

Performing (for) Survival

Theatre, Crisis, Extremity

Edited by

Patrick Duggan

and

Lisa Peschel



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and Lisa Peschel 2016
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Contributors

Editors

Patrick Duggan is senior lecturer in theatre and performance at the University of Surrey. Patrick's research interests lie in critical approaches to contemporary performance and the relationship between performance and the wider socio-cultural and political contexts in which it is made. His research is interdisciplinary in nature and particularly focused on questions of spectatorship, witnessing, trauma and ethics. As well as publishing numerous journal articles and book chapters, Patrick is author of *Trauma-Tragedy: Symptoms of Contemporary Performance* (2012) and co-editor (with Prof. Mick Wallis) of a special issue of the international journal *Performance Research* entitled *On Trauma* (2011). He is series editor of Intellect's *playtexts* and co-editor of *Reverberations Across Small-Scale British Theatre: Politics, Aesthetics and Forms* (2013).

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Contributors

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Alice Mukaka is a PhD candidate in the School of Law and Social Sciences at the University of East London (UEL), currently researching feminist activism for migrant rights. Her research interests developed through years of experience as an arts practitioner include the intersection between performance and politics, rights in exile, and feminist activism. Past performance credits include Koulsy Lamko's production *Corps et Voix, Paroles Rhizomes* and *Le Petit Lion Couché*, which toured Rwanda, France, Germany and Belgium; Kalisa Rugano's play *Rugali Rwa Gasabo*; Jean Marie Rurangwa's feminist production *Pour Vous Femmes*; and a choreographic collaboration in the CUA's *Iryo Nabonye* and *Des Espoirs*.

Amanda Stuart Fisher is a reader in contemporary theatre and performance at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, London. Her research area broadly covers verbatim and testimonial theatre, witnessing and performance, and the dramaturgy of trauma. She has published articles in *TDR*, *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, and *Performance Research*. Most recently she co-edited (with Dr Alison Forsyth, Aberystwyth) a special issue for *Performing Ethos* entitled 'Acting Out Trauma and the Ethics of Remembrance' (2013). She is also engaged in

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Cariad Astles is a lecturer at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, where she convenes the BA (Hons) puppetry course within the theatre practice programme and is director of the Centre for Research into Objects and Puppets in Performance. She has practical and research interests in international puppetry traditions, national identity, popular performance and applied theatre. She is also lecturer at the University of Exeter where she lectures in Latin American theatre, theatre and health, puppetry and applied performance, and has published widely in the areas above. She works regularly as a performing puppeteer with the Catalan group *Irènia*, which won the United Nations Innovation Award for Intercultural Practice in 2012.

Macelle Mahala is associate professor in theatre arts at the University of the Pacific. She writes about the intersection of theatre, race and social justice. She is the author of *Penumbra: The Premier Stage for African American Drama* (2013). Her writing has also been published in *Theatre Journal*, *Theatre Topics*, *Women & Performance* and *XCP: Cross Cultural Poetics*. As a theatre artist she has worked with Artists in Storefronts, the Illusion Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, New World Theatre, the New York Mills Cultural Arts Center, Penumbra Theatre Company, Pillsbury House Theatre, the San Francisco Mime Troupe, the Soap Factory and Works/Plays. She received her PhD and MA from the University of Minnesota and her BA from Macalester College.

Samer Al-Saber completed his contribution to this volume during his time as a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow (2013–15) at Davidson College in North Carolina, USA. His teaching and scholarship focus on the intersection of cultural production and political conflict. He taught courses on the cultural representations of the Israel/Palestine conflict and 'performing Arabs' in a postcolonial context. His areas of scholarly interest include Middle Eastern culture, theatre and performance, the modern history of East Jerusalem, Palestinian theatre, Arab theatre, and the performance culture in the Roman Middle East.

Katie Beswick is a lecturer in drama, theatre and performance studies at Queen Mary, University of London. Her research is concerned with

theatre and performance practices in and about sites of inequality; predominately with the intersections between theatre and British social housing. Her latest project explores subway dancing in New York City. She completed her PhD, which examined representations of the 'council estate' in performance, at the University of Leeds. She is co-editor of the special issue of *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 'Re-evaluating the Postcolonial City: Production, Reconstruction, Representation'. Beyond academia she has worked as a writer, performer and housing officer.

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Aylwyn Walsh is a lecturer at the University of Lincoln School of Fine and Performing Arts whose interests span political and activist performance, radical pedagogies and intercultural performance. Recent publications have included work on arts in healthcare for *Research in Drama Education* and the *Journal for Applied Arts and Health* as well as on street art in *Journal of Arts and Communities* and about women, prison and performance in *Contemporary Theatre Review*. Her artistic work has been hosted across Europe, including Germany, Greece and Finland, and in the USA and Brazil, as well as Zambia and South Africa. She co-edited *Remapping Crisis: A Guide to Athens*. Aylwyn is the co-director of Ministry of Untold Stories.

Sophie Nield teaches theatre and film at Royal Holloway College, University of London. She writes on questions of space, representation and theatricality in political life and the law, and on the performance of borders of various kinds: the international border, the former site of the Berlin Wall, and the problem of the corpse in representation.

Introduction – Performing (for) Survival: Frameworks and Mapping

Patrick Duggan and Lisa Peschel

Frameworks

In *Nation and Narration* (1990), Homi Bhabha argues that a nation shapes and narrates understandings of itself through the stories it tells about itself to itself. Such stories naturally take multifarious forms: political institutions, monuments, architecture, pageants, celebrations, commemorations and, of course, art practices such as performance. Bhabha's proposition is a useful one for the concerns of this volume in so far as it looks to the potential for theatre to help peoples cohere, to create communities, to function as a means of embodied thinking through contexts and problems. The diverse performance practices explored here could be considered what Thompson and Schechner (2004) call 'social theatre' in so far as the 'ruling objective' is not necessarily aesthetics and the 'quality' of the performances. The objective might be political agency, group cohesion, protest, amelioration of pain, or any of the dozens of other social functions that can be served by the stories that societies in crisis tell themselves about themselves.

The volume gathers contributions from a range of international scholars and geopolitical contexts to explore why people organize themselves into performance communities in sites of crisis and how performance – social and aesthetic, sanctioned and underground – is employed as a mechanism for survival. The chapters examine a wide range of examples of what can be considered 'survival', ranging from sheer physical survival, to the survival of a social group with its own unique culture and values, to the survival of the very possibility of agency and dissent. Performance as a form of political resistance and protest plays a large part in many of the essays, but performance does more than that: it enables societies in crisis to continue to define themselves. By maintaining

2 Introduction

identities that are based on their own chosen affiliations and not defined solely in opposition to their oppressors, individuals and groups prepare themselves for a post-crisis future by keeping alive their own notions of who they are and who they hope to be.

Much of the scholarship in this volume explores work that might fit Jan Cohen-Cruz's definition of 'engaged performance'; that is, performance work that at once responds to and engages with the particular social and political conditions or contexts of its making and that draws on a wide range of peoples in order to do so (cf. Cohen-Cruz 2010: 1–16). Nevertheless, what marks this performance work out from discourses of applied, social or community theatre is that (with the exception of two examples) it is not work made by external practitioners with a particular community in order to attend to a particular 'issue', but is work that arises out of those communities as a direct result of extremity or crisis. Crucial too is the fact that 'performance' is defined broadly in this volume as authors address aesthetic performance practices, read political action as performance practice, and examine the experience of people undergoing various forms of crisis through performance (theory). In each chapter, the performance(s) analysed happen in an actual moment of crisis, rather than being retrospective interpretations or analyses of that crisis. As such, the book explores performances that are intrinsically alive to the socio-political contexts of their making and which are engaged in plural modes of challenging and changing those contexts. While we outline a more complete map of the book below, it is useful here to note that the argumentative trajectory of the volume is that by examining performance in crisis we might also be able to see crisis as performance.

In light of such plurality of approach, it seems useful at this point to outline some of the things that cohere the volume and the uses of 'performance' within it before turning to a broader gloss of the theoretical underpinnings of the volume. In line with much recent scholarship in performance studies, the cultural objects of analysis in this volume range from what Richard Schechner might delineate as 'make-believe' performances (those we associate with the fictional worlds of the well-made play) to 'real world', social dramas (cf. Schechner 2002: 35). In tandem with this we recall Joseph Roach's proposition that 'performance attend[s] not only to "the body", as Foucault suggests, but also to bodies – to the reciprocal reflections they make on one another's surfaces as they foreground their capacities for interaction' (Roach 1996: 25). For us, then, performance, wherever it might be located on the social-aesthetic continuum, is politically and socially engaged, materially participating

in what theorists as diverse as Raymond Williams (1966), Jill Dolan (2001; 2005), Claire MacDonald (1996) and Peggy Phelan (1993; 1997) might think of as world-making. For Peter Dickinson (2010), defining performance broadly alongside understanding its world-making potential allows one to explore different ways in which performance can 'provide a model for, how one attends to the world socially' (4). Performance thus asks us to consider our interrelations in a given geopolitical context, but can also reflexively point beyond that context because it can involve

the transformation of the specific forms and contours of intimacy and identification that come from being part of a local theatrical public sphere into a potentially radical re-imagining of global citizenship as an activation of still more spectacular forms of counter-publicity [...] [Furthermore] the performance event [is] emblematic of those radically contingent situations, as described by Badiou [in *Being and Event*, 2006], that have the potential to interpellate being, rupturing the established order of things and ideally producing a new 'militant' (politically, aesthetically, erotically, etc.) consciousness. (Dickinson 2010: 5–6)

The performances analysed throughout this book are not simply representing something, nor are they just about the context of their making; they are fundamentally doing something – politically, ideologically, aesthetically, culturally. For us, then, and the contributors to the book, performance is performative in Jill Dolan's sense, after J. L. Austin (Dolan 2005: 5–6).

This radical, transformative potential of performance is at the core of each of the investigations in this book and, while each of the contributions attends to different contexts and aesthetic forms, from 'well-made' plays to parades to hunger strikes, it seems to us that one useful, common thread that might be productively theorized here is the way in which each performance can be seen to make a radical intervention in 'space'. For Henri Lefebvre, and in cultural or geopolitical terms, these performances might be seen to constitute interventions into (political, social, geographic, institutional) space which can reinscribe the meaning of space or materialize new space – a space within which something can survive that might otherwise be destroyed. This is because, according to Jones et al. (2004), after Lefebvre, spaces are 'constituted through [...] social, economic and political processes' (99), they are 'the intersection of a unique mixture of social, economic and cultural relations,

some of which are local in character, some of which have global reach [...]. The ways in which different actors engage with the particular combination of relations in a particular place, have real political effects' (101). As such, spaces are never neutral entities with constant and definable objective meanings; rather they are constructs in which actions and bodily relations determine social, political and symbolic meaning at different levels (social, individual, historical, governmental, etc.) (cf. Lefebvre 1991; 2009). Spaces are always in the process of being written and rewritten, made manifest in different ways through the contestation of space by bodies, physical or virtual. As cultural geographer Kirsten Simonsen argues, "'being-in-the-world" is the everyday skilful coping or engagement with an environment including things as well as other human beings. That means that our "environment" does not arrange itself as something given in advance but as a totality of equipment dealt with in practice' (2010: 222). For Lefebvre, human action changes and manifests space, but also the history of a space will reveal 'conflictual coexistence of works and products from different periods [...] [that] generate tensions that animate space [and] make it difficult to decipher' (2009: 229). Thus performance within situations of extremity can be seen to be part of the constitution of the meaning of the space even in the face of violence, confinement, migration, dictatorship or domination. In such contexts, performance can be seen as a form of agency, as the ability to take some form of action.

Given that all performance happens in and produces space, both representational and material, it seems vital to examine the political implications of performances in the context of extremity. Only some of the contributions focus on what might be thought of as overtly political protest performance. However, each performance, in its own way, represents a protest in time and space as each is a reaction to conditions and contexts in which some form of amelioration of pain or suffering, escapism or political intervention became urgent and necessary.

We choose to focus on performance as a meaningful response to crisis because, as Franz Fanon has powerfully proposed, in situations of extremity, there is often a sudden and urgent desire, even a fundamental need, to speak creatively to, from or about the socio-political context of the 'exceptional circumstances' being enacted upon the body (individual or collective) of those affected. As Fanon puts it, in such circumstances people often 'feel the need to speak to their nation, to compose a sentence which expresses the heart of the people and to become the mouthpiece of a new reality in action' (1990: 179). The notion of a 'new reality' is particularly important to the concerns of this

volume, suggesting that creative processes can provide modes of engagement that might facilitate, or at least point towards, different ways to experience the present and future beyond the contemporary crisis.

Each of the chapters takes as its central case study an example of performance that emerged from within the space and time of the socio-political context under discussion, even if, as Chapters 8 and 9 demonstrate, outsiders might have initiated a creative process that culminated in the community's taking ownership of the work. Thus, the performances analysed here are not performances which seek retroactively to comment upon, understand, discuss, 'act out' or 'work through' a past moment in history, but are from/of that moment. The chapters seek to discover what functions the performances served for performers and their audiences in that moment, and what each case study might tell us about the functions of performance within situations of extremity more broadly. These social functions might correspond with what de Certeau would call a tactic: a means of fighting back against different forms of oppression in responsive and flexible ways. In a striking echo of Brecht's call for theatre to make audiences look afresh at and question the social realities being represented in a play (principally through *Verfremdungseffekt*), for de Certeau 'a tactic boldly juxtaposes diverse elements in order suddenly to produce a flash shedding a different light on the language of a place and to strike the hearer' (1984: 37–8). The inclination to consider these performances as tactics becomes more striking when we consider that tactics are 'an art of the weak' (1984: 38) and in the majority of the cases discussed throughout the book those performing are those discernibly without state or institutional power. As such, these performances might be seen to operate within the 'space of the tactic', which is 'the space of the other', where the deployed tactic 'must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power [...] it is a manoeuvre "within the enemy's field of vision" [...] and within enemy territory' (de Certeau 1984: 37). The tactic is deployed by the 'powerless' to inflict blow-by-blow damage to those in power as opportunities present themselves, rather than with any 'strategy' guiding that deployment (cf. 1984: 37). Thus 'strategy' is formulated as the preserve of the powerful (cf. 36–8).

De Certeau goes further to argue that power brings with it a particular visibility that prevents 'deception' and 'feints' because 'it is dangerous to deploy large forces for the sake of appearances [...] Power is bound by its very visibility. In contrast, trickery is possible for the weak, and often it is his [*sic*] only possibility, as a "last resort"' (1984: 37) and so 'a tactic is determined by the absence of power just as a strategy is

organized by the postulation of power' (38). While such distinctions might be true in a military context, in which a more powerful force faces a lesser one, the situation might be more complex for our concerns. Although the idea of the tactic is productive, it also seems to negate, or perhaps ignore, the possibility of tactics being deployed strategically. At the same time it relegates those without institutional power to being reactionary, concerned only with grasping unexpected opportunities to strike out at their oppressors rather than taking advantage of the tactic as a way to engage with and define their own communities.

Many of the chapters throughout this volume worry at this distinction in exploring the space and function of performance within a range of international, transhistorical situations of 'extremity'. The contributions suggest that, far from being opportunistic one-offs, many of the performance practices deployed might be thought of as what Duggan terms a 'strategy of tactics' in which performative or theatrical events are used as tactics – with great flexibility of form, place or timing, for example – but in determinedly strategic ways, where, for example, visibility and changing of aesthetic form are used in a deliberate and sustained, campaign-like way to ideologically and materially alter the space that the performers inhabit or are subject to. Our authors attend to the specificity of the historical events under discussion, to the possibility of performance as a means to political agency through spatial and bodily practices and representations, and to the possibility that those practices provide a means of surviving the situation (literally, politically, historically, for example).

Thus, the work aims to expand upon and, crucially, move beyond existing scholarship regarding performance in 'camp' environments (concentration, labour, prison, refugee, etc.) by investigating the possibility that both aesthetic performance events and social performance strategies might be employed as a means of 'survival' in multiple environments of/in crisis, which might, for different reasons, be conceptualized as 'extreme' contexts.

Mapping: organization of the volume

Each of the contributions in this volume has been (informally) guided by a steer to attend to three interrelated research questions:

1. How do people living in oppressive conditions or conditions of danger and deprivation use performance to survive and to express dissent or a desire for change?

2. What role is (the) performance fulfilling within the context being explored?
3. What might the example/s being analysed tell us about performance, extremity and survival within their historical context and at a broader socio-political (and/or theoretical/philosophical) level?

In supplying this steer our editorial intention has been to gather together scholarship that explores multiple and differing geopolitical and social contexts and types of performance while ensuring a shared research imperative. This shared territory or focus has, we believe, allowed the contributors to develop chapters that absolutely and concretely stand on their own, but that draw further strength and impact through a dialogic engagement with and inflection on their section partners and more broadly across the volume as a whole.

We have also intentionally included chapters that demonstrate varying levels of historiographic versus critical engagement. That is, just as performance spans a continuum from the aesthetic to the social, scholarship on performance ranges from the largely descriptive to the critically reflective. We have found value in accounts of virtually unknown theatrical interventions for their ability to ensure the historiographic survival of rare performance practices, as well as in chapters that engage with and build upon contemporary critical thought.

In Part I, titled 'Surviving War and Exile: National and Ethnic Identity in Performance', the authors examine the role of performance during political upheavals in two African countries. Matzke describes theatrical and musical performances by Eritrea's guerrilla cultural troupes during the war with Ethiopia and the Eritrean civil war, and Breed and Mukaka examine the exile theatre of the Tutsis of Rwanda as they waited in neighbouring countries for the longed-for return to their homeland. In both cases, as Bhabha argues, a nation shaped its understanding of itself through the stories it tells to itself about itself, but for these societies in crisis, their stories were complicated by ethnic and linguistic diversity. In Eritrea, although 'cultural combatants' were first and foremost engaged in rallying against the Ethiopian enemy, a secondary goal was the struggle to create a pluralist Eritrean national identity. Tutsi playwrights, during their time in exile, wrote works that strengthened their own sense of ethnic identity. After their return to a country in which the terms 'Hutu', 'Tutsi' and 'Twa' have been forbidden, they have created plays that attempt to enforce 'Rwandanicity' as an integrated national identity. The juxtaposition of these two chapters also highlights the unexpected risks that emerge when tactics become strategies:

in both cases, when formerly disempowered groups (re)gained power, strategies of representation that were developed in extremity became potentially oppressive and/or destabilizing forces once the crisis had passed.

In Christine Matzke's chapter, musical and dramatic performances developed by the cultural troupes of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) in wartime exemplify the notion of a 'strategy of tactics' designed to serve overtly political goals. Touring the countryside to persuade the Eritrean people to fight the Ethiopian emperor's annexation of their country and, after 1974, the corrupt Marxist military junta that had ousted him, members of the ELF and EPLF used improvised materials and sets to perform songs and plays that portrayed Ethiopian atrocities and the heroic deeds of Eritrean fighters and civilians. Ironically, while attempting to preserve their own political, religious and cultural identities and construct an integrated yet pluralist Eritrean national identity, actors ran the risk that they might not survive their own performance practices; for example, those playing hated political figures were sometimes attacked by their own audiences. After independence was won, however, survival presented dangers of its own: the EPLF has become an oppressive force in a one-party state where all cultural work is subject to strict censorship.

Performances by Tutsi artists enduring the crisis of exile, as analysed by Ananda Breed and Alice Mukaka, drew on a mythical past representing specifically Tutsi culture, both to preserve that culture while in exile and to motivate their audiences to return to a homeland that those born abroad had never experienced. Playwrights, for example, embedded traditional war poems in their works to illustrate that Rwanda was a homeland worth fighting for, and trained spectators to speak like the heroes depicted in the plays during the moments when they participated through vocal response in the performances. As in Eritrea, however, the practices adopted to deal with past crises present dangers in the present: the persistence of Tutsi cultural forms in performances that are now intended to perform an ethnically neutral 'Rwandanicity' may actually jeopardize lasting peace.

The chapters in Part II, 'A Space Where Something Might Survive: Theatre in Concentration Camps', explore performance in conditions of extreme oppression. Paradoxically, in sites where power exerted a radical degree of control over the prisoners' physical existence, policing of their cultural activities was comparatively lax. Both chapters in this section speak to Lefebvre's concept of space as constituted through processes: prisoners took advantage of this relative freedom to create a

space, through the process of performance, where elements of their pre-war lives and identities could be preserved. That is, although they were cut off from engagement in normal social, economic and cultural relations, they were symbolically able to perform these normal relationships within the theatrical space and thus exercise choice and agency in sites where those possibilities were radically curtailed.

Lisa Peschel examines testimony from the 1960s by Czech-Jewish survivors of the World War II Jewish ghetto at Terezín (in German, Theresienstadt) to argue that theatrical performance in the ghetto functioned as a performative, not only representing something, but doing something: it enabled the prisoners to convert potentially traumatizing experiences into manageable narratives and thus enhanced their ability to cope with the conditions of their captivity. By creating a safe space, sharing these narratives with their fellow prisoners and reconnecting with themselves, others and what they considered to be 'their world', they refused to succumb to what psychiatrist Judith Herman calls 'the essential insult of trauma': helplessness (1992: 41). Their testimony, as a rhetorical performance, also effected change in the present: by referring to cultural touchstones shared with non-Jewish Czechs, the survivors created narratives that helped them reintegrate into Czech society after a long period of state-sanctioned anti-Semitism.

In Stuart Fisher's study of Charlotte Delbo and her theatre-making in World War II concentration camps, she draws on several autobiographical works and two post-war plays to explore what survival and theatre meant for Delbo in the context of the concentrationary world. Rather than engaging with their oppressors in their performances, Delbo and her companions, all French political dissidents, drew upon classic texts that opened up a space of togetherness and what Jean-Luc Nancy calls a being-with and being-for the other. They reinscribed the meaning of the brutal camp environment by creating a space defined by a sense of *communitas*, solidarity and indebtedness to others. Theatre-making contributed to Delbo's capacity to redefine her relationship with her fellow prisoners and this, Stuart Fisher argues, contributed to an existential process of survival by establishing a sense of solidarity amidst the harsh and unrelenting environment of the camps.

In Part III, 'Tactics and Strategies: Dissent under Oppressive Regimes', the authors examine symbolic resistance as expressed through seemingly 'minor' or 'harmless' theatrical forms: puppetry, absurdism and comedy. Working from a position of weakness within a political terrain imposed upon them – the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, authoritarian regimes in the Congo, the Israeli annexation of East

Jerusalem – artists created works that inflicted damage upon those in power by demonstrating the possibility of dissent, even if that dissent was carefully coded (successfully or not) to escape the censor's reach.

Cariad Astles' transnational and transhistorical study of puppetry as a response to dictatorship encompasses both subversion and resilience. As a seemingly trivial performance form, yet at the same time a powerful metaphor for the total control of one being by another and, simultaneously, the desire to break free, puppetry is particularly suited to speak to totalitarian rule. In Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia, puppet shows kept Czech-language popular and folk culture alive while providing a forum to condemn the regime. Astles then engages with more subtle forms of crisis that arise in the aftermath of dictatorship and the lifting of censorship: in Catalonia immediately after Franco's death, puppetry that revelled in scatological and grotesque imagery celebrated Catalanian culture and enabled people to release years of collective rage through laughter, and in Chile after Pinochet, puppet theatre represented the absence and trauma associated with the disappeared and enabled performers and their audiences to acknowledge the scars left on the present by the past.

Macelle Mahala examines the plays, novels and political essays of Congolese playwright Sony Labou Tansi, who lived and wrote through a series of political coups and authoritarian governments. Tansi thought about performance explicitly in terms of space, writing that '[t]heatre leaves us ample space while the world around us unrelentingly seeks to take it over'. Within that space, shaped by ancient Greek drama from his colonial education, traditional Kongo theatre practices and religious traditions and Afro-francophone interpretations of absurdism, Tansi's ebullient humour and wild imagination enabled him to critique abuses of state authority yet avoid censorship until nearly the end of his career.

Samer Al-Saber explores the potentially subversive effects of a comic play about a politically indifferent Palestinian 'everyman' who simply tries to survive in East Jerusalem after it is annexed by Israel. He is thwarted, however, in a series of increasingly absurd comic scenarios; for example, he is fired from his job at an Israeli factory because he is supposedly wearing the colours of the Palestinian flag. The troupe was similarly thwarted in their attempts to produce the play. Drawing on Edward Said's concept of 'permission to narrate', Al-Saber traces their long struggle against Israeli attempts to censor the production and the obstacles they faced even while on a tour of several European countries, during which Orientalist discourse and attempts to brand the troupe

a mere mouthpiece of the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) limited the performers' capacity to present their message outside of Israel.

The chapters in Part IV, 'Coming in from the Outside: Theatre, Community, Crisis', constitute an exception in this volume because the performance practices described were brought into depressed communities by outsiders. Both case studies, however, posit the initially 'outsider' artists as practising a potentially radical form of global citizenship by creating performances that reconfigured the established order in the sites where they worked and enabled a change in the consciousness of the local participants as well as themselves. The artists' long-term engagement with local youth potentially enabled restructuring what Bordieu calls their 'habitus': a repertoire of behaviours conditioned by social structures that can limit or expand the opportunities available to them. Within the crisis context of the growing gap between wealth and relative poverty, performance has the potential to help young people survive what Jeffery, Patton, Schaefer and Wakefield in Chapter 9 call 'a disturbingly quotidian "situation of extremity" affecting many communities in the UK today'.

Katie Beswick's study focuses on SPID (Specially Produced Innovatively Directed) Theatre Company, a collective of professional film and theatre makers that has been based permanently on the Kensal House estate in Ladbroke Grove, West London since 2005; a number of residents have joined the company as professional and amateur members. The residents' work with SPID enables them to resist dominant narratives about council estates as dysfunctional, deprived criminal breeding grounds by creating counter-narratives that may assist in breaking open the enduring stigmas that limit the opportunity structures available to estate residents.

Jeffery, Patton, Schaefer and Wakefield examine the work of Theatre Modo in Peterhead and Fraserburgh, two economically depressed fishing towns located on the northeast coast of Aberdeenshire. *Maelstrom, The Shell Fireworks Parade* was performed in Fraserburgh in 2012 as the culmination of a four-year programme of community partnership, public engagement and creative practice. During this programme, Modo held workshops in puppet-making, lantern-making, stilt-walking, drumming, mural painting, fire juggling/breathing and circus and street performance that enabled them to engage masses of young people. Interviews with participants revealed evidence of informal learning, of subtle forms of apprenticeship, the making of new identities and the imagining of possible futures.

In Part V, 'Crisis and Extremity as Performance', the authors turn from aesthetic performance events to social performance strategies. They explore hunger striking as an act that is 'performed' for the public, even when it takes place within the framework of incarceration. Paradoxically, as the starving body slowly disappears, it creates exceptional visibility for the strikers' cause and presents a crisis for state power: wilful self-destruction positions the government as ultimately having no power over the 'survival' of the strikers.

Aylwyn Walsh examines the case of 300 men – all asylum seekers and economic migrants – who embarked on a hunger strike in order to pressure the Greek government to pay attention to their demands for legal status. This strike was exceptional in that, rather than taking place in a carceral space, it was staged in a highly symbolic space related to Greek national identity: the Law School building in Athens. Although the strike conferred upon them valuable bargaining power at the time it was conducted, the rapid decline in social and economic conditions led to the political gains made by the strikers being overruled.

Duggan describes much more 'successful' performative acts by Irish prisoners in the H-blocks of the Maze prison. Triggered by the abolishment of their political prisoner status and classification as ordinary criminals, their initial acts of protest – the learning of Gaelic and then the so-called 'dirty protests' – broke down normal penal narratives as the prisoners first defied rules against 'talking out the door' with a language the prison staff could not understand, then radically changed the nature of the carceral space by writing themselves on it with their own bodily wastes. Finally the hunger strikers themselves performed death, as a way to make visible the wider politics of the Republican cause; in the process they created a crisis for the British government as politicians struggled to find a way to deal with the hunger strikers.

The volume ends with a coda by Sophie Nield which turns the book's concerns to the contemporary moment by looking at the January 2015 murders in Paris and the *Je suis Charlie* 'movement' that followed. The coda focuses not only on a timely example, but one that explores 'the intertwining of material and symbolic gestures' as fundamental components of the meaning of those events. In so doing, Nield dialogically refracts the arguments of the foregoing chapters to suggest that theatre and performance have an important and ongoing role to play in situations of crisis and extremity.

This book, then, not only highlights theatre's performative potential – the fact of its material agency – but also demonstrates an urgent imperative for theatre and performance scholars to look at such situations of crisis and extremity from plural perspectives.

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Part I

Surviving War and Exile: National and Ethnic Identity in Performance