hand is captured and projected onto the wall during the re-excavation of archival material in *PlayRec*, Villeurbanne, 2007.

these company members performed resembled those of billstickers who paste billboards in the Métro stations of Paris and Lyon. As the bill-sticker team affixed more and more of these images to the wall, the black and white pictures formed a backdrop for the video footage and other images projected onto the hydroelectric plant.

I identify four distinct, thematic movements in the second act of the performance: 1) technological and architectural history (the familiar received narrative of industrialization), 2) optimism and nostalgia, 3) energy and work, and 4) the question of power more broadly construed. In the first, briefest movement, the documents projected were plans and cross-sections of the factory and technical drawings of the machinery within. These primary source materials represented the architectural and technological history of industrialization. Accordingly, the accompanying audio was a digitally modified version of Jérôme's earlier introduction to the electrification of Lyon, this time joined by the sounds of the clarinet.

To initiate the second movement, the clarinettist switched from slow, meandering tones to a quick, chipper waltz. The two-person teams of researchers and recorders projected photographs and memorabilia from the early days of the factory. In one photograph, dozens of men in black coats and bowler hats stood proudly in front of the hydroelectric plant;

in another, a woman in coat, dress, and elaborate hat posed by the banks of the canal with the plant in the background. The spectators also saw early postcards depicting the factory, complete with postal markings and the handwriting of the card's unknown sender. Present Bonnard spoke into his microphone, imitating the tone of a carnival barker or scientific exhibitor at a world's fair: 'Science is now realizing its magnificent promise! Every day it enlarges its domain, and each of its conquests over nature brings to humanity greater well-being, hope, and new progress! There exists in France a gigantic attraction, which we may show with pride, as the accomplished model of modern electricity: it is the Jonage factory!' The next archival materials displayed were evidence of leisure activities, among them vintage photographs of workers with musical instruments and of women in bathing costumes by the canal.

The clarinettist's clipped waltz faded out and gave way to the sound of running, babbling water, which in turn ceded to the sound of Stéphane Bonnard slowly typing on a computer keyboard. With the computer monitor connected to a projector, the words Bonnard typed appeared simultaneously on the wall of the plant. Bonnard made frequent typos, which the spectators could then watch him correct in real time. Occasionally Bonnard even muttered into his microphone – for instance, 'Is that [noun] masculine or feminine?' – eliciting laughter from the spectators. Though it was initially unclear what Bonnard was typing, he was transcribing some of the material from one of his interviews with Aimé Henry. This became apparent when one of the KompleX technicians projected that video interview onto the factory wall over the other images, videos, and animations being produced by the two-person teams of researchers and recorders. In the video interview, Henry read from a text he had written in advance. He recalled how he and his team made shish kebabs for dinner when they were on duty on Sundays. 'I have only good memories here,' he said, 'especially with that team. […] When the old people left, I found myself with just young people, that worried me, but I got on board with them, and I didn't regret those years. […] We all broke bread together in those days. […] I really liked that work. I really liked those machines.' Henry's boss wanted to promote him, but Henry resisted being shut up in an office; he preferred to keep working with his hands. 'They were good times,' Henry recalled in the projected interview. 'That's all in the past.' Henry looked up from his paper at Projected Bonnard and the unseen camera operator. 'Is that good?' he asked. The audience then heard Projected Bonnard's voice: 'Perfect!'

The clarinettist (now sans clarinet) initiated the third movement by slowly turning the crank of a music box to produce slow, plinking notes.

The audience also heard the buzz of electricity as images of light bulbs flickered on the wall of the hydroelectric plant and the actual light bulbs on the technical booths flickered on and off. The noise intensified and the musician turned the key of the music box faster and faster until finally cutting into silence. A KompleX video editor then projected footage of Projected Bonnard's tour of the plant with Henry. Henry showed Bonnard the rapidly spinning turbines and explained various dials and meter readings. The musicians began to produce mechanical clanking sounds and strum twanging notes on electric guitars. The sounds of electric music and machines were accompanied by a woman's confident, soothing voice, seemingly from an energy advertisement: 'Producing more energy is vital. Pushing the world forward without pushing mankind backward is called sustainable development.' The music intensified: heavy metal, electric guitar, the grinding of machines, an air raid siren. The lights of the technical booths flashed alternating red and green.

Finally the musicians cut this heavy noise and the clarinettist resumed a slow, plaintive tune. KompleX technicians cut the flashing coloured lights and bathed the wall of the hydroelectric plant in a pure white glow. This allowed the spectators to see more clearly the progress of the mural that the KompleX billboard team had been pasting to the wall throughout the second half of the performance. The mural consisted mostly of life-size or larger-than-life black-and-white images of current and former Cusset employees and residents of the surrounding area. While preparing the performance, KompleX had taken photographs of these witnesses and digitally edited them to resemble line drawings. Other images in the mural included a rendering of the *fée électrique*, a fairy commonly used to represent electrical innovation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[21]

In the fourth and final movement of the performance, spectators saw interviews with local residents, filmed in tight close-up, projected onto the wall of the plant. These digital projections appeared to flicker like early film. A KompleX technician manually produced this effect: he reached above his head and used the full weight of his body to pull down a long metal rod connected to a rope. This rope was connected to a labyrinthine series of pulleys and belts; the technician's physical labour had the end result of rapidly turning a paper fan positioned in front of the digital projector. Thus the technician deployed an unnecessarily complex array of simple machines in order to make digital video flicker as if it were a filmstrip projected using analogue technology.

The first two flickering interviews were with two anthropology students who illegally secure empty or abandoned homes for people

living on the streets. One of the students remarked, 'It's a way of being relevant. To "go vote," for me, is not to engage in politics.' The next two interviews were with activists working on behalf of those who do not have access to basic services and utilities – including the electricity produced by the Cusset hydroelectric plant. These activists worked in establishment politics before becoming disillusioned by a perceived disconnect between professional politics and people's basic needs. These interviews expanded the performance's exploration of power beyond the electrical to the political (or perhaps revealed the politics of electricity). The interviews were replaced by projected video footage, not flickering this time, of Aimé Henry standing on the shore of the canal with the factory in the background. His digital image appeared over the material images of the completed mural. At this point the KompleX performers moved to the front of the assembled crowd and stood in front of the hydroelectric plant for their curtain call. Even this simple element of the curtain call, however, involved three kinds of bodies facing the spectators at once: first, the physically present bodies of KompleX company members; second, the digitally projected image of Henry's body; and third, the black-and-white portraits of local residents.

After applauding the performers, spectators approached the wall of the hydroelectric plant, where they were able to inspect more closely the mural created over the course of the performance. KompleX had also posted on the wall the text of the production and the transcripts of their interviews for interested spectators to read. Scores of spectators opted to linger at the factory to examine KompleX's primary sources and speak with the performers.

Though many of the videos featured in *PlayRec* were pre-recorded, most of the editing and mixing occurred 'live.' The video editors had no set script governing the distortion of the videos or even where on the factory they would project them. The professional prospectus for *PlayRec* thus describes the industrial site as a 'factory/editing room' [*usine/ salle de montage*].[22] Montage captures both KompleXKapharnaüM's own technique – producing a composite performance from fragments of video, text, image, and sound – and their industrial subject matter. Workers on the assembly line produce a composite whole from multiple parts, which is why factory assembly areas and film editing rooms share the name *salle de montage*. Obviously the Cusset hydroelectric plant is of a different character than an automotive factory; Henry and his colleagues never worked at an assembly line. (This is why for the Cusset performance KompleX incorporated more lighting effects and sound clips reminiscent of buzzing electricity.) But *salle de montage* remains an accurate description of the performance space created in front of

and on the walls of the plant. KompleX's audiences assembled memory fragments into a composite spatial narrative.

The montage as form highlights the interstitial spaces separating chains of images, denaturalizing a relation or progression through stark juxtaposition. The interstitial spaces act as traces of human labour. Spectators witnessed the work of producing electricity at Cusset and the work of producing *PlayRec*, projected onto the walls of the plant and also re-enacted live by the two-person research teams. Spectators also participated in the work of assembling a narrative from distorted, manipulated memory fragments. The effect was to denaturalize the construction of historical narrative then underway as part of the Carré de Soie redevelopment.

Developers aim to establish the Carré de Soie as an extension or satellite of Lyon city centre, which they are accomplishing in part by conflating the industrial history of the Carré de Soie with the artisanal history of Lyon. The urbanism team calls for mixed-use spaces on varying scales, from streets that intersperse businesses with homes to single buildings that contain both offices and apartments, to the most intimate 'superposition' of the 'maison-atelier.'[23] The maison-atelier is locally intelligible as the architectural descendent of nineteenth-century Lyon silk workshops on the slopes of the Croix-Rousse hill. Like other textile pieceworkers, a Lyon weaver lived and worked out of one space. The paradigmatic Croix-Rousse workshop featured a single, high-ceilinged room dominated by one or more looms. Living functions were confined to one corner of the space, with a small kitchen on the same level as the looms and a sleeping area lofted above the kitchen. Many of these spaces still exist as studio apartments with the original floor plan. By calling for the installation of maison-atelier housing in the Carré de Soie, Greater Lyon's urban planners are attempting to link the peripheral site to Lyon's history of silk production as opposed to Villeurbanne's and Vaulx-en-Velin's histories of chemical production. The maison-atelier residences will offer the conveniences of new construction and the cachet of period conversions: a connection to industrial history without an actual industrial past.

If maison-atelier housing references the artisanal, proto-industrial history of the Lyon silk trade more than the Fordist-Taylorist operations of Vaulx-en-Velin rayon factories, the same is true of the name 'Carré de Soie' itself. The silk monopoly granted to Lyon by François I persists today as symbolic monopoly. In fact, in 1935 Vaulx-en-Velin's largest textile factory had to change its name to TASE (*Textile Artificielle Sud Est*, Southeast Artificial Textile) from SASE (*Soie Artificielle Sud Est,* Southeast Artificial Silk) following legal action by Lyon silk workers. The

name Carré de Soie, like the proposed maison-atelier housing, binds the peripheral area to Lyon city centre *and* evokes an earlier, artisanal form of labour more palatable than Fordism to contemporary urbanists.

As a project of Greater Lyon, the Carré de Soie redevelopment is also a project of isotopy's absorption of heterotopy (in this case, the industrial banlieue). Henri Lefebvre defines heterotopias as fascinating but taboo spaces of mixing and difference, like shanty towns or marketplaces on the edge of a city, that resist homogenization.[24] Lefebvre posits a dialectical relationship between heterotopy and isotopy. He argues that isotopy – everything that makes a place 'the same place' – continually seeks to absorb the difference against which it defines itself.[25] I argue that the dialectic of isotopy and heterotopy plays out not just in space but also in time. In the case of the Carré de Soie, the absorption of the industrial banlieue is not just about the morphological and administrative 'sprawl' of Greater Lyon. It is also about representing the area's *past* differently.

Thus the function of *PlayRec* was to denaturalize this process by staging it *as* a process. Theatre critic Floriane Gaber recalls,

> This extremely rich work mixed video, music, and acrobatics to bring the relatively recent past back to life: the economic, social, and human crises that have changed the face of a number of our cities. Confronted with such a profusion of images and sound, however, some spectators felt overwhelmed, even aggressed, while others passed from one screen to another, hungry for more testimonies to listen to.[26]

Gaber's critique of *PlayRec* evokes critiques made by Peter Bürger and Andreas Huyssen in the 1980s of avant-garde shock aesthetics. If some works produced by early twentieth-century avant-gardes functioned as sensory re-education to fortify spectators for the perceptual shocks of urban modernity, Bürger and Huyssen concur that such aesthetic techniques passed into obsolescence as rapidly as any outmoded industrial technology. Bürger defines shock as a stimulus designed to alter praxis, but he observes that, first, there is nothing to guarantee the direction that praxis will take, and second, shock quickly loses its effectiveness and becomes expected, even consumed.[27] Huyssen agrees, writing that, in an oversaturated information society, even critical information fades into the background as noise.[28] In Gaber's view, the layering and purposeful distortion of sensory information in *PlayRec* became just such meaningless noise and foreclosed on the possibility of praxis. In the case of other iterations of *PlayRec*, she might have been correct. But in the case of the June 2007 Cusset rendition, I believe Gaber ignores the significance of the performance's interpretive community – those local spectators

familiar with the impending Carré de Soie redevelopment project who would have recognized in *PlayRec* a restaging of the manipulation of memory already underway in their community.

Plans and promotional materials for redevelopment projects have performative effects. They symbolically redefine a neighbourhood so as to lay the interpretive foundations for subsequent material, architectural changes. The redevelopment projects discussed in this book (particularly in this chapter and the next) accomplish this by repurposing the histories of their respective sites. With their June 2007 rendition of *PlayRec* at Cusset, KompleXKapharnaüM staged this process at the very moment when the semiotic restructuring of the Carré de Soie was about to be materialized in architectural projects. Therein lies the significance of the performance's Fresco-Manifesto: the manipulated images altered the appearance of a physical structure, the hydroelectric plant itself. *PlayRec*'s theatrical excavation of the industrial past presaged another impending excavation, the disruptive reconfiguration of the physical landscape and the concomitant construction of historical narrative by the Carré de Soie redevelopment.

The *SPP*: committed irony

Beginning in 2010, KompleXKapharnaüM embarked on a series of projects in the Carré de Soie collectively called *Projets Phare* (Flagship Projects). The name Projets Phare evokes the process of urban redevelopment in which a flagship project – in this case, the Carré de Soie shopping centre – prefigures the conversion of a larger area. Paul Ricoeur describes prefiguration as the introduction into daily life of new elements that are not yet identified as part of a larger project, but which lay the groundwork for inhabitants' interactions with a project to come.[29] These discrete novelties indicate that something is coming to pass. In English, 'flagship' refers to the ship in a fleet that carries the commanding admiral. Figuratively, it refers to an organization's most important site (e.g. a flagship store) or product (e.g. flagship legislation). In French, '*phare*' refers to a beacon or lighthouse. A lighthouse does not draw ships toward it – if anything, it warns them away – but it offers clues as to the contours of an obscured landscape. The *projet phare* of an urban redevelopment scheme is supposed to allow residents to see the structure within the fog. Municipal governments and developers rely on (theatrical) events to instil local confidence in a redevelopment process

that will take decades to complete. A *projet phare* should have the same effect.

The Carré de Soie shopping centre, however, instilled more doubt than confidence. Residents welcomed the increased public transport (an extension of the Lyon subway, numerous bus routes, and a new express tramway connecting the Carré de Soie to Lyon city centre and the Lyon-Saint Exupéry airport). But the shopping centre as *projet phare* shed light on the commercial intentions of developers. The shopping centre features large chain stores indistinguishable from those at Lyon's vast Part Dieu shopping mall; it is more non-place than memory site.[30] The homogenizing effect of the shopping centre undermines Greater Lyon's claim that the redevelopment project will honour the site's particular industrial history.

During the planning process for the shopping centre, Greater Lyon selected three finalists from the dozens of architecture and urbanism firms throughout Europe that responded to the city's call for proposals. Ultimately the jury unanimously selected the proposal from Altarea. The choice was the subject of much debate at an April 2004 town hall meeting held to discuss the first phase of the Carré de Soie redevelopment. Attendees overwhelmingly preferred the proposal by rival firm ING-Sorif, as it included plans for the preservation and redevelopment of the TASE factory site. The panel of urbanists and Greater Lyon officials observed that the ING-Sorif plan exceeded the limits of the agglomeration's call for proposals; ING-Sorif did not propose a recreation centre so much as an entire neighbourhood. Perhaps in an attempt to spare the attending Altarea representative from negative attention, Greater Lyon officials suggested that the audience's concerns were less with the Altarea project than with the scope of the agglomeration's call for proposals.[31] A recreation centre, in other words, proved an insufficient *projet phare* for the redevelopment of the Carré de Soie. In order to imagine the Carré de Soie as a coherent neighbourhood, residents of Vaulx-en-Velin and Villeurbanne required a short-term project that addressed the site's industrial heritage.

Members of KompleXKapharnaüM attended the community meetings held to discuss the Carré de Soie redevelopment. From those meetings, they gleaned the questions posed by redevelopment projects in general and by this one in particular. In the press pack for Projets Phare, the company elaborates the stakes of the project that derive from these questions. They are: 1) to regard the quarter differently, 2) to promote circulation, 3) to accompany the urban project, 4) to open up the quarter to the general public, 5) to participate in a new appropriation of places, and 6) to initiate a platform for artistic meetings and exchange.[32] Though

industrial heritage does not appear in these stakes explicitly, the industrial character of the Carré de Soie runs as an assumed undercurrent throughout Projets Phare. To regard the quarter differently is to regard the quarter as something other than a peripheral dumping ground for highly polluting industry, and also as productive once again following decades of dereliction. To promote circulation is to humanize the vast industrial plots that hinder pedestrian traffic. To participate in a new appropriation of places is to encourage residents to reclaim the site and its history, to develop new uses that respect industrial and spatial memory.

To introduce the first Projet Phare to be realized, the *Sentier Pédestre Périphérique* (Peripheral Pedestrian Path, SPP, 2011–12), I shall resort to a brief fictional interlude. The following story contains one truth and many lies: On 11 February 2011, construction began on Greater Lyon's new eastern highway (the Boulevard Urbain Est, or BUE). While excavating earth for the highway's aggregate base, the construction crew discovered the remains of an ancient road. The road traces a full perfect circle that cuts across the border between Villeurbanne and Vaulx-en-Velin and encompasses much of the Carré de Soie. Though the origins of the path remain unknown, subsequent archaeological digs along its route have unearthed a cycloptic animal skeleton, a sixteenth-century map of a circular utopian city, and a wooden totem pole. The Carré de Soie was long thought uninhabited prior to the construction of dams and canals in the mid-nineteenth century, but these recent archaeological finds suggest continuous human presence dating back to the Roman Empire.

Needless to state, this story is absurd. There is an actual BUE, the construction of which actually began on 11 February 2011, but crews did not unearth an ancient road. KompleXKapharnaüM invented the find and, in collaboration with local company BlÖffique Théâtre and other visiting artists-in-residence, initiated subsequent mock archaeological projects. The dirt and shovels were real, but the archaeologists were artists in hard hats, and the artefacts were sculptures and paintings they made, buried, and then unearthed. The two-year sequence of performance events centred around the SPP acted as an ironic foil to the Carré de Soie redevelopment, inviting participants to construct a blatantly invented past for a blatantly invented neighbourhood.

The structure of the artistic project also mirrored the organizational structure of the Carré de Soie redevelopment. Greater Lyon formed an urban redevelopment task force called Mission Carré de Soie to issue calls for proposals for specific lots. In similar fashion, KompleXKapharnaüM created Mission SPP to oversee rehabilitation of the imaginary road.

Mission SPP consisted of KompleXKapharnaüM, BlÖffique Théâtre, and cartographer Magalie Rastello. The artists of BlÖffique Théâtre, frequent collaborators of KompleX that have shared space at EnCourS since 2010, played the collective role of Archéotopos Agency, a team of archaeologists investigating the origins of the ancient road. Some members of KompleXKapharnaüM played themselves, while other company members formed the fictional enterprise Marquage Urbain Manuel (Manual Urban Marking, or MUM), responsible for tracing the SPP on the ground. Magalie Rastello used her skills as a real cartographer to create the first map of the Carré de Soie.[33] The members of Mission SPP, in their roles as archaeologists and urban planners, also issued calls for proposals for artistic interventions into the archaeological site. The call for proposals recounted as fact the 11 February 2011 'discovery' of the ancient road. 'Given the unprecedented enthusiasm [the discovery] has elicited,' the call reads, 'it was decided to restore this road to walking condition and to make it into a Peripheral Pedestrian Path (SPP) that will go around the quarter.'[34] Mission SPP selected graffiti duo Fat Poch and a team of film-makers and animators called La Ménagerie to join the project. At SPP events, these artists presented themselves to attendees as artists brought in to create work inspired by the archaeological discovery. Although the entire SPP project was artistic fabrication, some of the artists involved played archaeologists while others played themselves.

Like a redevelopment project, the SPP project operated on two temporal registers: the slow time of process and the fast time of the event. Over the course of the 2011–12 season, KompleXKapharnaüM, BlÖffique Théâtre, Fat Poch, La Ménagerie, and Magalie Rastello worked in residence in the Carré de Soie to develop performance events. There were five events in total, on 8 July 2011, 14–15 December 2011, 10 March 2012, 16 May 2012, and 6–7 October 2012. Each of the first four performances was framed as the 'inauguration' of a new section of the SPP. Mission SPP divided the path into four arcs, or 'lots.' Each inauguration event was a promenade performance during which groups of attendees moved from one artistic intervention to another, tracing the arc of the SPP with their bodies. Only with the audience's movement did the path come into being; there was, of course, no actual road to be exhumed (though Mission SPP called each performance the 'opening' of a new section), and no permanent footpath was being paved. The SPP consisted of spectators walking en masse through the Carré de Soie in an approximation of a circle. (I write 'approximation,' because the perfectly circular path of the imaginary ancient road cut through several impassable obstacles, including part of the Canal de Jonage.) The concluding

performance in October 2012 was an opportunity for attendees to walk the entire circular path.

Though Mission SPP styled each performance as an inauguration or an opening to the public, the production process for these events did not occur in artistic isolation but in collaboration with the residents of the Carré de Soie. Graffiti artists Fat Poch conducted archival research and interviews to learn more about the neighbourhood and decide what images they wanted to create on which surfaces. La Ménagerie animators stationed themselves on street corners and invited passers-by to walk, dance, or leap for their cameras. Willing volunteers could then see themselves appear in animations as part of subsequent inauguration events. For the second inauguration performance, KompleXKapharnaüM staged an intervention in the derelict TASE factory reminiscent of the company's earlier *PlayRec* performances; this creation required the same level of archival research, oral history, and community engagement as the *PlayRec* performance discussed above. Occasionally the SPP production process required additional, less formalized performances. BlÖffique Théâtre visited local schools and went from door to door in the neighbourhood to interview locals about their vision of the past, present, and future of the Carré de Soie. They did so in character as the archaeologists of Archéotopos Agency. The artists then incorporated these testimonies into their subsequent inauguration performances.

The production process for SPP indicates a key feature of the inauguration performances and the project as a whole, namely a tonal oscillation between engagement and irony. In what follows I examine the tone of SPP in more detail through an analysis of the fourth inauguration event on 16 May 2012. The artists of KompleXKapharnaüM and BlÖffique Théâtre graciously invited me to play the role of an archaeologist during the opening of the final section of the SPP. My experience performing as a member of Archéotopos Agency and interacting in character with residents of the Carré de Soie alerted me to the complex nature of the irony at work in this project, and its function in an ongoing urban redevelopment project. Ultimately, if KompleX's 2007 *PlayRec* performance generated distanced theatricality through montage and shock, the SPP project generated friction internal to the redevelopment of the Carré de Soie.

On the day of the inauguration of Section Four, I spent the morning with Magali Chabroud and Denis Déon of BlÖffique Théâtre making an empty lot look like an archaeological dig site. We drove dozens of wooden stakes partially into the ground in a matrix formation and strung rope from one to another to form a grid, imitating the way archaeologists divide their dig sites into numbered squares. Using red and white striped

barricade tape, we marked the arc of the fictional ancient road so that our attendees could continue along its path. Chabroud's brother, who works in construction, arrived in the afternoon with the excavator that he would operate that evening in the performance. On the far side of the lot he dug a substantial hole, in which Chabroud and Déon partially buried the latest SPP artefact, a wooden totem pole, which we would all 'discover' at the end of the performance. We cordoned off the hole with the same red and white barricade tape.

Late that afternoon our audience gathered at a hangar on Avenue Roger Salengro in Vaulx-en-Velin. Audience members could choose from several advertised start times; over a hundred people attended in total, but they experienced the promenade performance in groups of around twenty. The meeting point was the workshop of local association Voil'Avenir. Each year the organization (the name of which plays on the words *voile* (sailing), *avenir* (future), and of course *voilà*) taught six young people and four adults transferable, marketable skills in wood-working, metalworking, electrical work, plumbing, and painting by employing them in the construction of catamarans that are accessible to the mobility impaired. Voil'Avenir responded to a double need: first, paid work and skills training for the jobseekers of Greater Lyon's eastern communes (where in 2011 a staggering 35 per cent of adults under age 26 were unemployed), and second, opportunities for the physically disabled to benefit from the proximity of the Rhône and Saône rivers and the Canal de Jonage.[35] Attendees of the SPP performance peered through the windows of the Voil'Avenir hangar. Through some windows they could see one of the catamarans in progress. Through others they saw a looping short film by La Ménagerie, *La marche universelle* (*The Universal Step*).

Throughout the company's residency, La Ménagerie filmed Carré de Soie residents taking a single step along the circular path of the SPP. The company then spliced these shots together in rapid succession (at a rate of twelve different walkers per second) to create the illusion that a shape-shifting pedestrian was walking through the local landscape around the SPP. During the inauguration of each new section of the SPP, La Ménagerie screened an update of the piece and also invited attendees to take a step for the camera that could be added later to the film-in-progress. Of course, the screening location for this particular inauguration event, the workshop of an organization dedicated to accessibility for the physically disabled, added an additional layer of meaning to the title *The Universal Step*. By beginning the promenade performance at Voil'Avenir, Mission SPP invited attendees to consider questions of access and participation in keeping with the performance's

theme, 'the ideal city.' Who, an attendee might have asked, will have access to the recreation and leisure centres opening in the redeveloping Carré de Soie? For that matter, who has access to the performance in which I am about to take part?

Members of KompleXKapharnaüM, in character as the technicians of MUM, escorted attendees from Voil'Avenir along the path of the SPP. Performers and attendees marked the arc of the SPP with white paint dispensed from makeshift paint rollers. Each roller consisted of a long handle, a paint reservoir (an upside down bottle with the bottom removed), and a small tyre from a child's bicycle. Paint dripped from the reservoir and coated the bicycle tyre as the operator rolled the tyre over the pavement. MUM took attendees south along Avenue Roger Salengro, across rue Jacquard, and then further south through the intersection with Avenue des Canuts. The street names in this area of Vaulx-en-Velin read like a history of the French working class. Roger Salengro was Minister of the Interior for the leftist Popular Front in 1936; it was he who publicly announced the signing of the Matignon Accords that guaranteed the right to strike.[36] Rue Jacquard, of course, commemorates Joseph Marie Jacquard and the loom that transformed textile production, an invention of particular significance to local silk manufacturers. And the *canuts* were the weavers whose skill made Lyon the centre of French silk production and who famously rioted in 1831 and 1834. MUM and the attendees of the SPP inauguration painted their way along this historically evocative path from Voil'Avenir to the empty lot where Archéotopos Agency waited to receive them.

A low concrete wall covered in dense shrubbery shielded the empty lot from the view of the spectators as they approached from the north. In order to gain entry to the lot, attendees had to ascend a few plywood steps to the top of the low dividing wall, duck through a gap that we performers had cut in the greenery, and descend another set of steps. On both sides of the wall, performers stood ready to help. We offered hands to small children and the elderly, and even lifted a two-seater pram over the wall, through the brush, and down the other side. We greeted each individual attendee with handshakes and a warm 'Bonjour' as each one stepped down into the lot. Every performer had to shake hands with every attendee. Such VIP treatment was typical of all SPP inauguration events; I could easily identify those spectators who had attended past performances by their enthusiastic participation in the ritual greeting. One young girl shook my hand and then pointed to Chabroud's brother, still digging holes with his excavator at the far side of the lot. 'You're letting him work all by himself?' she asked. 'That's not very nice.' She then smiled and ran to greet the other performers. Once we had greeted

every spectator and all were assembled before us, Denis Déon began his introductory remarks in character as archaeologist Thibald Richter. Richter summarized the archaeological finds made up to that point along the SPP – a cycloptic animal skeleton and a map of a perfectly circular utopian city – and explained with much gravitas the project of Archéotopos Agency: to trace SIMs (*Sentiers Immatériels et Mentals*, Immaterial and Mental Paths) by delimiting TBCs (*Très Bons Coins*, Very Good Corners). Richter's ridiculous abbreviations parodied the preponderance of agencies and acronyms involved in the Carré de Soie redevelopment and in French redevelopment projects more generally. Some audience members chuckled at the speech while others nodded sagely, offering knowing looks to their fellow spectators. Richter then shared Archéotopos Agency's latest hypothesis, that the ancient road was an 'immaterial and mental path for those whose minds wander.' Residents of the Carré de Soie, Richter suggested, shared a psychic link to the area's past that Archéotopos Agency would attempt to demonstrate, measure, and analyse through a series of experiments.

The members of Archéotopos Agency escorted attendees a few steps further along the SPP to a circular arrangement of chairs and stools (see figure 3.4). In a glass case at the centre of the circle was displayed one of the Agency's first finds, the cycloptic animal skeleton. Many of

Figure 3.4 Archéotopos Agency (BlÖffique Théâtre) guide spectators through the dig site to view the cycloptic animal skeleton, KompleXKapharnaüM, *SPP*, Vaulx-en-Velin, 2012.

the children in attendance recognized the skeleton from Archéotopos Agency's visit to their school a few months earlier. Agency archaeologists had recorded interviews at the school in which children explained their theories about the mysterious prehistoric animal. Once all of the attendees were perched on chairs and stools around the glass display case, Magali Chabroud (in character, of course, as mononymous archaeologist Mandarine) recounted the discovery of the cycloptic skeleton and explained that local children, thanks to their powerful psychic connection to the site of the SPP, were the key to understanding its origins. We then asked audience members to close their eyes or accept blindfolds we provided so as to enter a meditative state that would allow them to tap into the psychic powers more easily accessed by the very young. With the audience's eyes closed, we played overlapping excerpts from the schoolchildren's recorded interviews with Archéotopos. Prior to the performance we had taken great care to conceal our small outdoor speakers among rocks and brush; more than a few audience members appeared startled by the sudden sound. According to the conceit of the performance, audience members had tapped into their psychic link with local history and were hearing these voices in their heads (or perhaps emanating from the skeleton itself). But the experience remained social. Adults laughed aloud at many of the theories proposed. Children in the audience gasped or giggled when they heard their own voices or those of their friends incorporated into the performance.

After the recordings ended, Mandarine explained that the next step in our psychic archaeological experiment was to have attendees walk a short section of the SPP with their blindfolds still on. Audience members could opt out if they felt unsafe, but no one chose to do so. Working in pairs, we approached audience members, tapped them gently on the shoulder, and helped them walk from their seats to the continuation of the SPP. Two other performers held aloft a guide rope so that attendees could blindly walk the 10 metres to our next archaeological installation. We also stationed performers along the path to alert walkers who were straying off course. Along the path we had buried additional speakers, so that the blind walk was accompanied by otherworldly, atonal music.

At the conclusion of the blind walk, performers collected the blindfolds and audience members entered a small shed in which we had mounted the artefact unearthed during the last SPP performance, a sixteenth-century map of a perfectly circular utopian city, presumably a city built (or designed to fit) within the circumference of the SPP. (It bears repeating that this map was a prop painted, distressed, and buried by the artists of BlÖffique Théâtre.) Spectators stepped into the shed in groups of three or four, examined the map, and then proceeded to

a cluster of picnic tables to record their thoughts on the map and the components of an ideal city. Attendees had the option of drawing their version of the ideal city with markers, filling out a written questionnaire, or recording an oral interview with me. Chabroud selected me to interview attendees because of my accented French; she liked the idea of a hapless foreigner badgering locals with questions. My questions were the same as those on the printed survey. I began with questions about the map itself and what it depicted, and transitioned to more topical questions about the possibility of constructing an ideal city in the Carré de Soie.

Adults, of course, immediately recognized these questions as pertaining to the ongoing Carré de Soie redevelopment project, and most of them candidly shared their thoughts on the project's strengths and weaknesses. But adults and children alike also participated in the fiction of the sixteenth-century map. Interview subjects of widely varying ages, from primary school children to senior citizens, looked me in the eye and explained in great detail, and with straight faces, the features of the imaginary city. They comfortably inhabited their roles as local residents with a psychic connection to the area's past. Some even proposed connections between the map and the animal skeleton. One interviewee suggested that the cycloptic animals were popular pets, while another informed me with great certainty that the cycloptic animal patrolled the peripheral boulevard like a guard dog. These interviews almost always ended the same way: respondents slowly cracked smiles and chuckled, saying, 'Thanks, that was fun!' Then they stood and moved on to the next attraction. Christopher Tilley suggests that archaeological excavation 'has a unique role to play as a theatre where people may be able to produce their own pasts, pasts which are meaningful to them, not as expressions of a mythical heritage.'[37] Along the SPP, attendees fabricated pasts as part of the ironic production of a mythical heritage.

After completing their interviews, questionnaires, or drawings, attendees could freely explore several other installations. They could climb a massive pile of earth and gravel in order to survey the surrounding area through three different viewfinders. Each viewfinder was actually an artwork prepared by animation team La Ménagerie: looking into the eyepiece of each telescope, participants saw the surrounding neighbourhood, but they also saw La Ménagerie's animations interact with that real landscape. One panorama depicted the remains of a local factory, visible from atop the pile of earth, being devoured by a cartoon monster. La Ménagerie was also standing by to record the steps of those who wished to be featured in the next instalment of *La marche*

Figure 3.5 Spectators piece together a map of the Carré de Soie, *SPP*, Vaulx-en-Velin, 2012.

universelle. Just south of the gravel pile, young attendees could work on a giant puzzle depicting a cartoonish map of the Carré de Soie (see figure 3.5). Cartographer Magalie Rastello stood at a nearby table displaying the latest version of her own map of the neighbourhood, complete with satellite images. Attendees could share with Rastello their daily trajectories and itineraries, which she then marked on the map. The experience concluded as the previous performances had, with a communal meal prepared together by performers and spectators. Publicity for this performance had encouraged attendees to bring produce for spring rolls (there was no admission price), though Mission SPP provided its own materials as well.

During the meal, Chabroud's brother cried out from his seat in the excavator. He had found something! The members of Archéotopos Agency herded the audience to the edge of the dig site. Chabroud's brother carefully backed up the excavator so that Magali Chabroud and Déon could lift the artefact – the wooden totem pole carved by BlÖffique Théâtre – from its resting place. A similar act of excavation concluded the inauguration of each new section of the SPP: Archéotopos Agency unearthed an artefact at the end of one performance, spent subsequent weeks asking local residents about its history, and then incorporated this testimony into the next inauguration, at the end of which a new artefact was discovered.

The costumes, props, and set pieces of the inauguration were symbols of authority and authenticity that became patently ridiculous upon minimal reflection. For one, archaeologists looking to locate and preserve delicate artefacts would sooner use a toothbrush than an excavator. The excavator served several purposes. It visually and sonically echoed the origin story of the SPP, in which construction workers excavating earth for the (actual) eastern beltway uncovered the remains of an ancient road. The performers of BlÖffique Théâtre replayed this scenario of accidental discovery with a different artefact at the end of each section's inauguration. The excavator also connected the fictional characters of Archéotopos Agency to the municipal bodies responsible for construction and redevelopment, lending them symbolic clout. It also had phenomenological effects. The excavator was *actually* an excavator, operated by a worker actually trained to perform such tasks. That worker was not pretending to dig holes; he was digging holes. But of course the real action of the excavator only served to play up the unreality of its task: watching the excavator dig roughly into the hard soil of the vacant lot, one could hardly consider it an appropriate archaeological instrument. The props of the performance juxtaposed wanton destruction, symbolized by the excavator, with careful excavation, symbolized by the rope grid, shed, and vitrine. Archaeologists do not wear hard hats and white lab coats either, and there was certainly no need for them at our dig site. The hard hats and lab coats granted their wearers authority as members of the production team, while simultaneously revealing the absurdity of just such markers of authority.

The SPP project relied on engaged, 'authentic' irony that generated friction rather than distance. I argue that participants in the project – and I include both performers and spectators in that category – behaved doubly 'as if.' They practised a *theatrical* 'as if' by agreeing to pretend that construction crews had unearthed an ancient road, that the members of BlÖffique Théâtre were actually the archaeologists of Archéotopos Agency, and that these archaeologists had really discovered a cycloptic animal skeleton, a sixteenth-century map, and a wooden totem pole. But they also practised what I call, borrowing from L. M. Bogad, a *parodic* or *ironic* 'as if.' Bogad draws on Jürgen Habermas's and Nancy Fraser's competing theories of the public sphere in his analysis of 'guerrilla electioneers,' mock candidates who run for real elected office. Habermas's public sphere required its members to behave 'as if' they lived in a society of equals in which the most rational arguments would prevail. In Bogad's estimation, electoral guerrillas 'play along with this magic *as if*, faux-naively, and, in an "in your face" manner, declare their candidacy for office.'[38] In similar fashion, participants in the SPP project behaved

'as if' residents' voices, opinions, and memories were an integral part of the Carré de Soie redevelopment.

Irony requires pre-existing 'discursive communities' or 'counterpublics' in order to function.[39] KompleXKapharnaüM and the other artists of Mission SPP could rely on locals' understanding of the Carré de Soie redevelopment, but they also deployed paratheatrical ephemera to render the irony of the SPP performances intelligible. During my time with KompleXKapharnaüM, a student intern and I cycled around the neighbourhood distributing the latest issue of *Soie Mag*, a newspaper created by Mission SPP.[40] The tone of *Soie Mag* matched the mixture of irony and engagement that characterized the SPP performances. Archéotopos Agency disseminated its latest fictional findings alongside actual interviews with former factory workers and their descendants conducted by journalist Monique Desgouttes. Mission SPP released a new issue of *Soie Mag* prior to the inauguration of each new section of the SPP, and each issue contained instructions on where to gather for the performance and what (if anything) to bring for the concluding communal meal. The intern and I did not simply leave copies on driveways or in mailboxes; we knocked on every door, handed the residents their copies of *Soie Mag*, invited them to the performance, and answered any questions they might have. Developers and local governments attempt to create ideal audiences for their redevelopment projects through the performative enunciations of plans and promotional materials. Mission SPP accomplished the same feat with *Soie Mag*. The newspaper, distributed locally and in person, helped to create an interpretive community capable of decoding the shifting semiosis and engaged irony of the SPP performances.

In his discussion of engaged irony, Bogad draws on de Certeau's concept of the 'occasion,' 'a contingent, passing opportunity in which the oppressed have the tactical agency to make oppositional or subversive moves.'[41] Redevelopment, as a discursive, material, and embodied redefinition of space – and also, as the projects discussed here make clear, of time – presents such an occasion. Redevelopment is a hotly contested negotiation of meaning among differently empowered agents. *PlayRec* and *SPP* represent two ways in which performers have taken advantage of the destabilization of meaning occasioned by redevelopment. The tactics have shifted based on the progression of the Carré de Soie project: when it was symbolically but not yet architecturally underway, KompleX deployed the distancing techniques of *PlayRec*; once the neighbourhood had become a construction site, Mission SPP practised engaged irony. Heterotopias, shock aesthetics and distancing techniques, engaged irony: all suggest an attempt to produce the

spatio-temporal coordinates from which we might criticize the very discursive and material formations in which we exist. Both *PlayRec* and *SPP* demonstrate the possibility for a theatre company caught up in redevelopment to engage in critical praxis: this is one example of what I mean when I claim that street theatre's capacity to *make* change might be linked to its capacity to make *sense* of change.

The Carré de Soie redevelopment, *PlayRec*, and *SPP* are all excavations of the industrial past. The redevelopment project has hollowed out the history of the area and discursively recontextualized material remains in order to construct a particular narrative linking industrial banlieue to artisanal city centre and create the appearance of a coherent identity. The theatrical excavations of *PlayRec* and *SPP* adhere to the logics of redevelopment. But theatrical excavation is a hollowing out that calls attention to the process of hollowing out, in the same way that performance suggests both doing and showing doing. Excavation is a creative and destructive act that produces the past as past in the very moment that it renders that past useful to and meaningful in the present. The theatrical excavations of KompleXKapharnaüM participate in this process while rendering it intelligible and therefore subject to critique.

Notes

1   The name is a homonym for *complex capharnaüm* (complex shambles).

2   KompleXKapharnaüM, '*PlayRec*: Dossier de presse,' artistic prospectus (Villeurbanne, 2008), 4.

3   Gavin Lucas, 'Destruction and the Rhetoric of Excavation,' *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 34.1 (2001): 35. Lucas ultimately challenges the rhetorical emphasis on destruction but provides a helpful overview of its prevalence in the literature. For a more recent challenge to the rhetoric of destruction (that simultaneously suggests its continued dominance), see Christopher H. Roosevelt et al., 'Excavation is ~~Destruction~~ Digitization: Advances in Archaeological Practice,' *Journal of Field Archaeology* 40.3 (2015): 325–46.

4   Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks, *Theatre/Archaeology* (London: Routledge, 2001), xiv.

5   Ibid., 11. See also Randall McGuire and Michael Shanks, 'The Craft of Archaeology,' *American Antiquity* 61 (1996): 75–88.

6   Pearson and Shanks, *Theatre/Archaeology*, 11. Michael Shanks emerges from the 'post-processual' archaeology that developed in the United Kingdom in the 1980s. Post-processual archaeology challenged the scientific objectivity of archaeological work and the supposed neutrality of the excavation site. Concurrent with postmodern theory in other disciplines, post-processual archaeological theory brought to the fore the subjectivity of the scholar and the situated nature of knowledge. Post-processual archaeologists and their

theoretical descendants insist that an archaeological site is not a space where objective historical data is unearthed, but rather a space of cultural production. See Christopher Tilley, 'Excavation as Theatre,' *Antiquity* 63 (1989): 275–80. For a more recent model of the excavation site as not only theatrical but also performative, see Yannis Hamilakis and Efthimis Theou, 'Enacted Multi-Temporality: The Archaeological Site as a Shared, Performative Space,' in Alfredo González-Ruibal (ed.), *Reclaiming Archaeology: Beyond the Tropes of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2013), 181–94.

7 Randall McGuire, *Archaeology as Political Action* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 63. McGuire's book offers a valuable overview of developments in archaeological theory and their political implications.

8 For more on theatricality as sympathetic breach, see Tracy C. Davis, 'Theatricality and Civil Society,' in Tracy C. Davis and Thomas Postlewait (eds), *Theatricality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 127–55. For Davis, theatricality does not inhere in the event but is ascribed to it by spectators. Practitioners can attempt to encourage theatricality (for instance, through Brechtian strange-making) but cannot guarantee the result.

9 Amber Day, *Satire & Dissent: Interventions in Contemporary Political Debate* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011), 24–42.

10 KompleXKapharnaüM, '*PlayRec:* Dossier de presse,' 4.

11 Louise Mongalais, 'Dépasser l'anecdote,' *stradda* 6 (2007): 8–9.

12 Isabelle Raymond, 'La fête de la mémoire ouvrière,' *Courrier Picard*, 17 July 2005.

13 Ibid.

14 KompleXKapharnaüM, '*PlayRec:* Dossier de presse,' 4.

15 Stéphane Bonnard, interview with the author, August 2010.

16 KompleXKapharnaüM, '*PlayRec:* Dossier de presse,' 7.

17 N. D., 'Souvenirs et création contemporaine,' *La Tribune*, 26 April 2007.

18 Olivier Bertrand, 'Eaux de gamme,' *Libération*, 22 June 2007.

19 Raymond, 'La fête de la mémoire ouvrière.'

20 KompleXKapharnaüM, '*PlayRec:* Dossier de presse,' 2.

21 See Denis Woronoff, *Histoire de l'industrie en France* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), 379.

22 KompleXKapharnaüM, '*PlayRec:* Dossier de presse,' 4.

23 Bruno Dumetier, Pierre-Dominique Guerin, and Laurent Marquet, eds, *Projet Urbain – Carré de Soie: Synthèse* (Lyon: Agence d'Urbanisme du Grand Lyon, 2007).

24 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991), 163–4; Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, trans. Robert Bononno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 11, 129. Unfortunately the term heterotopia has begun to suffer from overuse. In performance scholarship, Lefebvre's definition has been overshadowed by Foucault's definition, which appears nearly useless in its expansiveness: the usual Foucauldian round-up of asylums, schools, and

prisons, but also any coexistence of multiple emplacements or temporalities within a single emplacement. This includes shanty towns, marketplaces, mirrors, maps, museums, movie screens, all theatres, formal gardens, and Oriental rugs. See Michel Foucault, 'Different Spaces,' in James D. Faubion (ed.), *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology* (New York: The New Press, 1998), 175–85. For further comparison between Lefebvre and Foucault on heterotopias, see Neil Smith, in his foreword to Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, xii. With both *PlayRec* and *SPP*, KompleXKapharnaüM generated heterotopias. But if we take Foucault's definition seriously, it would be woefully insufficient merely to identify particular performance sites as heterotopias, because *all* performance sites are heterotopias. Ultimately, though, it is no more illuminating to say, following Lefebvre, that a performance space is a heterotopia from which 'difference' might stage a counterattack against 'sameness' (see note 25, below). Regardless of which definition we adopt, the mere labelling of heterotopias as such cannot be the end of our critical project. In theatre scholarship, Joanne Tompkins has done much to render the term newly useful. See Joanne Tompkins, *Theatre's Heterotopias: Performance and the Cultural Politics of Space* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

25 Lefebvre insists on the ability of difference to stage a counterattack, testing the ability of centrality and normativity to integrate, recuperate, or destroy that which has transgressed. What might such a counterattack look like? Lefebvre broke ranks from classical Marxists when he identified the urban underclass (rather than the industrial proletariat) as the primary revolutionary agent. Thus for Lefebvre a counterattack against isotopy might resemble the revolutionary urban practices of May 1968, the *banlieue* riots that rocked France in 2005, or the post-2011 Occupy movements.

26 Floriane Gaber, *40 Years of Street Arts*, trans. Kate Merrill (Paris: Editions ici et là, 2009), 164.

27 Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 80–1.

28 Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), 14–15.

29 Paul Ricoeur, 'Architecture et narrativité,' *Urbanisme* 303 (1998): 44–51.

30 On non-places – spaces of transience such as airports, hotel rooms, and shopping malls, without sufficient history or character to form place attachments – see Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 2009). On memory sites, see Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,' *Representations* 26 (1989): 7–24.

31 Gildas Lepretre, 'Concertation sur la première phase de réalisation du projet du "Carré de Soie": phase du dialogue et des propositions: restitution et analyse qualitative des réunions publiques et des ateliers.' Mission Carré de Soie, Lyon, 2004, 8.

32 KompleXKapharnaüM, 'Projets Phare' (Villeurbanne, 2010).

33 Because the area straddles the border between Villeurbanne and Vaulx-en-Velin, the entire Carré de Soie only appeared on maps of the Greater Lyon agglomeration. However, Rastello's map invited its viewers to consider the Carré de Soie as a coherent neighbourhood. This is another similarity between the artistic project and the redevelopment project: both promoted the construction of a coherent neighbourhood identity. For the redevelopers this was the means; for the artists it was the end.

34 KompleXKapharnaüM, 'Appel à projets artistiques' (Villeurbanne, 2011).

35 Voil'Avenir closed its doors on 15 October 2014. See Voil'Avenir, 'Voil'Avenir, un chantier naval d'insertion de MSD,' official website, http://voilavenir.blogspot.co.uk/.

36 Salengro committed suicide in November 1936 after right-wing extremists libellously accused him of desertion during World War I.

37 Tilley, 'Excavation as Theatre,' 280.

38 L. M. Bogad, *Electoral Guerrilla Theatre: Radical Ridicule and Social Movements*, second edition (London: Routledge, 2016), 19–20.

39 On discursive communities, see Linda Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (New York: Routledge, 1994). On counterpublics, see Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,' *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 56–80.

40 Stéphane Bonnard's contribution to the first issue of *Soie Mag* provides the epigraph to this book.

41 Bogad, *Electoral Guerrilla Theatre*, 20. See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 37, 79–89.

4

Resurfacing: continuous theatre for a creative city

On 3 July 1987, ten thousand spectators looked on as the *Bougainville*, last ship to be built in Nantes, slipped into the Loire. A spectacular feat: a hull 113 metres in length had to enter a portion of the estuary just 150 metres wide. The crowd gathered on the Loire's northern bank along the Quai de la Fosse, once home to shipbuilding activity itself but by that time a stretch of cafés and bars frequented by Nantes' working classes. It was early evening, the hour for an aperitif among friends, but the atmosphere that day was sombre. Writer and architect Thierry Guidet later recalled, 'A ship launch had always been a celebration, but not that time. […] The city was living the end of an ancestral activity, of a culture, of an era, of a source of wealth.'[1] The day after the *Bougainville*'s departure, journalist Dominique Luneau lamented, 'The naval construction that has fashioned the city for centuries is no more than a memory.' Luneau remembered the crowds that would assemble to watch every launch – tens of thousands for the grander ships – and asked, 'Tomorrow, what will gather such a crowd in Nantes?'[2]

On 30 June 2007, tens of thousands of people gather for another launch in the park that used to be the shipyards. A 12-metre-tall mechanical elephant emerges from a hangar. Though enormous tyres support the puppet's weight, it appears to walk on treading feet. It raises its flexile, reticulated trunk above its formidable wooden tusks. It trumpets. It sprays mist from its trunk at squealing children. Its eyes

Figure 4.1 The Great Elephant carries riders along the banks of the Loire, Les Machines de l'île, Nantes, 2010.

blink, its tail swishes, and its ears flap. Constructed by street theatre company La Machine from wood and steel, with leather for the flapping ears, the hydraulically powered behemoth carries forty-five passengers along the banks of the Loire (see figure 4.1). The Great Elephant is the first completed project of *Les Machines de l'île* (The Machines of the Island, 2007–), a tourist and cultural destination based in the Naves, three former metal fabrication shops. Members of La Machine use two of the three Naves as metal and woodworking shops; here they construct the interactive mechanical animals that will become part of future urban installations. The third Nave shelters the Great Elephant and also houses the Machines Gallery, in which visitors may view and test La Machine's works in progress (see figure 4.2).

The launch of the Great Elephant was the most spectacular aspect of an ongoing theatrical endeavour that is supposed to propel Nantes forward into a creative economy while commemorating the industrial heritage of the shipyards. La Machine divides its work into three categories: construction of theatrical machinery for other theatre companies, creation of original theatrical performances, and installation of long-term urban projects like Les Machines de l'île. Prior to the founding of La Machine in 1999, artistic director François Delarozière designed many of the

Figure 4.2 The entrance to the Machines Gallery beneath the Naves, Les Machines de l'île, Nantes, 2010.

large-scale puppets for Nantes-based street theatre company Royal de Luxe. Delarozière continues to collaborate with Royal de Luxe under the aegis of La Machine, which has also designed and constructed theatrical machinery alongside street theatre company Cirkatomik and numerous individual performers. La Machine also maintains a touring repertoire of its own productions, all of which dispense with plot and character to focus on the interaction between machines and the urban landscape.[3] According to the company's official website, La Machine creates work based on the theatricality of machines and the language of movement.[4] Delarozière identifies the imaginative and bodily encounter between spectator and machine *as* the theatrical event.[5] Thus the distinction blurs between La Machine's touring performances and a visit to the company's workshop in the Naves, which Delarozière has called 'continuous theatre' (*théâtre en continu*).[6] In what follows I do not address La Machine's touring productions, but instead focus on the continuous theatre of Les Machines de l'île and the work required to make it intelligible to the people of Nantes as both a cultural and an industrial project. This work is ultimately historiographic: Les Machines de l'île must simultaneously represent to its visitors continuity and progression, persistence of *and* improvement upon past repertoires.

From the launch of the *Bougainville* to the launch of the Great Elephant, the former shipyards in general, and the Naves in particular, emerged as Nantes' most hotly contested symbolic space. In public meetings, interviews, pamphlets, and the press, defenders and detractors of the Machines de l'île project clashed over how best to commemorate industrial heritage while strengthening Nantes' position in an increasingly competitive urban-global economy. City leaders have adopted what Laura Levin and Kim Solga call the 'creative city script' as an official cultural and economic strategy; they hope to position Nantes as a European leader in architecture, design, new media, digital innovation, research, and the fine and performing arts.[7] Crucial to this strategy is the redevelopment of the Ile de Nantes, the island in the Loire, just south of the city centre, that served as Nantes' shipbuilding hub from the nineteenth century to the launch of the *Bougainville*. Much of the former shipyards has been converted into a park. Traces of the island's industrial past remain embedded in the landscape: concrete pillars that once supported workshop roofs, tracks in the pavement that once enabled workers to move heavy materials with ease, the two massive cranes that once lifted prefabricated portions of a ship's hull from workshop to slipway for final assembly, and even the slipways themselves.

As part of the redevelopment project, La Machine plans to create on this island a total of ten urban installations. Some of these installations will serve as public space. Plans for the Heron Tree, for instance (scheduled to open in 2021), depict a network of freely accessible elevated garden walkways in the shape of an enormous tree. At the top of the structure, (paying) riders will be able to board gondolas in the shape of mechanical herons from which to look out onto the city. Other Machines resemble elaborate versions of more traditional urban entertainments: the three-storey Marine Worlds Carousel (opened 2012) features interactive mechanical sea creatures instead of the usual immobile horses, carriages, and cars. Still others, like the Great Elephant, are ambulant Machines carrying passengers from one place to another. Visitors to the Naves, the project's base of operations, may pay to enter the Machines Gallery, where smaller machines (such as the larger-than-life mechanical insects that will eventually grace the Heron Tree) are displayed before their incorporation into the larger installations (see figure 4.3). Paying visitors may also observe the company members of La Machine as they build new machines in their adjacent workshops. The workshops beneath the Naves have become the construction site in which members of La Machine, in concert with Nantes' residents, forge a new – but familiar – cultural identity for the island and the city. The circulating discourse surrounding the Machines de l'île project, the

Figure 4.3 Front view of the repurposed Naves, Les Machines de l'île, Nantes, 2010. Visitors descend from the prototype branch of the forthcoming Heron Tree into the café and gift shop.

physical reconfiguration of the space of the Naves, and the visible labour of La Machine employees combine to create a contradictory sense of simultaneous continuity and change.

Frédérique de Gravelaine, an independent urbanism consultant hired by Nantes Métropole to chronicle the Ile de Nantes redevelopment, writes, 'All public space is also a space of representation, where cities exhibit their vision of themselves and their future.'[8] Such exhibition occurs via discursive performatives and embodied performances. Urban communications campaigns and their amplification in the media have performative effects; they establish a range of interpretive possibilities.[9] Other social actors alternately benefit from, strengthen, test, or contest these discursive frames. La Machine is both beneficiary and agent of an official narrative that newly turns the Naves into a public space for an aspiring creative city. The Naves' (and the island's) discursive, embodied, and architectural reconfiguration as both *public* space and *work* space dialectically sustains and is sustained by the economic shift from heavy industry to cultural industry. The debates and negotiations that rescript the Naves simultaneously construct the discursive and material conditions of possibility for Nantes' creative economy. This chapter

explains how, in the twenty years from the launch of the *Bougainville* to the 'launch' of the Great Elephant, the Naves, the former shipyards, and the Ile de Nantes became intelligible as public workspace in which the performances necessary to the creative economy might take hold. Discursive performatives, embodied performances, and architectural renovations have *resurfaced* the Ile de Nantes, gradually smoothing over historical rupture in favour of continuity and flattening historical layers of use and reuse in favour of simultaneity.

Inventing the Ile de Nantes

The Ile de Nantes is a by-product of the shipbuilding industry. Nantes' first shipyard was installed on the Quai de la Fosse in 1668 with financial backing from Colbert, minister of finance to Louis XIV. From that date through the height of French imperialism in the nineteenth century, a spatial division of labour emerged in which Paris merchants distributed goods throughout the nation and Nantes merchants distributed goods throughout the empire. Shipbuilding perpetuated and was perpetuated by Nantes' role as the slave-trading capital of France and the pre-eminent port for trade with the colonies. Merchants setting out from Nantes reaped hefty profits exporting French textiles, capturing or purchasing Africans as chattel slaves, and importing colonial sugar. Textile production, particularly cotton and printed calico (Lyon having a monopoly on luxury silks), remained the primary industry of Nantes throughout the eighteenth century. Sugar refineries began to appear towards the end of the eighteenth century, and in the nineteenth century surpassed textile production as Nantes' most profitable industry. By 1844, sugar refineries accounted for a full third of Nantes' industrial business. Shipbuilding accounted for almost 20 per cent.[10]

Though shipbuilding was not the city's most profitable industry, it surpassed all others in its transformation of Nantes' urban and fluvial landscape. Early in the eighteenth century Nantes' urban development pushed shipbuilding activities west to Chézine and gradually further west to Chantenay. Other shipbuilding activities developed on the Prairie-au-Duc, one of numerous small islands in the Loire. As Nantes grew, shipbuilding activities became concentrated here and at Chantenay, and as naval construction grew, the Loire was dredged to accommodate larger shipyards building larger ships. Seventeenth-century maps of Nantes depict a latticework of bridges connecting some ten or twelve small

islands to each other and to the Loire's northern bank. With the growth of the shipbuilding industry, dredging operations displaced silt to the smaller fingers of the river, gradually forming a single land mass out of multiple islands. The northernmost islands became part of the mainland, while the others formed what is today the single Ile de Nantes. The numerous small shipyards and numerous small islands of the eighteenth century gradually ceded to three major shipyards – Dubigeon, Ateliers et Chantiers de Bretagne (ACB), and Ateliers et Chantiers de la Loire (ACL) – in two major locations, the slopes of Chantenay (Dubigeon) and the one newly formed island in the Loire (ACB, ACL). Nantes, once dubbed the 'Venice of the West,' soon consisted of one mainland merchant city north of one industrialized island.

The Ile de Nantes' physically unified topography belies its persistent morphological and demographic fragmentation. Neighbourhoods retain their designation as separate islands (île Beaulieu, île Sainte-Anne, île de la Prairie-au-Duc) and their distinct identities. Though the entire Ile de Nantes is just one of the city's eleven administrative districts, the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) divides the district into four neighbourhoods: Sainte-Anne-Zone Portuaire, west of boulevard Léon Bureau; République-Les Ponts, morphologically similar to Nantes' right bank and linked to that bank by four bridges; Beaulieu-Mangin, oriented more toward the south and frequently grouped with the Nantes Sud district; and Ile Beaulieu, encompassing both the public housing tower blocks and the undeveloped green space on the island's eastern tip. Morphologically, the western Sainte-Anne and Prairie-au-Duc bear all the marks of the centuries-long shipbuilding industry, while the eastern Beaulieu exemplifies the massive French housing projects of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Both ends are characterized by large plot sizes, but in the west these are almost entirely paved (or still covered by vast, abandoned industrial buildings), while the eastern plots feature single residential towers surrounded by green space. Separating these areas is a central district formed by shops, cafés, and residences largely indistinguishable from their counterparts across the Loire. Drawing on demographic data collected by INSEE, sociologists and urbanists of the research group Langages, Actions Urbaines, Altérités (Languages, Urban Actions, Alterities, or LAUA) divide the island at Boulevard des martyrs nantais into just two parts, the western Prairie-au-Duc and the eastern Beaulieu. From 1975 to 1990, a span encompassing Dubigeon's decline following the 1973 oil crisis and its 1987 closure, Prairie-au-Duc lost 989 residents while Beaulieu gained 3,144 new residents. Industrial buildings and working-class residences on the Prairie-au-Duc were abandoned and demolished, while new

construction continued to spring up on Beaulieu. Both halves suffered from high unemployment, but the west's 15.8 per cent dwarfed the east's 10.4 per cent rate.[11]

Few locals appreciate (or even use) the island's new official name. André Péron, former president of a collective of industrial heritage associations, explains, 'No one from Nantes would have given this island the name Ile de Nantes. Ile de Nantes, it's for someone seeing things from the outside or for the outside.'[12] The author of a letter to the editor in daily newspaper *Ouest France* derided the name for making no connection to the city's rich history; since an island in Nantes was to be named the Ile de Nantes, the author wryly suggested that Beaujoire stadium be renamed Stade de Nantes, the neoclassical Graslin opera house be renamed Théâtre de Nantes, and the Bretagne Tower be renamed Tour de Nantes. This, he wrote, would clear up any confusion about one's geographic location.[13] Today, former shipyard workers and their political allies continue to refer to the island as the Prairie-au-Duc. New residents call it simply 'the island.' The Ile de Nantes, for them, is redundant.

The goal of the Ile de Nantes redevelopment is thus to assemble a cultural whole from disparate morphological and demographic parts, to generate a unified affective geography for an invented island: 'The genius of the project (which both unites and sets apart) rests in its conciliatory capacity. Its task is to compose a whole (the Ile) from disparate elements (the different neighbourhoods, their names, histories, customs) and affirm the city's intention to accept heritage in its totality and its diversity.'[14] In stark contrast to the homogeneous, high modernist urban projects that dominated French architectural theory and practice for much of the twentieth century, the Ile de Nantes project represents an attempt to create a unified but heterogeneous open system characterized by the coexistence of new structures and repurposed old ones. Alexandre Chemetoff, chief urbanist of the Ile de Nantes from 2000 to 2010, won the open call for redevelopment proposals in large part due to his flexible *Plan-Guide*, a processual model of redevelopment that stresses constant dialogue and respect for traces of the island's past. But if Chemetoff opposes his *Plan-Guide* to high modernism's *tabula rasa*, he also writes that every new construction or renovation must be 'symptom, […] witness, and demonstration' of the greater whole.[15] Chemetoff insists that each individual lot represent the entire Ile de Nantes project in microcosm and further the ongoing interplay among residual parts and emergent whole.

Chemetoff's *Plan-Guide* has become a model throughout France for flexible, diverse urban redevelopment. In 2000, before its implementation, it won him the Grand Prix de l'Urbanisme, awarded annually

by the French Ministry for Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development, and Planning. The *Plan-Guide* exemplifies what sociologist Laurent Devisme, borrowing from Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, has dubbed the 'new spirit of urbanism.'[16] For Devisme, Chemetoff's *Plan-Guide* is contemporary capitalism's architectural counterpart; its author presents it as a solution to the alienation imposed by high modernist urban planning while obscuring the real socioeconomic precarity that can result from a rhetoric of openness and flexibility.

I will return to these concerns in the second half of this chapter. In what immediately follows, I perform the same operation on the *Plan-Guide* that the *Plan-Guide* performs on the Ile de Nantes: whereas Chemetoff's proposal insists on dialogue with existing structures, I insist on the role of former shipyard workers and interim projects in establishing the Ile de Nantes as open, public space. Nantes officials' 'intention to accept heritage in its totality and diversity' did not emerge from nothing, but resulted from decades of negotiation leading up to and following the closure of Dubigeon. Shipyard workers' efforts to link their industry to Nantes' cultural identity laid the groundwork for redevelopment.

Dubigeon's 1987 launch of the *Bougainville* marked the official end of a long period of decline for Nantes' shipbuilding industry. The French military market kept the Nantes shipyards busy until the Nazis entered the city on 19 June 1940. In 1942 and 1943 British and American air squadrons devastated the Prairie-au-Duc to thwart German submarine repairs. The Germans finished the job themselves, leaving the ACL and ACB in ruins when they retreated from the city on 10 August 1944. Dubigeon, still at Chantenay, escaped the worst of the bombing but was still too damaged to launch ships. Postwar physical reconstruction of the shipyards required a full year and massive government subsidies; economic reconstruction proved still more difficult. The shipyards prospered in the 1950s, building submarines and other military vessels for France and its allies, but continued to draw heavily on government subsidies and contracts. Even during the *Trente Glorieuses*, France's thirty continuous years of postwar economic growth, Nantes' shipyards underwent numerous reorganizations and required substantial state subsidies to stay afloat.[17]

The 1950s and 1960s were marked by frequent mergers and restructurings; shipyard directors hoped that local consolidation would better position Nantes' industry to stave off increasing foreign competition, first from Britain and Scandinavia, then from Japan and South Korea. In 1955, ACL merged with shipyards in Normandy to become the Chantiers réunis Loire-Normandie (CRLN). Just six years later, in 1961, this shipyard merged with the ACB to form the Ateliers et Chantiers

de Nantes (ACN). The ACN became the Société financière et industrielle des Ateliers et Chantiers de Bretagne (SFI-ACB) in 1966. Finally, SFI-ACB ceded all its shipbuilding activities to Dubigeon in 1969, and Dubigeon moved from the Chantenay location it had occupied since 1840 to take over the facilities on the Prairie-au-Duc. SFI-ACB then restored its simpler designation, ACB. However, from 1969 ACB had no role in naval construction, instead taking on contracts from the rail and aeronautics industries.

More than mere name changes, each merger listed here entailed massive job losses and either anticipatory or ensuing strikes. Shipyard workers accused their bosses of mismanagement, claiming that the industry could remain viable by specializing in smaller, less glamorous ships (particularly for the military market) and ceding larger projects to Asian firms. Instead, the directors took on contracts for increasingly grand ships (such as the cruise liner *Scandinavia*) in an attempt to promote Nantes' image with future clients. Such projects did attract media attention but also drove the Nantes shipyards to bankruptcy. In a 1985 interview, union representative Alain Noblet explains, 'Last year, they tell us: ferries and cruise ships are done, we're reorienting toward the military, modifying our investments, how we organize and train our personnel. Today it's a 180 [degree] turn back to the civilian market. […] They've thrown out the plan to save Dubigeon.'[18] Managers and politicians blamed increasing foreign competition for Dubigeon's losses, but union representatives observed that Nantes' shipyards were losing jobs at a much higher rate than elsewhere in France: between 1959 and 1986, Nantes shipyards lost 88 per cent of their workforce, compared to 55 per cent in Saint-Nazaire, 49 per cent at Dunkerque, and 38 per cent at la Seyne.[19] If all French naval construction was suffering, Nantes was suffering more than most.

While lobbying to save their jobs, shipyard workers walked a fine rhetorical line between the danger and difficulty of their work and their satisfaction in performing it. At one meeting of workers,

> Serge pulls a tee shirt from his bag. It is riddled with holes. 'Look, I go through two a week. When you work [as a solderer], you've got 300 amperes that go through your body. You've got to pay attention, shake it off, it burns you everywhere.' He rolls up his sleeves. Red marks on his skin. 'There's our work. Soldering, lying flat on your stomach because in the ballast in the depths of the slipway, there's no other way to put yourself. We would crawl inside the boats with our tools into these crevices a metre wide. All that for thirty years. And they just kick you to the curb!'[20]

Numerous shipyard workers referred to their dismissal as being 'kicked to the curb like a dog.'[21] By showing reporters the physical damage done

to their bodies during decades of shipyard labour, they gave corporeal expression to the emotional damage inflicted on them by management.

In the years immediately following Dubigeon's closure, descriptions of workers' physical scars ceded to imagery of a wounded landscape. By 1991 the city had demolished most of the Prairie-au-Duc's industrial structures; those that remained stood empty. One journalist noted an 'air of catastrophe' permeating the site and cited the pangs of regret experienced even by the head of demolitions: 'I'm not a demolitions man with a big heart […] but this one hurts.'[22] One year later, a second journalist compared the site to the ruins of Pompeii and remarked, 'Dubigeon resembles a few poor children's toys abandoned in an empty lot. The clandestine visitor to this desolate site is at once appalled and fascinated by the destruction that has made *tabula rasa* of the past.'[23] Articles in the press alternately treated the site as rich with history or as a clean slate (or, in the case cited above, as both at once). Local press, elected officials, and former shipyard workers agreed that the city required a period of reflection, even mourning, before redevelopment could begin. Imagery of scars and wounds dominates this period, establishing an implicit link between the traces of manual labour marking the bodies of shipyard workers and the traces of industrial use still marking Nantes' fluvial landscape. Rehabilitation of the shipyard site – specifically, a project to commemorate industrial heritage – promised to heal some of the damage. 'The former shipyard workers await the rehabilitation of the site. At least for the wounds not yet scarred over.'[24] On his election to the mayoralty in 1989, Jean-Marc Ayrault announced, 'The closure of the shipyards has wounded Nantes, but the city's fate will be played out here.'[25] The wounds inflicted on shipyard workers were symbolically separated from their physical bodies and reimagined as collective psychic wounds inflicted on the city of Nantes.

In order to engage the citizenry in the 'playing out' of Nantes' fate, institutional and associational actors attempted to reconfigure the shipyard site as public space. As city officials and workers pondered the long-term future of the former shipyards, the municipal government actively encouraged temporary appropriations of the site. The city leased the Naves to two resale outlets, La Trocante and Destock Ouest, and an auto shop. Two metal fabrication shops (separate from the Naves and now destroyed) provided space for theatre companies: one as a warehouse and rehearsal space for street theatre company Royal de Luxe, the other as the location for Théâtre la Chamaille's site-responsive staging of *Othello* (1990), which made climactic use of the structure's retractable roof.[26] The city of Nantes sanctioned both of these projects. In an unsanctioned move, architecture and fine art students appropriated the

Blockhaus, a concrete structure adjacent to the Naves used as a workers' bomb shelter during World War II, as free studio space. These students enjoyed the unspoken protection of their institutional affiliations, Nantes' prestigious *grandes écoles* of art and architecture, which shielded them from eviction. Professors soon incorporated Blockhaus projects into their curricula. Finally, the least officially sanctioned appropriation of the space was its use as a training ground for aspiring graffiti artists. The city, however, took no legal action against the muralists, who were occasionally commissioned by local businesses (including La Trocante) to decorate their exterior walls. In 1999, the city of Nantes relocated its annual Summer Festival from the Castle of the Dukes of Brittany to the former slipways and metal shops of Dubigeon. The covered slipway on which workers once assembled top-secret submarines for the French Navy became the music festival's largest stage. When asked if he was shocked to see his place of work become a concert venue, former shipyard worker Gérard Tripoteau replied:

> On the contrary, it warms the heart to see the people of Nantes appropriating the site. When these were the shipyards, they didn't come here, they just saw them from the quay. The great moments of communion were the ship launches. […] This isn't any old place. People see the traces. They necessarily mark them. They can't escape the shipyard: they see the slipways, the pillar foundations. The functionality of the site is still there. The festival spoils nothing.[27]

Tripoteau goes on to argue that the festival proves the value of fighting to preserve the island's industrial structures. Converting existing structures to new uses, he suggests, can potentially connect the citizens of Nantes to their city's industrial heritage. Temporary appropriations of the shipyards, in particular the wildly popular music festival, proved critical in encouraging Nantes residents to assume symbolic ownership of the site.

Tripoteau's warm reception of the Summer Festival is indicative of a phenomenon common to most heritage preservation efforts: the strategic expansion of symbolic networks. The rhetorical shift from the physical wounds of workers to the symbolic wounds of a city parallels a broader shift in ownership. A city government or private developer will more likely spare the wrecking ball if multiple, collaborating interest groups claim a building as significant. To save the headquarters of the Ateliers et Chantiers de Nantes, the Association for the History of Nantes Naval Construction (AHCNN) appealed not only to works councils throughout the region but also to architects and architectural historians, who then argued for the building's restoration on aesthetic

grounds. The most successful preservation efforts surpass the limits of interest groups entirely and appeal to a site's universal value. Former factory workers stand a better chance of saving a structure if it symbolically belongs not only to them but also to an entire city (or, with the advent of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, to all humankind). Shipyard activists made their history public property: 'the history of the shipyards is the history of all *Nantais*, it's the history of Nantes for the last 2,000 years.'[28] Class-based claims to ownership more often than not cede to place-based ones in debates over heritage preservation. Claims to universality enable activists to preserve material heritage, but those claims simultaneously and performatively efface the historical particularities that made preservation efforts worthwhile in the first place. This is the paradox of patrimony.

In the early 1990s, defenders of Nantes' industrial heritage welcomed cultural appropriations of the shipyard site in the hope that these temporary measures (be they short-term leases to Royal de Luxe or events like Théâtre la Chamaille's *Othello* and the music festival) would reconnect the people of Nantes to the shipyards and generate interest in a permanent redevelopment project in keeping with the area's history. After *Othello*, Tripoteau cited the production's success as evidence that the shipyards were 'still in the hearts of the people of Nantes.'[29] City officials, too, encouraged short-term cultural projects, but as a way of instilling confidence in their own tentative redevelopment plans. In both cases, cultural projects sustained the site's working memory, but each interest group emphasized a different temporal aspect: shipyard workers sought to keep the past present, while city officials sought to suggest the possibility of closure. Both strategies involved the symbolic expansion of the site from working-class heritage to Nantes' urban heritage. Cultural appropriation of the shipyards laid the groundwork for the ongoing discursive, structural, and embodied reconfiguration of the shipyards as public space, a tripartite reconfiguration that soon became centred on the Naves and the work of La Machine.

Reopening the Naves

The ACL had the Naves constructed as metal fabrication shops between 1904 and 1920. Founded by Louis Babin-Chevaye in 1881, the ACL quickly established itself as a financial and organizational innovator in Nantes' competitive shipbuilding industry. Whereas engineers,

architects, or local merchants had founded Nantes' older shipyards as small family businesses, the ACL began with substantial investment from Paris financiers.[30] The ACL required substantially more start-up capital than other shipyards because it consolidated previously separate shipyard trades – hull construction and metal fabrication – within a single, massive enterprise. The Naves and their adjoining workshops were the architectural expression of this organizational paradigm shift from the factory system to proto-Fordism. The 1921 General Plan of the Loire shipyards depicts a vast line of hangars forming an acute angle with Boulevard Léon Bureau and transected by rail to permit the transfer of prefabricated ship segments from one shop to another. This did not, however, result in a streamlined, Fordist assembly chain. In fact, some items constructed under the Naves were not even destined for naval use. According to the 1921 plan, the easternmost Nave housed locomotive boiler construction. Proceeding westward, the next Nave housed metal pressing, metal shaping, and hull tracing; the next (and final surviving) Nave housed marine boiler construction.

The area immediately adjacent to the Naves – and not the Naves themselves – became the focus of most preservation efforts. Several years before the official closure of the shipyards, Dubigeon's *comité d'entreprise* began gathering records of all ships ever built in Nantes (the earliest dating to the thirteenth century) to preserve the city's maritime heritage, but also to document the changing techniques of naval construction and their affiliated forms of labour. The initial result of this project was a regular weekend exposition, open to the public, that attracted over 4,000 visitors between June 1984 and May 1986.[31] The team responsible for establishing the collection eventually became the Association de l'Histoire de la construction navale de Nantes (Association for the History of Nantes Naval Construction, or AHCNN), which, alongside the Maison des Hommes et des techniques, lobbied Nantes' municipal government for preservation of the former shipyards as a maritime cultural centre. Nearly every structure that would have been preserved under the AHCNN's plan has since been demolished. The proposed Maritime Cultural Centre would have preserved the wood and iron shops immediately to the north of the management offices, the covered slipway that housed submarine construction and shielded its secret contents from prying eyes, and an additional hangar to the west with a retractable roof (the hangar in which Théâtre la Chamaille performed *Othello* in 1990) that permitted the neighbouring 80-ton crane to lift out pre-assembled hull segments. The Naves that currently house La Machine are notably absent from the AHCNN's sketch, as they were never part of Dubigeon. The area immediately in front of the

Naves, which is now the stomping ground for the Great Elephant and part of the park that extends to the west, is marked only as 'Parking' in AHCNN's drawings.

Preserving the covered slipway and the iron and wood shops would have continued to obstruct the view of the management offices (a stone structure from 1917) from the northern bank of the Loire. Today these offices have been restored and form a visual anchor in the Ile de Nantes panorama. Architect Patrick Mareschal expressed regret that he could not preserve any of the iron and wood shops designated under the AHCNN plan, but he explained, 'the problem of conservation and immediate usage not being resolved, to maintain one of these hangars would have given Nantes the image of a city in decline.'[32] This statement is significant for two reasons. First, it is perhaps the clearest (and in 1991, the earliest) expression of the purpose of the Ile de Nantes redevelopment: to create a new image of the city. The bulky metal shops would have obstructed the panorama of the Ile de Nantes when seen from across the Loire, but they also would have clouded the mental image that city officials were trying to generate. Second, Mareschal's statement betrays the muddled logic of much urban redevelopment: the city threatens to demolish a structure unless a plan for its preservation can be found, numerous associational actors propose such plans, and finally the city demolishes the structure because the question has not yet been resolved and in the interim the structure has become unsightly or unsound.

The Naves were perfectly situated to become the focal point of the panorama that the other metal shops would have obscured. In their proposal for the Naves, La Machine artistic director François Delarozière and collaborator Pierre Orefice promised to transform them into a new public space for the city that in turn would manufacture additional public spaces: the easternmost of the three Naves would become a public pedestrian thoroughfare, while in the other two the members of La Machine would construct the massive mechanical attractions to be installed at different points around the Ile de Nantes.[33] Each projected urban installation is designed to generate public space alongside various phases of the Ile de Nantes' redevelopment. These urban installations take years to complete, and at the time of writing only two – the Great Elephant and the Marine Worlds Carousel – of a projected ten have been realized. In the meantime, the Naves themselves serve as both a base of operations and model public space for the rest of the project.

How do metal fabrication shops become intelligible as public space? The cultural appropriations discussed above, particularly the 1999 music festival, expanded symbolic ownership of the shipyards beyond former

workers to encompass 'the people of Nantes.' Such events encouraged residents and tourists to cross the Loire to explore the postindustrial landscape and prepared them for the more permanent appropriation of La Machine. But La Machine also relies on familiar spatial repertoires to encourage particular spatial practices.

La Machine and Nantes Métropole tap into the existing repertoires of parks, cafés, and covered shopping arcades to encourage the Naves' use as public space. They do so both structurally, via changes to the built environment, and discursively, by comparing the Naves to other public spaces in the third public space of the press. Key landscaping and building choices invite visitors to pass through the Naves and to linger around them. The easternmost Nave is a covered thoroughfare open at both ends. Flora planted beneath this Nave establish sensory continuity between it and the immediately adjacent park, offering visual permission to enter. Immediately in front of the Naves, La Machine has installed a carousel (distinct from and much smaller than the Marine Worlds Carousel) designed by Delarozière. The carousel, a common element of many French parks, offers a familiar and approachable setting in which to encounter Delarozière's mechanical, steampunk aesthetic. (A carousel was also part of the redevelopment plan proposed by AHCNN.) Delarozière and Orefice's initial proposal also stressed the importance of establishing a café alongside each urban installation – not, they claim, to increase revenue, but to better integrate the Machines into the life of the island.[34] The Naves, too, feature a café from which parents may easily watch their children ride on the carousel. Here La Machine draws on the familiar spatial repertoires of French café culture to make its project intelligible to locals as new public space.

Chemetoff heralded the Naves as a means of returning the island to the public: 'No one ever came to the banks of the river. Today, the Naves […] have been handed over to the public.'[35] Chemetoff's statement establishes an opposition between private workspace and public leisure space. When the site was part of the shipyards, 'no one' (i.e. only shipyard workers) came to the banks of the Loire. Now that non-industrial workers and others use the river, the site has been 'handed over to the public.' Though thousands of people regularly gathered to attend naval launches, the shipyards must be represented retroactively as closed in order to make their converted spaces seem all the more open. I argue that this is the urbanist's perversion of earlier heritage preservation efforts in which workers offered up their history to all of Nantes. In the same interview Chemetoff also calls the Naves 'this industrial Passage Pommeraye,' comparing them to Nantes' ornate nineteenth-century shopping arcade.[36] Local press echoed Chemetoff's metaphor;

just two weeks later journalist Stéphane Pajot called the Naves 'a kind
of extraordinary big brother to the Passage Pommeraye.'[37] This com-
parison draws a parallel between the impressive roof architectures and
general shapes of the two structures. But, like Delarozière's insistence
on the importance of the café, it also situates the Naves within familiar
French repertoires of public space.

   If the space of the Naves is public, it remains regulated by implicit and
explicit spatial rules. Anyone may stroll through the easternmost Nave,
examine a description and photos of the project, and admire the Great
Elephant. During off hours, the Elephant remains under the iron lat-
ticework of the Nave, cordoned off by a low, largely symbolic rail. Access
to the interior of the Elephant and to the Machines Gallery requires two
separate €7 tickets. To access either the Gallery or the Elephant boarding
platform, visitors pass their tickets over scanners that then allow them to
pass through turnstiles (see figure 4.4). It is impossible to see the inside
of the Machines Gallery without purchasing a ticket, though during
off hours I frequently saw two or three curious people peering through
small gaps in the walls of the Gallery's flexible architecture. The two
western Naves housing La Machine's workshops and office space are
off limits to visitors. A locked door with keypad and intercom restricts

Figure 4.4 Visitors scan their tickets to gain entry to the Great Elephant's
boarding platform, Les Machines de l'île, Nantes, 2010.

Figure 4.5 View of La Machine's workshop from the observation post, Les Machines de l'île, Nantes, 2010.

ground-level access to these areas, and a sign on the door asks passers-by to respect La Machine's workspace. However, the €7 tickets granting access to the Elephant boarding platform also allow visitors to climb an additional set of stairs to the workshop observation post. From here, one may look down on the members of La Machine as they work on their latest projects (see figure 4.5). But this platform is quite small, and with many visitors angling for a view (most with eager children) there is unspoken pressure to have a peek and move on.

Critics of the project accuse Delarozière and Orefice of transforming the former shipyards into a theme park, a Jules Verne-themed Disneyland for consumption by tourists and of little interest to locals. Chemetoff and the press hardly assuaged these concerns by comparing the Naves to the Passage Pommeraye, as the function of the shopping arcade is primarily to encourage consumption and only secondarily to encourage social mixing. Beneath the Naves, too, we are free to look, but we pay to play.[38] Delarozière routinely responds that theme parks are not integrated into their urban environment. They enclose their visitor-customers within a delimited space (usually far from the city centre), demanding that they maximize enjoyment and experience the most for their money between opening and closing times. By contrast,

the eventual projects of the Machines de l'île will be distributed throughout the Ile de Nantes, with separate ticket booths for each Machine. Delarozière and Orefice argue that this would allow local visitors to explore the island and the Machines at their leisure, returning for multiple visits, perhaps spaced months apart, without the pressure of 'making the rounds' in a single day. But Delarozière also rejects labels of theme parks or consumerist paradises because the Naves remain a space of manufacture, a space of production rather than (or more accurately, in addition to) consumption.

Artists at work

La Machine combats the image of the Naves as consumerist space by insisting on their continued role as a worksite. Promotional materials and media coverage of the project emphasize that the Naves are a workshop and the machines are works in progress.[39] Delarozière has repeatedly attempted to distance Les Machines de l'île from the image of a Disney-style amusement park, saying in 2011, 'We're a construction site, one that manufactures the city, nothing to do with the fake, neat and tidy city of Disney [Main Street USA].'[40] He reiterated this in our 2012 interview: 'It's in our genes to work with the industrial past, the industrial present, and besides it's a space of manufacture. It's a construction site.'[41] Delarozière's genetic imagery is apt, not because it reflects a real and natural lineage, but because, firstly, it indicates the importance to Les Machines de l'île of repertoires that make the new intelligible based on what has come before, and secondly, it demonstrates the political stakes of divergent theories of repertoire. The intelligibility of the Naves as public space depends on spatial repertoires, which are primarily acts of recognition rather than of embodied transmission from performer to performer. But Delarozière deploys his genetic imagery to imply a direct and natural act of transfer: laying claim to repertoire in the sense proposed by Diana Taylor, La Machine attempts to present itself as the inheritor of industrial savoir-faire passed down directly from the Nantes shipbuilding industry. When these attempts succeed, La Machine is able to justify its presence in the repurposed metal fabrication shops. When they fail, La Machine's workshop is vilified in letters to the local paper as a force of gentrification and a tourist trap, and by extension Nantes' cultural policy priorities are called into question. In the first half of this chapter I demonstrated the built, discursive, and embodied

reconfiguration of the Naves as public space. In what follows I turn to repertoires of work, and how these recombine with repertoires of public space to enable performance and reception of the creative city script.

Delarozière is not exaggerating when he says that his company collaborates with Nantes' 'industrial present'; the initial phase of the Machines de l'île, including construction of the Great Elephant and the opening of the Machines Gallery, provided contract work to a total of sixty-three businesses, from local laser cutting operations to multi-national electronics conglomerate Siemens.[42] Although La Machine's permanent company members are skilled technicians and artisans, the sheer scale and complexity of their projects necessitate collaboration with outside experts. In an organizational model increasingly common across multiple economic sectors, temporary, peripheral contractors routinely supplement a permanent team. By providing contract work to local (and with Siemens, one multinational) businesses, La Machine assumes the redefined role of culture in the creative economy.

> The scale has changed. It is no longer just a question of giving cultural vocations to industrial buildings. […] It is no longer just a question of using culture as a communications or public relations tool. Henceforth, culture is also considered a productive force; it must create surplus value and jobs.[43]

It is not an ephemeral event that generates surplus value and jobs, but La Machine's ongoing production process: its continuous theatre. The primary product of this process is not a mechanical animal but a set of social relations, a highly interconnected web of artistic and industrial workers and public, private, and symbolic capital.

The hub of this network is the burgeoning creative quarter just to the east of the Naves. The scheme consists of five main components: media and communications, higher education and research, artists' workshops and studios, creative small businesses, and housing. The area, centred around the former Alstom industrial hangars, now houses the head-quarters of regional newspaper *Ouest France* and the regional headquar-ters of Radio France, Nantes' prestigious Schools of Architecture and Fine Arts, and numerous architecture, graphic design, interior design, and digital media firms. The Blockhaus, the World War II-era bomb shelter for shipyard workers once occupied by architecture students, has undergone an architectural conversion to become La Fabrique, a centre of experimental music production and Nantes' hippest concert venue. Proponents of the transition herald the creative quarter as crucial to Nantes' long-term urban strategy: drawing on and nurturing the creativ-ity of Nantes' people, they argue, will position the city as a European

hub for the fastest growing creative industries. If Nantes' shipbuilding and port activities turned the city westward from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, across the Atlantic to foreign markets, the creative quarter promises to reorient Nantes to the east, to forge trans-urban links with cities throughout Europe. Once again, it seems Nantes is positioned to strategically divide labour between itself and Paris. Formerly, Paris was the centre of distribution throughout France, whereas Nantes was the centre of distribution throughout the world. Tomorrow, as proponents of the creative quarter would have it, Paris might be France's global city, but Nantes will prove France's European metropolis.

What is La Machine's role in the creative quarter? Delarozière has confirmed that his company and the musicians of neighbouring La Fabrique will 'necessarily' find projects in common. But Delarozière also finds the creative quarter 'weighed down by concepts.'[44] He points to his company's longstanding collaboration with the School of Architecture and remarks that the quarter was creative long before it was branded as such. Delarozière acknowledges that he and his company will benefit from the media (and financial) attention paid to the creative quarter, but is quietly sceptical that an urbanist or city government can plan the cross-fertilization of artistic projects.

Physically, the Naves link the emerging creative quarter to the park that occupies much of the former shipyards, a park marked by the concrete and metal traces of shipbuilding activity. La Machine's base of operations provides a visual and symbolic connection between Nantes' heavy industrial past and its cultural industrial future. This was not always the case. I first visited the Naves in 2010, before construction and renovation began for most of the creative quarter. Approaching the Naves from the northern bank of the Loire, across the Anne de Bretagne bridge, they appeared visually grouped with the open park areas to the west. Boulevard Léon Bureau (the Anne de Bretagne bridge becomes Boulevard Léon Bureau once on the Ile de Nantes) divided the Naves from the emerging creative quarter, notably the former Alstom buildings. To cross the boulevard was not difficult, though I had to pay attention to the cars coming over the crest of the Anne de Bretagne bridge, frequently at high speeds. The side of the Naves facing Boulevard Léon Bureau and the future creative quarter resembled the rear of a greenhouse and not a hub of cultural and tourist activity.

Working in concert with the Naves' physical orientation, initial publicity for the Machines de l'île project grouped the Naves exclusively with the rest of the former shipyards to the west. Additionally, though the Naves never belonged to Dubigeon – ACB retained them for non-naval use when it sold its other facilities to Dubigeon in 1969 – city officials,

the media, and many locals mistakenly labelled them as the Dubigeon Naves as early as the 1990s. The error persisted until 2007, when former shipyard and non-naval ACB workers successfully lobbied to have the Naves labelled the Loire Naves on official maps of the redevelopment site. One letter to the editor exemplifies the lobbyists' concerns: 'Despite the solicitations of our politicians to believe the contrary, Dubigeon was never installed [in the Naves]. To give an imprecise name to these naves is to hold in contempt the people who worked so hard there and is also to obscure a part of the history of working, industrious Nantes.'[45] I do not believe that city officials purposely misidentified the Naves as belonging to Dubigeon. But the effect of their honest mistake (and of its fifteen years of reiteration in the media) was to efface the shipyards' long and complex history of competition, relocation, and mergers in favour of a simpler narrative. Labelling the early twentieth-century hangars as part of Dubigeon obscured the parcelization of the site and Dubigeon's relatively recent installation on the Prairie-au-Duc in 1969. More importantly for my argument here, it also had the dual effect of attaching redevelopment efforts to Nantes' maritime history's most illustrious family, the Dubigeon clan, and of presenting the Naves' repurposing as a balm for the wound left by Dubigeon's closure. Dubigeon's closure was the impetus for redevelopment, so the Machines de l'île – a project requiring millions of euros of public money – had to be somehow connected to the Dubigeon site. The Naves' mislabelling helped build this bridge, but it simultaneously offended the former shipyard workers, who continued to benefit from significant symbolic clout.

Now that the Naves' proper name has been restored, the structure is once again linked to the rest of the former ACL, across the street in the emerging creative quarter. The Naves and Delarozière feature prominently in de Gravelaine's 2011 feature on the creative quarter. Gravelaine calls the Naves 'a site that associates the industrial past of the Prairie-au-Duc and its new cultural vocation,' but he also cites them as the earliest example of the '*mise en culture*' (a phrase suggesting a purposeful turn to culture as well as a *mise en scène*) of the entire Ile de Nantes.[46] The Naves' discursive relocation from memorial park to creative quarter is an example of what Paul Ricoeur might call retroactive prefiguration. In an essay for *Urbanisme*, Ricoeur describes prefiguration as the introduction into daily life of new elements that are not yet identified as part of a larger project, but which lay the groundwork for inhabitants' interactions with a project to come.[47] These discrete novelties indicate that something is coming to pass. The Naves are certainly an example of such prefiguration, though I identify this prefiguration as retroactive due to their symbolic relocation to the creative quarter. This

is resurfacing in action: the Naves have served as the flagship structure for two of the redevelopment efforts' major projects.

Boulevard Léon Bureau continues to sever the Naves from the rest of the creative quarter, but two new structures encourage physical and visual associations between the two sides of the street. Immediately across from the Naves, the city built France's tallest metal parking structure to provide easier access to the Machines de l'île. Pedestrian crosswalks now facilitate movement to and from this structure, and by extension between the creative quarter and the memorial park. (Accessing the Naves via public transport is slightly more difficult; one may take Line 1 of the tram to the Chantiers Navals stop, but this tramline is on the northern bank of the Loire. Riders must alight from the train and then cross the Anne de Bretagne bridge on foot.) The stark contemporary structure of La Fabrique, attached to the easternmost Nave, lends visual weight to the Naves' eastern half, and La Fabrique's function physically joins the Naves to the high-tech innovation that the creative quarter is meant to facilitate. The repurposed Naves were always meant to bridge past and present, but they now also bridge past and future, memory and innovation.

If the Naves physically and discursively bridge the creative quarter to the east and the public memorial park to the west, the workers of La Machine are called upon to embody both the new creative economy and the past industrial one. La Machine company members are primarily carpenters, welders, mechanics, sculptors, electricians, and metalworkers. Several of them actually began their careers working in heavy industry, including at France's only remaining active shipyard, the Chantiers de l'Atlantique in nearby Saint-Nazaire.[48] Jean-Louis Jossic, formerly Nantes' deputy mayor for culture and heritage, suggests, 'To those who miss the universe of the shipyards, we can say that there is real continuity. Look at the Naves, the people who work wood and metal in the Workshop. […] We are in the same universe.'[49] Journalist Armelle de Valon remarks, 'one could imagine [the workers of La Machine] as coming from the disappeared shipyards.'[50] Even before the Naves reopened, Ayrault claimed: 'In the Naves, we will "fabricate" culture just as workers used to fabricate boats.'[51] In concert with the structural reconfiguration of the Naves, the official narrative of Nantes' heritage preservation and redevelopment calls on La Machine to embody past industrial repertoires, to gesture continuity in the face of rupture.

Delarozière, Nantes' cultural officers, and the media routinely cite the team's artisanal savoir-faire as evidence of continuity between shipbuilding activities and the Machines de l'île. During construction of the Great Elephant, Delarozière and Orefice wrote that 'the structure of

the elephant will take the form of part of a ship's hull. We will use laser cutting, metal fabrication, welding etc. All this savoir-faire inherited from the shipyards to create a modern and inventive machine.'[52] The choice of the elephant had nothing to do with the industrial techniques required to produce it. Delarozière and the artisans of La Machine had already constructed an elephant for the Royal de Luxe production *La visite du sultan des Indes sur son éléphant à voyager dans le temps* (*Visit from the Sultan of the Indies on his Time-Travelling Elephant*, typically translated simply as *The Sultan's Elephant*, 2005–06). The mechanical elephant used in the Royal de Luxe performance required twenty-two operators and was dismantled in 2006. The Nantes elephant is a modified replica that requires only one operator, the driver, and can carry more passengers. Still, the Great Elephant is primarily intelligible to Nantes residents as a souvenir of the Royal de Luxe performance. It also evokes Nantes native Jules Verne's novel *The Steam House*, in which a giant mechanical elephant tows a full-size house across India, and it conjures a sanitized, exoticized version of the voyages of violent commerce and conquest that set out from Nantes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[53] The employment of shipbuilding techniques in the construction of the elephant is merely happy coincidence, but one that Delarozière repeats frequently to justify the project as a commemoration of industrial heritage. In an interview with Thierry Guidet, he claims: 'Metal fabrication, forging, the carpentry of the main skeleton … all this savoir-faire from the shipyards, we inherit it and we put it in service of a new industry, that of the imagination.'[54] In our 2012 interview, Delarozière explained:

> There was a hull tracer who worked with us on the Great Elephant. We also solicited former naval metal fabricators who were capable of manipulating complex pieces thanks to their highly technical play with the blowtorch […] We solicit skills that these veterans have mastered incredibly well, and there you have it. There are a lot of people who worked at Saint-Nazaire, who did their training on boats, who come to work here; we're partners with an adult workers' training program, called the Chantier-Ecole, where Saint-Nazaire welders can fabricate pieces for our shows, it's an exchange. We really exist in relation to the industrial world. The statute of our association [La Machine], it says that we're here to evolve the techniques of the performing arts, of scenery, of scenography, notably by drawing on industrial savoir-faire.[55]

Many of the industrial and artisanal techniques used beneath the Naves have indeed remained the same. But, as Delarozière rightly points out, the industry has changed, from heavy industry to the imagination (or

creative, or cultural) industry. The repertoires of La Machine's workers – and, for those once employed in shipyards, the mere presence of their labouring bodies – establish continuity between past and present industries while subordinating the past industry to present concerns, namely the fabrication not just of mechanical animals but of a common urban imaginary. The work of La Machine fabricates its own conditions of possibility: the transition from heavy industry to culture industry, from class-based solidarity to place-based belonging, and (within Nantes' redevelopment process) from industrial memory park to creative quarter.

Moving on

Even as the work of La Machine harks back to the work of the shipyards, it establishes its own kind of labour as superior to and more fulfilling than the backbreaking, soul-crushing toil of industries past. Press profiles of La Machine company members and contract workers read like a survey of post-Fordist management literature. Jörn, an iron and steelworker, used to have a metalworking shop in Ariège but needed a change. In La Machine's workshop he discovered 'an uncommon way of working': 'In the Workshop, we are all interdependent. We're at once responsible for our work and that of others.'[56] Pascaline, another metalworker for La Machine, agrees: 'Here, you are responsible for your own construction project, and if you want, you can take on new responsibilities. Different trades come together, so much so that you can familiarize yourself with other areas. You learn every day by watching others.'[57] Joiner Richard Triballier, who came to La Machine for a two-month training course and never left, cites an atmosphere of free exchange and creative consensus; 'it would be difficult' to leave and work elsewhere.[58] Company members, contractors, and reporters alike cite teamwork, independence, and a sense of collective ownership – all hallmarks of the post-Fordist management ideal – as key to the functioning of the Naves as worksite.

Apart from the company's collaborative but independent, project-based labour organization, La Machine company members and contract workers cite the production of a common imaginary as the primary reason for their emotional attachment to the job. Both Delarozière and Orefice define imagination and inspiration [*faire rêver*] as their primary products. Jérôme Thareau, formerly of the Chantiers de l'Atlantique

in Saint-Nazaire, explains, 'We don't come here to earn a salary but to inspire [*fabriquer du rêve pour*] people.'[59] Contractor Olivier Baret writes that 'the project permits all those who work on it to contribute to this part of the dream and to share our pride in our modern and noble professions.'[60] The French formulations *faire rêver* (usually translated, as above, as 'to inspire,' but literally 'to make dream') and *fabriquer du rêve* (to fabricate dreams) prove particularly revealing. The common urban imaginary is La Machine's primary product, over and above any mechanical animals that happen to lumber out of the workshop.

I do not mean to imply that La Machine's company members are delusional or lying; my goal here is not to lift the veil of ideology from downtrodden naïfs but to examine the theoretical underpinnings and political stakes of this widely accepted narrative of transition from Fordist industrial labour to post-Fordist affective labour and collective creativity. Press reports profiling the workers of La Machine link the company to the developing creative quarter in the east, even as separate news articles and statements from Nantes city officials use La Machine's technical savoir-faire to link them to the former shipyards in the west. La Machine workers must perform in two industries at once, even as the rhetoric of one (the creative industry) opposes itself to the working conditions of the other (heavy industry). When journalist Philippe Gambert calls the workers of La Machine 'dream creators in a former site of toil,' he obscures both the difficult manual work necessary to create giant mechanical animals *and* the solidarity, camaraderie, skill, and sense of collective ownership that characterized shipyard labour in Nantes.[61] When he goes on to describe the 1987 closure of Dubigeon as 'funereal,' he establishes Les Machines de l'île as the shipyards' disembodied, spiritual afterlife: manual, material labour apparently died in 1987, but its soul lives on in the immaterial and affective production – more play than work – of La Machine. Press coverage and promotional materials for Les Machines de l'île may tout La Machine's labouring bodies as evidence of continuity between shipyard work and the creative quarter redevelopment efforts, but they also dissolve the materiality of that work and its products to promote a narrative of transition to affective labour.

Though the Nantes media have constructed a narrative of progression from difficult industrial labour to imaginative, stimulating, creative labour, shipyard labour more closely resembles the highly skilled, project-based work of La Machine than it does any Fordist assembly line. Although digital modelling technologies have enabled increased standardization of shipbuilding since Dubigeon closed in 1987, the work of the Nantes shipyards predated those developments and thus was always made-to-measure naval 'couture.'[62] In the Naves, as late as

the 1970s, metal fabricators (*chaudronniers*) and pipe-fitters (*tuyauters*) cut, bent, and shaped large pieces of metal to form sections of a ship's hull, internal piping, and the artfully curved blades of propellers. This work, the transformation of metals, was distinct from the assembly work of the mechanic shops, and required highly skilled individual labourers working collaboratively with each other and with other stages of the naval construction process. Metal fabricators relied on the precise work of hull tracers, who would trace and cut full-scale models of a ship's horizontal struts out of thin, light wood. Metal fabricators would then test their work against the curvature of these wooden models. This practice continued well into the twentieth century, until the advent of three-dimensional computer modelling. Metal fabricators, pipe-fitters, hull tracers, and riveters needed to understand the entirety of the construction process; thus, a young shipyard apprentice would rotate from team to team before settling on a trade.[63] 'In naval construction, the trades long retained an artisanal character and thus lent themselves poorly to modern [Fordist-Taylorist] methods for the organization of work.'[64] Testimonies from former shipyard workers (which, admittedly, are likely to have grown rosy with time) emphasize skill, independence, teamwork, camaraderie, and creativity.[65]

Defenders of La Machine cite the particular materials and skills as a tribute to shipyard labour, but somehow the artisanal organization of work within La Machine becomes associated not with the shipyards but with the new creative quarter. The designation of the new economy as a 'creative' one is itself problematic. Guidet cautions, 'How can we fail to see the risk of co-option (at least verbally) of "creativity"? As if the industrialists and the workers of the shipyards had not proven their creativity before those who took their place?'[66] Just as the shipyards must be represented as closed and private in order to sell the converted Naves as open and public, so shipyard and industrial labour must be represented as oppressive to better portray La Machine's work as collaborative and emancipatory. This narrative emphasizes the (very real) hardships of industrial labour but obscures the artisanal, collaborative, creative reality of shipyard workers' experiences. Shipyard labour, in this narrative, becomes indistinguishable from other forms of industrial labour in which Fordist-Taylorist rationalization minimized workers' creative input.

Both the shipyards and La Machine's workshop produce 1) enormous metal and wood vessels using many of the same tools and techniques, and 2) collaborative, skilled, independent, project-based labour relations. Yet, to demonstrate continuity between industrial and artistic labour beneath the Naves, the media cite only the phenomenological

similarities between the ships and the mechanical animals and the similar techniques used to produce them. The collaborative nature of shipyard labour is obscured, while the collaborative nature of La Machine's labour is touted as a radically new improvement on industrial work. Delarozière and Orefice cite similar techniques and materials in order to claim that Les Machines de l'île commemorates industrial heritage. Were they to cite continuity in labour organization, they would disrupt Nantes' narrative of progress and highlight the precarious nature of artistic work in the creative economy. In the shipyards, financial precarity, combined with the highly skilled nature of the work, led to high levels of working-class solidarity and intense union activism from the 1930s to the 1980s. Today, as Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello have painstakingly documented in *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, precarity is called 'flexibility' and 'freedom.' Contemporary capitalism has addressed what Boltanski and Chiapello call the 'aesthetic critique' – focused on feelings of alienation – in order to better disregard the 'social critique' – focused on exploitation.[67] Les Machines de l'île as a project must commemorate the heritage of industry without commemorating the heritage of industrial working-class activism.

When the artisanal nature of shipyard labour is, intentionally or otherwise, effaced, La Machine and the creative quarter come to represent an emerging democratization of creativity. Whereas industrial workers of an invented past supposedly had zero creative input in the production process (a myth debunked by even a cursory survey of shipyard labour), the workers of La Machine and the creative quarter are free to contribute their own ideas and take ownership of projects. In addition, by presenting La Machine's collaborative, skilled, interdependent-yet-autonomous labour as something radically *new*, the media and the municipal government bring La Machine in line with the rhetoric of openness that characterizes Chemetoff's *Plan-Guide* and the entire Ile de Nantes project. The Ile de Nantes is supposedly open source: the flagship project for a rising European metropolis open onto the world; home to a rhizomatic, networked creative cluster and a workshop that produces imagination itself; planned not in accordance with a single, unified vision but with a flexible, regularly updated 'road map' consisting of smaller, independently contracted construction projects. Contemporary urbanism, much like contemporary capitalism, has responded to aesthetic critiques of alienation, only to worsen social problems of exploitation. The flexible city is a precarious one.

The democratization of creativity supposedly extends to those who visit the Machines Gallery. In promotional materials and interviews, Delarozière and Orefice insist that these visitors actively participate in

the creative process, hence their designation as 'testers.' The production process is both removed spectacle and participatory performance. 'The Workshop, visible from the Elephant's boarding platform, offers the public the spectacle of the Machines' construction and mechanical tests. The Gallery will operate in sync with the creations of the Workshop, which each visitor will be able to test.'[68] Delarozière and Orefice cite the workshop and gallery as interconnected elements in an ongoing process of construction, testing, and innovation. 'The Gallery is above all a laboratory in which to exhibit the fabrication process of the Machines Workshop: models, tools, unfinished objects. Visitors will be actors in this process. They will be able to test the machines for themselves and attend La Machine's rehearsals in front of the Naves.'[69] The press, too, emphasizes the project's participatory aspect: 'Spectators will be actors. They will be able to climb aboard the machines and guide their movements.'[70] Political theatre has long attempted to activate its spectators to engage them in critical thinking and activism against the status quo. Here, however, activation has become a publicity slogan to solicit residents' approval of an official urban project.

What manner of participation is available to Les Machines' visitors? The 'testing' that occurs in the Machines Gallery is not that of the skilled test pilot, but that of the repetitive stress test. Delarozière and his colleagues joke that their creations must be able to 'survive' the Machines Gallery: they must withstand the repeated and sustained stress of a stream of visitors, all eager to turn cranks, flip levers, and press foot pedals with vigour.[71] It is not one visitor who tests the machine, but the steady stream of visitors; the role of the individual visitor is to act as one small step in a large-scale act of quality control. The individual mechanical marine creatures that eventually became part of the larger Marine Worlds Carousel were not transferred from workshop to gallery until they could safely entertain the crowds. Adjustments made to the machines before their final installation in the carousel resulted from machinists and constructors' observations and not from visitor feedback.[72]

Spatially, too, visitors' participation remains distinct from the construction process. The western and central Naves house the metal and woodworking shops, respectively, while the Machines Gallery is housed in a flexible, temporary structure beneath the eastern Nave. The rest of the eastern Nave comprises a covered public thoroughfare that allows pedestrians to pass from north to south (even when Les Machines is closed) but that further reinforces the spatial division of constructors' and visitors' labour. As part of the paid visit to the Machines Gallery, visitors may cross the public thoroughfare, use their tickets to pass

through a turnstile, and climb stairs to a narrow gangway overlooking the shops where the workers of La Machine are constructing their next projects. This part of the process is indeed on display, if from a limited perspective (and I would certainly not advocate children's unfettered access to table saws and belt sanders). In the Machines Gallery itself, the machines are accompanied by recreations of Delarozière's initial sketches, scale renderings and models of entire projects both complete (the Great Elephant, the Marine Worlds Carousel) and incomplete (the Heron Tree), and representations of some of the techniques used to construct the machines, notably the contour mould used in the creation of the Great Elephant's wooden skin. Ultimately, however, these additions generate the effect of a sneak behind-the-scenes preview, a backstage pass for interested (and paying) consumers, or even a museum display, rather than that of meaningful co-production.

Finally, the machinists guiding visitors through the Machines Gallery are *not* La Machine company members. La Machine is a street theatre company that constructs its theatrical machinery in the metal and wood-working shops beneath the Naves. The 'machinists' who greet visitors and encourage them to 'test out' La Machine's creations in the Machines Gallery are public employees, professional tour guides hired by the city of Nantes. These tour guides are co-workers not of La Machine, but of other publicly employed guides at Nantes' Museum of History, across the Loire in the Castle of the Dukes of Brittany. The employment structure of the Machines de l'île project continues to separate between the affective labour of greeting and guiding and the manual labour of carving and welding.

The creators of Les Machines ascribe to visitors a greater role in the creative process by emphasizing the importance of appropriation, narrative, and imagination. 'All the great industrial undertakings started with a dream. Here industry is put in the service of dreams. Climbing into the machines, visitors, be they big or small, invent their own voyages.'[73] One of the theatrical aspects of Les Machines, the ability of visitors to experience an 'as if,' is crucial to Delarozière and Orefice's claims that visitors participate in the production process.

When I first visited the Machines Gallery in August 2010 it still held the mechanical sea creatures that are now part of the Marine Worlds Carousel. One of the machinists gathered my fellow visitors and me for a demonstration of the Queen's Carriage, a wooden conch shell 'carried' by a fleet of flying fish (see figures 4.6 and 4.7). The machinist asked for a female volunteer aged 16 or older to play the Queen and for two well-behaved boys to act as footmen (see figure 4.8). Once in position, these three volunteers turned various cranks, levers, and
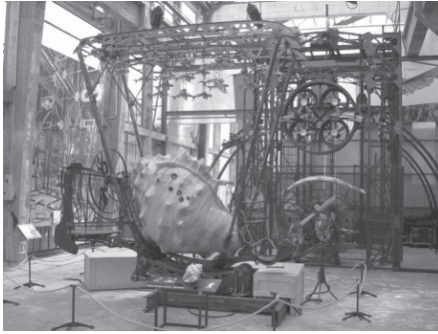
Figure 4.6 The Queen's Carriage in the Machines Gallery prior to demonstration, Les Machines de l'île, Nantes, 2010. The conch-shell carriage is now part of the completed Marine Worlds Carousel.

Figure 4.7 An employee of Les Machines de l'île gathers a crowd for a demonstration of the Queen's Carriage, Nantes, 2010.

Figure 4.8 A young woman prepares to play the part of the Queen in a demonstration of the Queen's Carriage, Nantes, 2010.

wheels to move the carriage up and down and to flap the wings of the flying fish. The young woman playing the Queen drew particular praise for her stately royal wave. An actor inhabiting a role, the young woman was both herself and someone else. She acted in a brief theatrical event by imagining herself the Queen of the Conch Shell and waving to onlookers from her chariot as it passed below the waves. We onlookers, participants and spectators and attendants, suspended our disbelief and waved back. We waved both to the real young woman and to the imagined Queen.

The roles were not always so clearly defined. When testers climbed into the Lantern Fish, they had not been asked to play the Queen and her footmen or any other particular parts; they might have imagined themselves part of a living sea creature, pilots of a steampunk submersible, momentary performance artists, or something else entirely. But the creators of Les Machines – and the project's supporters in Nantes' government and the press – tout such imaginative interactions as part of the construction process. The machines are only complete when in motion, and this motion emerges from both the gestural and imaginative engagement of the visitor. Visitors to Les Machines thus participate in the production process insofar as 1) the machines are only complete when in motion and rely on the gestures of visitors to achieve such motion, and 2) the machines must be animated not only by their riders' gestures but also by their riders' imaginative capacities.

Visitors' bodily and imaginative engagement with the machines supposedly transforms them from passive spectators to actors. But to what end? Visitors to Les Machines de l'île do not participate in the creative process any more than they would at another, more traditional theatrical event: in the Machines Gallery visitors may turn cranks and levers, but the physical activity of button-pushing hardly amounts to creative input. And the imaginative capacities of the spectators engaged in the testing of the machines are not fundamentally different from the ability of spectators at a play to temporarily embrace fictional conceits. Claims of activation and participation at the Machines de l'île serve a purpose akin to the discursive 'reopening' of the Naves discussed above. The discourse surrounding the Ile de Nantes redevelopment and the Machines de l'île represents the former shipyards as a private affair in which the public could not participate: even if thousands of Nantes residents gathered to witness ship launches, they were passively watching the launch of a (mostly) completed object from the other side of the Loire. By contrast, visitors to Les Machines de l'île cross the Loire, enter the Naves, and 'test' the machines prior to their 'launch.' Visitors' participation in the production process is illusory but is a necessary discursive move that

sustains a narrative of transition from industrial labour to participatory, creative, affective labour.

If the Machines de l'île project claims to democratize creativity by actively engaging visitors' imaginative faculties, it does so to engage Nantes residents and foreign tourists in the ongoing reimagining of the Ile de Nantes. La Machine has inscribed its project in two temporal registers: ephemeral events and the *longue durée* of urban redevelopment. Every spring, autumn, and winter the Naves host a series of concerts, performances, and art installations, each of which features both paid-for and free entry events. The completion of each Machine (the Great Elephant, the Marine Worlds Carousel) is also the occasion for an inaugural celebration. All of these events attract both local and non-local visitors. For outside tourists, the event format offers an easily digestible timeline for a visit to Nantes. For locals, delimited events instil confidence in the long-term vision of a project with no end in sight. In an interview I pressed Orefice for details about the endgame of Les Machines. None exists. Only the continued success of one stage triggers approval of and funding for the next. In this case, the city measures success in numbers of paying visitors. The Great Elephant attracted just over 200,000 visitors in 2007, its first year, a number that steadily increased and in 2010 topped 300,000 (roughly equivalent to the current population of Nantes). Because Les Machines requests the postal code of every paying visitor, Orefice could also tell me that, whereas in its first year of operation the Great Elephant's riders were 80 per cent local and 20 per cent non-local (a category encompassing foreign visitors and French visitors from outside the Loire-Atlantique department), by 2010 the figure was the inverse: just 20 per cent of the Elephant's riders hailed from Loire-Atlantique, while 80 per cent were non-local. Combined with increasing ticket sales, this statistic spurred approval of Les Machines' next two projects, the Marine Worlds Carousel and the Heron Tree. As the Great Elephant attracts more non-locals than locals, the next two projects will (temporarily) return Les Machines and the Ile de Nantes project to the local eye.[74] La Machine has integrated its work into that of Nantes' urban redevelopment, a decades-long process that is difficult to cleanly delimit as an event. Delarozière even calls the Machines de l'île '*machines de ville*' (city machines).[75] Les Machines de l'île is not (just) a cultural event that instils confidence in a larger project; it is (also, simultaneously) a cultural project woven into urban redevelopment.

The members of La Machine are beneficiaries of, as well as actors in, Nantes' urban redevelopment, both via the (structural, discursive, and embodied) generation of public space and the (structural, discursive,

and embodied) perpetuation of the creative economy. The role of culture is no longer just public communication, but also the generation of jobs and surplus value. The work of La Machine retains a promotional function, but this is both the marketing of place *and* the marketing of their own kind of labour.

The labour of La Machine is the affective labour of the creative economy, the manual labour of the industrial economy, and the labour of establishing continuity between the two. The site of the shipyards is the site of a critical contradiction: the bodily labour of the theatre workers at their machines preserves the repertoires of the absent shipyard workers, but what they produce is an urban project that promotes the memory of industry's success while encouraging the effacement of the industry's collapse. This is the resurfacing alluded to in this chapter's title. When road workers resurface a motorway, they do not replace all of its strata. Their milling machine scrapes away only the topmost layer of asphalt. The Ile de Nantes redevelopment is built on the base layer of generic naval heritage, but the project calls on La Machine workers to mill away the more recent, tumultuous past. As de Gravelaine writes, 'more and more the island exists to erase its former abandoned state from memory. As if Place François II had always been so welcoming and the quays free of squatters.'[76] Working memory lasts only so long. In order for Nantes' redevelopment to function, the workers of La Machine must at once embody and efface the city's naval industrial past. This central paradox emerges wherever a city converts former heavy industrial space to culture industrial uses: the creative city script demands that its performers *be* industrial workers and *replace* industrial workers – keep them present while consigning them to history.

Delarozière, Orefice, and their supporters routinely cite the importance of childlike wonder to the Machines de l'île project. They stress that, rather than merely supervising their children during a trip to an amusement park, parents experience the same emotions as their children during a visit to the Machines.[77] The connection between parent and child is a generational act of transfer that speaks to *patrimoine*'s original meaning: patrimony, inheritance, that which is passed down from father to son according to patrilineal law in order to reproduce the status quo. Multiple acts of inheritance collide at Les Machines de l'île: one, the industrial techniques and savoir-faire adopted for use in the creative economy, which Delarozière says are 'in [their] genes'; two, an intangible feeling of amazement passed from parent to child. But Delarozière insists that at Les Machines de l'île parents and children experience their wonder simultaneously. The act of inheritance is flattened so that generational transmission becomes generational coexistence.

Such historical flattening also characterizes La Machine's industrial inheritance. Despite the company's rhetoric, the skills they use to construct their machines were not directly 'passed down' from the Nantes shipyards. There is no clear act of transfer in this repertoire. What La Machine presents as inheritance is in fact simple contract work. This goes for their work with local businesses as well as for their short-term contracts with individual workers from Saint-Nazaire. The compressed, ahistorical act of inheritance is, in effect if not intent, a strategic political move that smoothes over the traumatic ruptures in Nantes' industrial history and justifies a creative economy founded on total innovation. Paradoxically, La Machine's recycling effaces the past in commemorating it; the company's acts of inheritance only erase history in favour of simultaneity. The very walls of the repurposed Naves exhibit such historical flattening. Just outside the Machines Gallery one finds displayed a collection of massive images: photographs of shipyard labour, photographs of the Machines and their construction, and reproductions of sketches by Delarozière and Leonardo da Vinci, arranged in no apparent order.

Chemetoff has called the Naves a 'field of possibilities.'[78] The physical and discursive reconfigurations of the Naves establish the realm of possibility for embodied spatial practices. Performers – be they La Machine company members, contract workers, local residents, or foreign tourists – enact the creative city script on the public stage. The work repertoires of La Machine (in which visitors, too, participate) generate and justify the shifting spatial repertoires of the converted Naves and contribute to the resurfacing of the Ile de Nantes. The Naves, as a fusion of public space and workspace, are at once stage and scene shop of Nantes' redevelopment.

Notes

1 Thierry Guidet, 'Des Allumées au Quartier de la Création,' *Place Publique* 27 (2011): 7.

2 Dominique Luneau, 'Chantier Dubigeon: 1738–1987,' *Presse Océan*, 4–5 July 1987.

3 Of these productions, *Les Mécaniques savantes* (*The Savant Mechanicals*) is the most famous. Performed in Liverpool, United Kingdom in 2008 and Yokohama, Japan in 2009, the performance features two 50-foot-tall mechanical spiders that, operated by La Machine company members, emerge from water, walk the streets, and even climb tall buildings. The performance's only narrative is that created by the spectator.

4 La Machine, 'Compagnie La Machine,' *La Machine*, web, www.lamachine.fr/compagnie-la-machine (last accessed 16 August 2017).

5 François Delarozière, interview with the author, 27 January 2012. See also François Delarozière, *Le Grand Répertoire: Machines de spectacle* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2003).

6 François Delarozière, interview with the author. Collaborator Pierre Orefice refers to the site as a 'permanent laboratory.' See Frédéric Brenon, 'Les Machines passent au vert,' *Presse Océan*, 10 February 2012.

7 See Laura Levin and Kim Solga, 'Building Utopia: Performance and the Fantasy of Urban Renewal in Contemporary Toronto,' *TDR: The Drama Review* 53.3 (2009): 37–53.

8 Frédérique de Gravelaine, *La Loire au centre* (La Mothe-Achard: Place Publique/SAMOA, 2009), 39.

9 Laurent Devisme, *Centralité émergente: la fonction miroir de l'Ile de Nantes*, report (Nantes: Laboratoire Architecture Usage Altérité, Ecole d'Architecture de Nantes, 2001), 75–6.

10 Marie-Paule Halgand and Jacques Guillaume, *Basse-Loire: une histoire industrielle* (Nantes: éditions MeMo, 2007), 65.

11 Devisme, *Centralité émergente: la fonction miroir de l'Ile de Nantes*.

12 André Peron, quoted in Amélie Nicolas, 'Des espaces aux trajectoires complexes: élus locaux et aménageurs en prise avec la question mémorielle sur l'Ile de Nantes,' in *Les friches à l'oeuvre #2: La mémoire de l'industrie textile dans le projet urbain: actes du colloque* (Villeurbanne: Le Rize, 2010), 15.

13 Gérard Gallerand, 'Il était une fois une île …' *Ouest France*, 3 March 2003.

14 Frédérique de Gravelaine, *A Nantes, la mutation d'une île* (La Mothe-Achard: Place Publique/SAMOA, 2009), 6. I do not believe that the distinct neighbourhoods of the Ile de Nantes have wildly divergent customs, but this is the word used by de Gravelaine.

15 Alexandre Chemetoff, *Le Plan-Guide (suites)* (Paris: Archibooks, 2010), 27.

16 Devisme, *Centralité émergente: la fonction miroir de l'Ile de Nantes*, 45.

17 See Pierre Durand, *Industrie et régions: l'aménagement industriel de la France*, second edition (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1974), 62, 125.

18 'Lancement, chez Dubigeon, de la drague "Pierre-Lefort,"' Histoire de la construction navale [archive], Médiathèque Jacques Demy, Nantes, 1985.

19 'Dubigeon à l'abandon,' Histoire de la construction navale [archive], Médiathèque Jacques Demy, Nantes, 1986.

20 Ibid.

21 'Lancement, chez Dubigeon, de la drague "Pierre-Lefort"'; 'Rétro sur 2000 ans de construction navale,' Histoire de la construction navale [archive], Médiathèque Jacques Demy, Nantes, 1987; 'Tout à coup la colère d'un homme a claqué,' Histoire de la construction navale [archive], Médiathèque Jacques Demy, Nantes, 1987.

22 D. Hervouet, 'Dubigeon et les ferrailleurs,' Histoire de la construction navale [archive], Médiathèque Jacques Demy, Nantes, 1989.

23 P. M., 'Que reste-t-il de Dubigeon?,' Histoire de la construction navale [archive], Médiathèque Jacques Demy, Nantes, 1990.

24 Valérie Forgeront, 'Le samedi des gars de la navale: le symbole d'une ville

ouvrière,' Histoire locale [archive], Médiathèque Jacques Demy, Nantes, 1990.

25 Cited in Claudine Colin Communication, 'Projet urbain de l'île de Nantes,' Claudine Colin Communication – Agence de communication culturelle, web, www.claudinecolin.com/fr/89-projet-urbain-de-l-ile-de-nantes (published 12 June 2008, last accessed 16 August 2017).

26 In the final scene, after Othello murders Desdemona and realizes the full, horrific consequences of his jealousy, the theatre company's production staff would open the building's roof to reveal the starry night sky. Director Hervé Tougeron stated that he wanted the heavens to gaze down upon Othello in judgement. See François Gauducheau, *Sur l'autre rive: des chantiers navals à* Othello (Paris: F. Productions, 1990), videocassette (VHS), 40 min.

27 Yasmine Tigoé, 'L'ancien Dubigeon: une renaissance,' *Ouest France*, 10–11 July 1999.

28 Quoted in Nicolas, 'Des espaces aux trajectoires complexes: élus locaux et aménageurs en prise avec la question mémorielle sur l'Île de Nantes,' 14.

29 'Rumeur de démolition,' *Presse Océan*, 9 November 1990.

30 The obvious exception to the 'small family business' model is Nantes' first modern shipyard, funded by Louis XIV's finance minister Colbert.

31 'Les historiens de la navale nantaise: toujours le vent en poupe,' Histoire locale [archive]. Médiathèque Jacques Demy, Nantes, 1986.

32 Marie-France Barrier, 'Chantiers Dubigeon: Le bâtiment en dur racontera l'histoire de la navale,' Histoire locale [archive]. Médiathèque Jacques Demy, Nantes, 1991.

33 See François Delarozière and Pierre Orefice, 'Les Machines de l'île de Nantes: étude pour l'implantation d'un équipement culturel et touristique,' project proposal (Nantes: MANAUS, 2003).

34 Ibid.

35 Quoted in Gaspard Norrito, 'A Nantes, l'éléphant géant remplace les bateaux,' *Ouest France*, 30 August 2007.

36 Ibid.

37 Stéphane Pajot, 'Les Nefs de l'île de Nantes, nouveau lieu de spectacle,' *Ouest France*, 13 September 2007.

38 See Tracy C. Davis, 'Theatrical Antecedents of the Mall That Ate Downtown,' *Journal of Popular Culture* 24.4 (1991): 1–15. See also Susan Bennett, 'Universal Experience: The City as Tourist Stage,' in Tracy C. Davis (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Performance Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 76–90.

39 See, for instance, Armelle de Valon, 'Machines de l'île, acte 1,' *Nantes Passion*, Summer 2007; and Noèle Biton, 'Les Machines de l'île: Press Pack,' Nantes Culture & Patrimoine, Nantes, 2009.

40 Quoted in Frédérique de Gravelaine, *La création prend ses quartiers* (La Mothe-Achard: Place Publique/SAMOA, 2011), 69–70.

41 François Delarozière, interview with the author, 2012.

42 Isabelle Labarre and Gaspard Norrito, 'Les Machines font travailler 63 entreprises,' *Ouest France*, 13 November 2006.

43 Guidet, 'Des Allumées au Quartier de la Création,' 8.

44 François Delarozière, interview with the author, 2012.

45 Daniel Guiho, 'Les Nefs de la Loire, appelées par erreur Nefs Dubigeon,' *Ouest France*, 18 August 2006.

46 de Gravelaine, *La création prend ses quartiers*, 78, 12.

47 Paul Ricoeur, 'Architecture et narrativité,' *Urbanisme* 303 (1998): 44–51.

48 Isabelle Labarre and Gaspard Norrito, 'Voyage dans le ventre des Machines de l'île,' *Ouest France*, 10 November 2006; Cédric Blondeel, 'La Raie Manta, une Machine d'exception,' *Presse Océan*, 30 January 2012; Stéphane Pajot, 'Machines de l'île: elles attirent les talents,' Dossiers des quartiers: Prairie-au-Duc [archive]. Médiathèque Jacques Demy, Nantes, 2007; Stéphane Pajot, 'Carroussel: le métal avant le bois,' *Presse Océan*, 6 February 2012.

49 Armelle de Valon, 'Un an de Machines de l'île,' *Nantes Passion*, Summer 2008, 25.

50 Ibid., 26.

51 Jacques Sayagh, 'Nefs Dubigeon: musique à donf en 2006,' *Ouest France*, 6 July 2004.

52 Jacques Sayagh, 'Un éléphant géant sur la Prairie-au-duc,' *Ouest France*, 18 June 2004.

53 In Chapter 2, I discussed, following Kristin Ross, how techniques and discourses of colonial administration were redeployed in rural France amidst the dismantling of French empire. I call this the scenario of development. In this chapter we see the redeployment of what Diana Taylor would call the scenario of discovery: visitors to the Machines de l'île (even local *Nantais*, provided they hail from north of the Loire) are invited to explore the mysterious island from atop an exotic mechanical elephant. The view from the elephant's back is a confident one. See Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*; and Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*.

54 Thierry Guidet and Michel Plassart, *Nantes saisie par la culture* (Paris: Editions Autrement, 2007), 48.

55 François Delarozière, interview with the author, 2012.

56 'Le Monde merveilleux des Machines de l'île,' *Nantes Métropole*, July/August 2007, 15.

57 Ibid.

58 Blondeel, 'La Raie Manta, une Machine d'exception,' 10.

59 Pajot, 'Machines de l'île: elles attirent les talents,' 29.

60 Pajot, 'Carroussel: le métal avant le bois,' 10.

61 Philippe Gambert, 'La Magie des Mondes Marins fonctionne à plein,' *Ouest France*, 4 August 2010.

62 Dominique Delauney, 'Les Coulisses d'un chantier naval: I. La construction d'un navire c'est de la couture industrielle,' *Ouest France*, 20 August 1982; Dominique Delauney, 'Les Coulisses d'un chantier naval: II. "Coque en

stock": un gigantesque puzzle,' Histoire de la construction navale [archive]. Médiathèque Jacques Demy, Nantes, 1982.

63 See Yves Rochcongar, *Des navires et des hommes: de Nantes à Saint-Nazaire, deux mille ans de construction navale* (Nantes: Editions Maison des hommes et des techniques, 1999); and Pierre Joseph and Jacques Rivet, *Interview de Jean Joret, traceur de coque* (Paris: Parenthèses, 2001).

64 Rochcongar, *Des navires et des hommes*, 138.

65 Franck Barrau, 'Dubigeon: "250 ans de chantiers navals,"' *Nantes Passion*, April 1990; Joseph and Rivet, *Interview de Jean Joret, traceur de coque*; 'Batisseurs de navires,' Histoire de la construction navale [archive]. Médiathèque Jacques Demy, Nantes, 1995; Gérard Tripoteau, 'La construction navale et son évolution industrielle (19e–20e siècle),' in Alain Croix (ed.), *Du sentiment de l'histoire dans une ville d'eau: Nantes* (Thonon-les-Bains: Editions l'Albaron, 1991), 257–76.

66 Guidet, 'Des Allumées au Quartier de la Création,' 9. Along similar lines, Richard Florida's concept of a single 'creative class' has drawn intense criticism in France for its thoroughly undemocratic and economically simplistic ascription of creativity to well-educated engineers, artists, designers, intellectuals, and – of course – the executives who profit from them. Florida counters that all people *are* creative, but that those who *harness* that creativity drive our current economy. However, this response does not solve Florida's problem, as it 1) merely echoes the staunchest supporters of neoliberalism in blaming the economically disenfranchised for their own precarity, and 2) blithely ignores the vast politico-financial disparity among various members of the so-called creative class. See Shannon Jackson, *Social Works*; and Levin and Solga, 'Building Utopia.'

67 Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*.

68 Société pour l'aménagement de la métropole ouest-atlantique (SAMOA), 'L'actualité du projet Ile de Nantes,' SAMOA (Nantes, 2007), 3.

69 Ibid.

70 de Valon, 'Machines de l'île, acte 1,' 23.

71 François Delarozière, interview with the author, 2012.

72 Visitors offer feedback in the form of blog posts, online photo albums, and online reviews, but the audiences for this feedback are other potential visitors and not the constructors themselves.

73 Françoise Dargent, 'Nantes se promène à dos d'éléphant géant,' Dossiers des quartiers: Prairie-au-Duc [archive]. Médiathèque Jacques Demy, Nantes, 2007.

74 Pierre Orefice, interview with the author, 9 January 2012.

75 François Delarozière, interview with the author, 2012.

76 Frédérique de Gravelaine, *Le temps du projet* (La Mothe-Achard: Place Publique/SAMOA, 2010), 11.

77 François Delarozière, interview with the author, 2012.

78 Chemetoff, *Le Plan-Guide (suites)*, 71.

5

Recuperation: alternative pasts, sustainable futures

It is 2015, and I am standing in a garden. I approach the metal plant with caution. Its roots and vines, a dense thicket of pipes, curve and curl across 12 square metres of grass. Scrap metal flowers, larger than human heads, their petals open, rise above the elegant arabesque (see figure 5.1). Stepping towards the structure I trigger its self-defence mechanism: a kind of sonic warfare. The quiet of the garden is broken by a low hum, insect-like, but unmistakeably electronic. I draw nearer, and the drone becomes a whine. I slow my approach but continue, tentatively extending feet and hands to test the structure's range. The plant now emits beeps and whistles, atonal arpeggios, flurries of sonic, electronic activity. I move closer still and the sound intensifies, rising in pitch, quickening in tempo, and darkening in tone. I withdraw. The noise calms and subsides to nothing, leaving only the ambient sounds of the cloistered garden. Leaves rustle in the breeze. From beyond the garden walls I hear the faint sound of music and milling crowds: the buzz of the annual street theatre festival at Chalon-sur-Saône. As part of that festival, multimedia artist Fabrice Giraud and arts collective Zo Prod have installed this interactive sculpture, *Le murmure des plantes 2.0* (*The whisper of plants 2.0*, first created in 2013), in the Jardin de l'Arquebuse.

Giraud's installation is not the first industrial vegetation to spring up at a French street theatre festival. Whereas *Le murmure des plantes 2.0* consists of a single, physically immobile sculpture, Compagnie Fer

Figure 5.1 Fabrice Giraud, *Le murmure des plantes 2.0*, 2015.

à Coudre's *Eclosion floraferrique* (*Floraferrous spawning*, first created in 2010) invites the spectator to explore an environment full of numerous mechanical plants, several of which move in response to human presence.[1] With their metallic bodies curved into sensuous, organic structures, the sculptures of *Eclosion floraferrique* are close cousins of Hector Guimard's Art Nouveau designs for the Paris Métro, and like those designs they signal a fantastical, ornamental transformation of common elements of public space. The components of *Eclosion floraferrique* include street lamps, a bench, a fountain, and flowers, all of which fuse industrial materials and vegetal forms. Oil blossoms (*les fleurs d'huile*) grow on spindly tendrils from the dregs of an apparent spill, the offending barrels still overturned nearby. At the end of each shoot sits a single, partially lidded eye, surrounded by golden petals and leaves. The flowers appear to look around them, as if searching for the cause of the pollution from which they have sprung. Braided metal creeping vines (*les lianes de métal*) wind around the branches of trees; their balloon-sized, pustular buds glow orange and cast eerie shadows as dusk darkens. If evening temperatures drop, visitors might gather around the fire blossoms (*les fleurs de feu*), mammoth metal flowers, reminiscent of pterodactyls' wings, emerging from a fire pit. An array of pipes (*les tuyaux*) gives the impression that the area's subterranean infrastructure has sprouted above the soil, extending, rhizomatically, of its own accord. Sounds emanating from the pipes, together with occasional puffs of

steam, suggest that the activity continues, unseen, somewhere beneath the grass. The fountain (*la fontaine*) resembles a mechanical mangrove tree, its roots a thick tangle of cables and rope spilling out of a basin of glowing green water. The water is drawn up and expelled into an elaborate network of metal pistils, which pivot and bend on mechanical arms to pour the water onto the lower tiers. The fountain's largest tier, a luminous gold, has the look of a Tiffany ceiling lamp, with rust-red veins in place of floral patterns.

The environment seems alive and alien, and other sculptures heighten this effect by responding to visitors' weight or movement. In front of the street lamps (*les lampadaires*) visitors cross a platform that acts as a balance scale; the drooping floral lamps lift their heads to follow passers-by as they move from one end of the platform to the other. The imposing carnivorous plants (*les plantes carnivores*), with nails for thorns, remain still until spectators stray too near, at which point their leaf blades turn to loom like monstrous heads over the unsuspecting interlopers. Sitting on the lovers' bench (*le banc des amoureux*) causes two reticulated metal spines on either side of the bench to arc inward, forming the shape of a heart. The seat itself shares the curvature of human lips or a waxed moustache, and the surrounding metalwork suggests male and female genitalia. (The sculptures have inherited Art Nouveau's ornamentation, and also its languid eroticism. As one reporter delicately notes, 'less prudish souls will recognise, embedded in [the bench's] backrest, forms evocative of the pleasure of games for two.')[2] The speed and quality of the sculptures' movement depend on how visitors interact with them. When spectators tread lightly, the towering metal stems of the lamps and the bench bend toward them gently, as if curious; less careful spectators cause the sculptures to jerk aggressively.

In this concluding chapter I approach these two installations, Giraud's *Le murmure des plantes 2.0* and Fer à Coudre's *Eclosion floraferrique*, because they exemplify contemporary French street theatre's production of postindustrial space.[3] Neither is attached to a specific urban or regional redevelopment project, but through their aesthetics, their work on space and time, and the mode of spectatorship they foster, they create the complex 'after but not over' of the postindustrial. Both projects are interactive scenographies that shape salvaged industrial materials into vegetal forms. Both invite spectatorial participation even as they produce a double temporality that complicates the call to action. In this discussion, I pick out once more the threads braided together at the end of the first chapter: street theatre's invocation of industrial and pre-industrial pasts (its temporal work), its play on the boundaries between performer and spectator (its spatial work), and the questions of agency

and efficacy (its political work). If, as I argued in Chapter 1, Théâtre de l'Unité's *2CV Théâtre* and Générik Vapeur's *Bivouac* staged failed escapes from the harmful effects of industrialization and modernization, then the attempts of *Le murmure des plantes 2.0* and *Eclosion floraferrique* appear to be more successful: alternative pasts that have spawned more sustainable futures. But the success is not (entirely) ours to claim.

Act now, because it's too late

Press coverage, interviews, and artists' statements for both installations make much of their interactive character. In a 2010 interview, Manuel Charnay, co-founder of Fer à Coudre, explains that, without the spectator, *Eclosion floraferrique* 'remains inanimate'; the interviewer thus claims that the installation 'render[s] the public an actor.'[4] In her 2012 review of the installation, journalist Ariane Servain describes a walk amongst the sculptures of *Eclosion floraferrique* as a 'stroll during which the rambler is himself [an] actor.'[5] According to the artistic prospectus for the project, the spectator 'becomes the indispensable actor to bring this mysterious world to life.'[6] And, in our 2017 conversation, Fer à Coudre co-founder Hugo Dubus simply stated that, without the actions of the spectator, nothing happens.[7] The same language of animation and participation used by reviewers and artists to describe *Eclosion floraferrique* also appears in Giraud's statements on *Le murmure des plantes 2.0*: 'The slightest movement gives life to the material. […] The walker-spectator becomes an actor of the installation. An experience in which movement is essential and in which nothing happens if there is no interaction.'[8] So far, so familiar: such claims to spectatorial activity echo the rhetoric of participation that has long pervaded political theatre, immersive theatre, relational or 'social' practice, and minimalist and installation art.[9] More significant than the mere existence of the claim is the situation from which the invitation is made and the circumstances under which one might accept. Who – and *what* – is acting, how, *when*, and to what end? In what follows I establish, first, the complex interplay of human and non-human agency that emerges from encounters with these installations, and second, the double temporality that makes the installations so exemplary of the production of postindustrial space.

In its initial incarnation, the participatory aesthetic of *Eclosion floraferrique* was intelligible as part of a localized conservation effort. Fer à

Coudre first installed *Eclosion floraferrique* in the Murs à pêches (Peach Walls), an area of the founders' native Montreuil most famous as an orchard that thrived from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. The *espalier* technique, by which trees are trained to grow against walls, protected the plants from early spring frosts; peach varieties that would normally survive only in southern climes flourished in Montreuil.[10] By 1870, at the orchard's peak, 600 labyrinthine kilometres of peach walls were producing over fifteen million peaches annually. In subsequent years, the extension of the railway and the ensuing industrialization of Montreuil led to the orchard's decline, and over the course of the twentieth century City Hall permitted an auto garage, junkyards, and other polluting enterprises to occupy and transform parcels of the orchard's green space. At the time of writing only 37 hectares of orchard remain, and the Ministry of Ecology protects just over eight of those. Many of the remaining walls (17 kilometres of the original 600) are in disrepair. Nevertheless, the fruit persists.

Granted use of 800 square metres within the Murs à pêches (including the building formerly occupied by the auto garage), Fer à Coudre co-founders Charnay, Dubus, and Sophie Belotte were impressed by the resilience of the area's plant life. They decided, in Dubus's words, to 'recount, via the realisation of iron structures, the regeneration of this earth fertilised by industrial waste.'[11] The debut of *Eclosion floraferrique*, Fer à Coudre's first creation, coincided with the 2010 Festival Murs à pêches, an annual event that promotes the maintenance and preservation of the site by encouraging its appropriation by locals as public green space. As I have demonstrated in the preceding case studies, preservation efforts tend to expand symbolic ownership of a site; this holds true for green space as well as for buildings. The Festival Murs à pêches established the area as one worth using and therefore one worth salvaging. The participation invited by *Eclosion floraferrique* reinforced the festival's advocacy of environmental conservation for the purpose of human enjoyment (or its strategic use of human enjoyment as motivation for environmental conservation). By her walking, jumping, or sitting, the spectator causes the sculptures to move; her actions have impact. The sculptures do not move without the spectator's intervention. Thus the spectator's actions appear not only consequential, but also necessary. As Charnay explains, 'in order to get things moving, it is necessary to get involved in [*s'impliquer dans*] the movement. A message that the individual can connect to their own life. In order for things to move, one must activate the gears.'[12] According to this formulation, the spectator is supposed to translate simple physical actions and their effects into ecological activism.

Ultimately, however, encounters with *Eclosion floraferrique* (and with *Le murmure des plantes 2.0*) suggest a more complex, distributed model of human and non-human agency. For one, some of the sculptures appear to defend themselves against human interference. The imposing carnivorous plants give the impression that they might devour those who venture too close. Even the more innocuous lamps seem poised to protect their territory as they track the movements of passers-by. Although the metal plant of *Le murmure des plantes 2.0* does not itself move, it does respond defensively to the actions of spectators. The artistic prospectus for the installation describes the responsive soundscape as a 'self-defence mechanism against a potential enemy.'[13] While human action is entirely necessary to the installation, it is also treated as dangerous threat – and the sculptures pose threats of their own.

The presence of the artists further troubles the relationship between human subject and art object. Dubus recalls that the initial months of *Eclosion floraferrique* proved to be a stress test of the sculptures, which kept breaking under the strain of repeated (and encouraged) tapping, drumming, and climbing by spectators.[14] Dubus and the other Fer à Coudre artists had to insert themselves into the encounter as caretakers of the garden so that they could mend their creations when necessary. They did not draw focus from the sculptures. They were not playing characters or delivering lines, though they did improvise material when addressed by spectators. They appeared as support staff to the animate matter of the metallic plants. Giraud appears alongside *Le murmure des plantes 2.0* as well, though his role is less clear. When I visited the installation in 2015, Giraud was seated on the grass several metres from the sculpture, and he might or might not have been operating a piece of sound equipment inside a metal case. He did not conceal his labour; he sat on the grass for all to see. But his specific actions remained a mystery. That I did not approach him to see what, exactly, he was *doing* was the result of years of behavioural conditioning (only some of which occurred at the theatre). 'I mustn't bother him,' I thought. 'He's *working*.' How he was working, I could not tell. He appeared to me as still as the sculpture itself, and as busy. The artistic prospectus and official website for the project offer clues to Giraud's activity, but more significant to my analysis here is the uncertainty, even undecidability of human activity in the moment of the encounter. I did not know who or what was producing the otherworldly soundscape. Was Giraud doing all of the work: monitoring my movements, creating a track in real time, and playing it through the speakers hidden amongst the metal root system? Was he amplifying, distorting, and looping sounds produced by my interaction with the sculpture? Or was he simply making sure that no

one absconded with pieces of his project? I knew only that I was engaged in some form of three-way interaction connecting me, the spectator, to artist and performing object.

If street theatre claims a space as public, or somehow reanimates public space (see Chapter 1), these installations raise questions about who (or what) constitutes that public and who (or what) does the work of reanimation. To accept the conceit of these projects is to accept that the role of human agents, be they visitors or the artists themselves, remains uncertain and fragmentary. Agency is distributed. At most, human agents form part of what Jane Bennett would call an 'onto-logically heterogeneous public': an assemblage of differently empowered actants, human and non-human, that affect their environment and each other, consciously or otherwise.[15] Human visitors act *with* these installa-tions rather than *on* them: the matter is not inert.

For Charnay, *Eclosion floraferrique* in its original setting evoked and reconciled the agricultural and industrial pasts of the Murs à pêches.[16] This fusion of the agricultural and the industrial appears a more suc-cessful reconciliation than that depicted by Générik Vapeur in *Bivouac* (Chapter 1). In that performance, the blue-painted performers' strenu-ous efforts to herd oil drums as though they were sheep seemed a fruit-less endeavour, comic and pathetic even in its aggression. As I argued in Chapter 1, *Bivouac* staged the impossibility of a return to a distant agrarian past as refuge from a more recent industrial past. In *Eclosion floraferrique*, the union of agricultural and industrial pasts is a fertile one, but the merger does not seem to be the product of human design. In the Murs à pêches, especially, the visual aesthetics of hearty plant life atop crumbling walls create both agential and temporal confusion: the peach walls appear less as an intentionally planted orchard in need of maintenance and more as an overgrown ruin, reclaimed by flora in the absence of human intervention.

I have argued throughout this book that street theatre produces postin-dustrial space. Here, the postindustrial is not the product of confident human redevelopment but the otherworldly outcome of the evolution of plants. Charnay might see the participatory *Eclosion floraferrique* as a call to action, but that action occurs as a response to metallic flora that have already acted, seemingly, on their own. Spectatorial participation would thus constitute interference in an ongoing process of mechano-vegetal evolution. Both installations share the fictional premise that the mechanical plants have sprouted of their own accord. According to Dubus, it should be apparent to spectators of *Eclosion floraferrique* that the vegetation has taken possession of industrial space and industrial materials, rather than the reverse.[17] The same holds true for *Le murmure*

des plantes 2.0: the artistic prospectus proposes that the plant is 'using ferrous material to find a new form, like a parasite.'[18] Fer à Coudre and Giraud constructed their respective sculptures from recuperated materials, but the sculptures give the impression that plants have done the recuperating: they have recuperated scrap metal, chemicals, and other remnants of human activity (transitive recuperation), and they have recuperated from human-inflicted pollution (the intransitive recuperation of healing).[19] They have not only adapted *to* their environment; they have adapted their environment to them.

When did this adaptation happen, or when will it have happened? The conceit of the installations indicates their double temporality. The installations conjure a distant future after the disappearance of humans from the earth. As Dubus explained in our 2017 conversation (switching, unprompted, to the future perfect), 'All the pollution we will have left, we will have given birth to new plants that are on the frontiers of robotics.'[20] On an early crowd-funding page for *Le murmure des plantes*, Giraud suggests that his project is a vision of a future form that nature might take in order to reclaim its rights.[21] Humans will have died; plants will have somehow adapted and survived, bending our industrial residues to their will. Yet the encounter with the installations necessarily unfolds in the present moment and consists of interaction between machines and humans who are definitively not yet dead. The encounter thus also suggests an alternative past. Something must have happened already to explain the existence of this flora in the present. The artistic prospectus for *Eclosion floraferrique* describes that alternative past as one in which 'the earth was not polluted, but fertilized by industry.'[22] In early iterations of *Eclosion floraferrique*, the Fer à Coudre artists improvised stories to that effect, inventing a factory that had once stood on the site of the installation and explaining to spectators that these mysterious organic structures had grown from its ruins. If working memory conjugates experience in the two tenses of present perfect continuous and future perfect (see Introduction), encounters with these installations, too, occur in doubled time.

By situating spectators in a distant future, the installations might offer the same comforts as the afterlife or post-apocalyptic cinema: the fantasy, first, that all will continue, and second, that we will be around to witness what happens after we have ended. But the necessity of the alternative past dispels such illusions. Without an alternative past, the strange evolution of these plants could not, will not have happened. And the past that must be 'alternative' – the past that must be or have been made otherwise in order for this future to occur or have occurred – is our present moment. The future's past is now.

Eclosion floraferrique and *Le murmure des plantes 2.0* issue calls to action from a set of spatial and temporal coordinates in which it is already too late. This is 'enlightened doomsaying': to borrow from Jean-Pierre Dupuy, a 'ruse' that 'invites us to make an imaginative leap, to place ourselves by an act of mental projection in the moment following a future catastrophe and then, looking back toward the present time, to see catastrophe as our *fate* – only a fate that we may yet choose to avoid.'[23] For Dupuy, 'to believe in fate is to prevent it from happening.'[24] (This is why he views both theological thinking and post-apocalyptic cinema as offering more than comforting fantasy.) The spectator of *Eclosion floraferrique* and *Le murmure des plantes 2.0* does not necessarily hope to avoid the future projected by the installations; after all, the environment is a fantastical one in which flora thrive and humans experience sensory pleasure. But the alternative past is so fanciful and demonstrably false – industry *has* polluted the earth – that the projected future remains an obvious fiction. We must act with, and we must act now: not before it's too late, but because, in the doubled time of these installations, it already is.

Working memory, again

I have argued in this book that working memory operates performatively and theatrically. It operates *performatively* through the circulating discourse of redevelopment proposals, communications campaigns, news reports, and promotional materials, which establish horizons of expectation and frameworks for interpretation; and through the embodied performances of (in this case) street theatre practitioners: their gestures, movements, and multisensory aesthetics.[25] The artists discussed in this book do not 'play' industrial workers; they are not historical re-enactors in so strict a sense. Neither are they surrogates: the industrial workers they have apparently re- or dis-placed are, as Stéphane Bonnard reminds us in the epigraph to this book, 'still here.' Nonetheless, in their occupation of industrial spaces – spaces that resonate once again with the buzz, whine, clank, and clamour of machinery – these artists embody the accumulation of labour, the simultaneous persistence and transformation of repertoires, the emergence of the ostensibly or actually new from the recombination of extant behaviours and tropes. Their performances entail the recuperation of industrial products, by-products, and spaces, but also of bodies, gestures, symbols, practices, and techniques.

I argue that working memory operates *theatrically* because of the modes of spatial and temporal perception required to produce the postindustrial. Theatrical space is characterized by the interplay of actuality and virtuality, the real and imagined, the present and the projected. The case studies in the preceding chapters have demonstrated how converted industrial sites must – for a time, at least – remain intelligible as what they once were while becoming intelligible as something else. The 2CV theatre (Chapter 1) illustrates this on the smallest of scales: the vehicle must be recognizable as both 2CV and theatre for the performance to work. This is how all sited performances function, but that function is also fundamental to a process like redevelopment. The local television news report on the conversion of Corbigny's Photosacs factory (Chapter 2) proposed that the building was once again a 'site of production,' but that the nature of that production had changed, as if the factory had simply transitioned from manufacturing camera cases to manufacturing art. The Carré de Soie shopping centre (Chapter 3) failed as a flagship project for the redevelopment of Greater Lyon's eastern belt because it created the impression that the Altarea developers were ignoring the area's history and installing generic, suburban retail outlets. Defenders of Nantes' Machines de l'île project (Chapter 4) maintained that the fantastical mechanical animals emerged from the 'same universe' as the ships once launched from the island's shores, a connection sustained by the persistence of industrial techniques, the presence of workers' bodies, and the material traces of naval construction. The dual intelligibility of these converted sites – their fundamentally theatrical spatial doubleness – is made possible in part by the discourse circulating around street theatre institutions, which creates and recreates a public, and by the embodied repertoires and aesthetics of street theatre events, which make sense to, for, and with an audience.

Discursive and embodied connections between a site's past and present make the repurposing intelligible, perhaps even – if one accepts the validity of the connection – justifiable, but this does not mean that the site's past life is recalled in sharp detail. In the act of commemoration, specific industries might become subsumed within the generic 'industrial.' The labour of Photosacs employees bore little resemblance to the mining and metallurgy occurring elsewhere in the Nièvre, though it is these other forms of work that are evoked by the images, sounds, and gestures of Metalovoice's performances. Despite the new neighbourhood's name, the factories in what is now the Carré de Soie had more in common with the chemical industry than with the silk weaving of northern Lyon. Although former shipyard workers in Nantes

remember camaraderie and creative input as well the physical hardship of their employment, press reports and redevelopment literature on the Ile de Nantes project present La Machine's collaborative-yet-independent labour organization as a radical departure from industries past. Working memory plays tricks. One of my tasks here has been to determine what those tricks are, how they operate, and what (or whose) purpose they serve. This might be the task of street theatre, too: the performances of Théâtre de l'Unité and Générik Vapeur mount compelling challenges to simple nostalgia, instead interrogating the desire to return to a pre-industrial past, and the imaginary archaeology of KompleXKapharnaüM stages the assembly, distortion, or even wholesale invention of local memory. Street theatre – and theatre more generally – can *do* historiography.

Postindustrial space is also reconnected space. In Corbigny, Greater Lyon, and Nantes, public officials and their private partners have worked to reconfigure their towns' internal spatial dynamics and to reorient those towns within trans-local networks. The conversion of Photosacs into La Transverse, together with the repurposing of the Saint-Leonard Abbey as an arts and community centre, has established Corbigny as a rural cultural attraction and linked the town to others within new chains of production and consumption. The Carré de Soie project has created a new density of activity stretching across the border between Villeurbanne and Vaulx-en-Velin in an attempt to remake the area as a coherent eastern hub for the Greater Lyon agglomeration. This project is a key component of Greater Lyon's broader urban strategy, which positions the metropolitan area as the central node of a transnational European network. In Nantes, the Ile de Nantes redevelopment is shifting the city's economic and cultural centre of gravity from north of the Loire to the river itself. As in Lyon, the ultimate goal is to bypass Paris and establish the city as a European metropolis in its own right: for Nantes, this entails reframing the city as the continent's key Atlantic gateway. The production of postindustrial space, then, entails not only the repurposing of individual factory sites (the micro), but also the reimagination and reworking of spatial scales and networks (the macro). Both of these processes are theatrical insofar as they require the coexistence of a space that *is* and a space that *was*, a space that *is* and a space that *might be*, or a space that is tangibly there and other spaces that are not. This is the kind of spatial perception demanded of a theatre audience, who are able to perceive the material reality of the stage, the conjured space of the fiction (what Marvin Carlson calls 'iconic space'), *and* those sites not represented onstage but otherwise alluded to (what Carlson calls

'indexical space').[26] Theatrical space is able to make vast geographic networks coherent and intelligible.[27]

The spatial networks created during street theatre events do not, however, necessarily align with the networks of redevelopment or, more broadly, of globalized late capitalism. Metalovoice, for instance, used *Virée(s) vers l'est* to link Corbigny to other, more obviously industrial towns in the Nièvre, and to the more distant locales to which industry has relocated. With *Bivouac*, Générik Vapeur facilitated the imagination of a globalized network of industrial waste disposal precisely in order to critique that network and the power dynamics that produce some human beings *as* waste. When I claim that processes such as deindustrialization and redevelopment require a theatrical approach to space, I do not mean to suggest that street theatre companies caught up in those processes share the goals of developers, or that they are unwitting pawns incapable of deviating from the master strategies of municipal governments and their corporate allies. Municipal governments in France do encourage street theatre production as part of their redevelopment strategies. But my purpose in this book has not been to accuse street theatre companies of complicity. (Too often, scholars wield the word 'complicit' as a hatchet; wholesale dismissal of 'complicit' artists or companies then becomes proof of the scholar's own ideological purity.) Rather, I have attempted to demonstrate how, even as street theatre institutions participate in the processes of deindustrialization and redevelopment, street theatre events make those processes intelligible. To make a process intelligible is a necessary precondition of its smooth unfolding, but also of critique.

The transformation of space takes (and makes) time. Theatrical events punctuate the *longue durée* of redevelopment. The first iterations of the street theatre festival in Corbigny – after the relocation of Metalovoice to the town, but before the completion of the Photosacs factory conversion – laid the groundwork for the eventual opening of La Transverse. The opening of each new section of the Sentier Pédestre Périphérique provided an opportunity for residents of the Carré de Soie to take stock of the ongoing transformation (or invention) of their neighbourhood. Inaugural events for the Great Elephant, the Marine Worlds Carousel, and (eventually) the other Machines de l'île instil confidence in an urban and cultural project that, at the time of writing, has already stretched over a decade, while seasonal festivals beneath the Naves bind the project to the more familiar rhythms of the calendar. Street theatre festivals do now what they have always done: keep the cyclical time of the year. When street theatre keeps that time as part of a redevelopment project, it makes the ongoing process of redevelopment intelligible as an event.

In their performances, the street theatre companies discussed in this book have engaged in temporal play that has established a set of complex (if provisional) links between past and present. *2CV Théâtre* and *Bivouac* staged encounters with the residual products and by-products of industrial modernity in shows of complex, critical nostalgia. The inauguration of La Transverse linked local history to planetary movement via the performers' own family backgrounds. The archaeological excavations of *PlayRec* and the *Sentier Pédestre Périphérique* unearthed – not for the first time – real or fabricated artefacts of real or fabricated pasts, staging the interpretation, invention, distortion, and repurposing of the past in and for the present moment. The Machines de l'île project flattens history, creating a sense of simultaneity even as its proponents insist on the inheritance over time of industrial repertoires. *Le murmure des plantes 2.0* and *Eclosion floraferrique* situate their spectators in both a distant future and a present moment resulting from an alternative past. All of these performances operate via continuities and discontinuities, and via the repurposing of materials, objects, bodies, sounds, gestures, stories, images, or names. By bringing back something from the past, and by the very nature of their event-ness, these performances project an ending: soon, something will have happened.

I insist that working memory operates theatrically and performatively, not because it is pleasing to see one's own disciplinary specialism at the heart of all phenomena (though that is enjoyable and perhaps inevitable), but because working memory relies on a complex interplay of continuity and rupture, persistence and ephemerality. Theatre and performance scholarship has tended to emphasize one or the other, but the debate ultimately demonstrates how practices can disappear and linger at the same time.[28] These are the strange logics necessary to the production of postindustrial space.

Postscript: at the time of writing

I did not consciously decide to begin each of the five chapters of this book with dates. I confess I noticed them there – 1973, 2011 and 1961, 2012, 1987 and 2007, 2015 – embarrassingly late in the process of revising the manuscript. Perhaps this is the distinction that I drew in Chapter 2 between foreshadowing ('I have a plan') and reincorporation ('why yes, that was my plan all along'). Returning to these openings now, I interpret them as attempts to account for the changes still

occurring in the areas under consideration: the Carré de Soie and Ile de Nantes described in this book, for instance, are not quite the sites one would find on a return visit. The work continues. Contemporary, ongoing processes such as urban redevelopment outpace our efforts to analyse them in writing, especially when one writes as slowly as I do. Thus the dates at the start of each chapter serve as reminders that this is a book of history, however recent that history might be. They locate the reader and myself, offering us both a set of coordinates so that we might understand our place (and time) in an unfolding situation. In that sense, they are logical introductions to the street theatre projects explored in the book.

To produce postindustrial space is to posit an endpoint at which the past will be laid to rest, but that endpoint is illusory: the same production process ensures that the past remains present. This is the 'after but not over' of the postindustrial and of this postscript. A postscript implies that the script is finished and yet somehow incomplete. The text is over, but on it goes. Now I, too, grasp at an ending, a full stop, a clean break between this project and what comes next. Still the process unfolds. I pick up dangling threads, and I keep them for later. There is always more work where that came from.

Notes

1 *Floraferrique* is a neologism that combines 'floral' with 'iron,' hence its rough translation as 'floraferrous.' The original French has the advantage of evoking *féerique*: 'fairy-like,' and also the designation for certain fantastical spectacles of the nineteenth century.

2 E. B., 'Eclosion floraferrique: quand l'industrie féconde la terre,' *Journal de Saône-et-Loire* 19 July 2012: 11. The seat calls to mind Salvador Dali's *Lips Sofa* (1936–37), inspired by Mae West and itself a response to Art Nouveau. See Elizabeth E. Guffey, *Retro: The Culture of Revival* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 37–9.

3 Installation art has become a regular feature of French street theatre festivals such as those in Chalon-sur-Saône and Aurillac. The prevalence of installation has contributed to the preferential use of the term street *arts* over street *theatre*. But, as I noted in the introduction, I retain the term 'street theatre' to bring to the fore the peculiar spatiality and temporality of these public arts projects. I treat the encounter with the installation as a theatrical event. I am hardly alone in insisting on the theatricality of installation. The durational situation of the encounter between art object and onlooker has been the subject of critical debate at least since Michael Fried penned his notorious 1967 essay 'Art and Objecthood.' See Michael Fried, 'Art and Objecthood,' in *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago

Press, 1998), 148–72. Fried, of course, hurled the words theatre and theatricality at minimalist art as though they were scathing epithets. His essay (now an easy punching bag) is over-cited, and I already regret bringing it up. Claire Bishop and Shannon Jackson have done the more important work of bringing together the genealogies and critical frameworks of the visual and performing arts. See Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012); and Shannon Jackson, 'When "Everything Counts": Experimental Performance and Performance Historiography,' in Charlotte M. Canning and Thomas Postlewait (eds), *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010), 240–60. In the case of *Eclosion floraferrique* and *Le murmure des plantes 2.0*, I can also claim to follow the lead of the artists themselves, who refer to their projects as 'scenographies' and even 'shows.'

4   Anne Locqueneaux, 'Amélie et Manuel relèvent le défi,' *Tous Montreuil* no. 39 (20 July – 13 September 2010).

5   Ariane Servain, 'Une nuit à floraferrie,' *Tous Montreuil* no. 82 (25 September – 8 October 2012).

6   Compagnie Fer à Coudre, 'Eclosion floraferrique,' artistic prospectus, 3.

7   Hugo Dubus, interview with the author, 18 October 2017.

8   Zo Prod, *The Whisper of Plants*, web, www.zoprod.com/en/creations/archives/the-whisper-of-plants/ (last accessed 30 August 2018). Curiously, this text appears on the English-language version of Zo Prod's official website and not on the French version. The French-language crowd-funding page for the project, however, does claim that the spectator becomes an actor. See Fabrice Giraud, *Le murmure des plantes*, web, https://fr.ulule.com/murmure/ (created December 2012, last accessed November 2017).

9   The nature of that participation varies from one practice to the next, and the politics of participation are (of course) contested. See Bishop, *Artificial Hells*; Claire Bishop, ed., *Participation* (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2006); Grant Kester, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator* (London: Verso, 2011); and Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

10 The horticultural innovation caught the attention of Louis XIV, who reserved the peaches of Montreuil for consumption at his court. The peaches' royal reputation continued into the nineteenth century, when they became popular with Emperor Napoleon III and with Russian nobility.

11 Servain, 'Une nuit à floraferrie.'

12 Locqueneaux, 'Amélie et Manuel relèvent le défi.'

13 Zo Prod, 'Le murmure des plantes 2.0,' artistic prospectus, 3.

14 Hugo Dubus, interview with the author, 18 October 2017.

15 Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 108.

16 Locqueneaux, 'Amélie et Manuel relèvent le défi.'

17 Hugo Dubus, interview with the author, 18 October 2017.

18 Zo Prod, 'Le murmure des plantes 2.0,' artistic prospectus, 3.

19 Recuperation is a key art-making technique and ethical practice for Fer à Coudre and the Zo Prod collective. Both organizations have offered workshops in salvaging and sculpting with found material.

20 Hugo Dubus, interview with the author, 18 October 2017.

21 Giraud, *Le murmure des plantes*, web.

22 Compagnie Fer à Coudre, 'Eclosion floraferrique,' artistic prospectus, 2.

23 Jean-Pierre Dupuy, *The Mark of the Sacred*, trans. M. B. Debevoise (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013 [2008]), 32–3.

24 Ibid., 32.

25 By grouping street theatre performances with circulating discourse as part of the performative operations of working memory, I do not mean to use *performative* as the adjectival form of *performance*. Rather, I am claiming that, in performance, the street theatre practitioners discussed in this book performatively construct particular relationships or links between past and present uses of space and between different modes of labour.

26 Marvin Carlson, 'Space and Theatre History,' in Charlotte M. Canning and Thomas Postlewait (eds), *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010), 195–214. I realize, of course, that I am referring to the physical reality of the 'stage' in a book about street theatre. I am using the space of a purpose-built proscenium theatre as a convenient exemplar of how theatrical space works. During a street theatre performance, the audience is aware of the material reality of the street (whatever form that takes), in addition to the iconic and indexical spaces described by Carlson.

27 Edward Ziter, for instance, has demonstrated how Victorian stage melodramas transformed the vastness of the British Empire into easily comprehended theatrical landscapes, making geographically remote locales intelligible as a 'periphery' bound to the 'centre' of London. See Edward Ziter, 'Staging the Geographic Imagination: Imperial Melodrama and the Domestication of the Exotic,' in Elinor Fuchs and Una Chaudhuri (eds), *Land/Scape/Theater* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 189–208.

28 Peggy Phelan's *Unmarked* remains the most prominent exploration of performance's tendency to vanish. See Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993). Advocates of performance's tendency to remain include Jacky Bratton, Marvin Carlson, Tracy Davis, Rebecca Schneider, and Diana Taylor (though these scholars hold differing views on what remains, where, and how). See Jacky Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001); Tracy Davis, 'Nineteenth-Century Repertoire,' *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film* 36.2 (2009): 6–28;

Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (London: Routledge, 2011); and Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

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