

The Social Theatre of Power: Concepts of  
Space and Theatricality in the Interpretation of  
Power and Resistance.

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The Social Theatre of Power: Concepts of Space and Theatricality in the  
Interpretation of Power and Resistance.

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## Abstract.

This thesis applies insights drawn from the field of spatial analysis to the interpretation of theatrical events expressive of power and resistance.

These events are treated within the disciplines of Theatre Studies and Cultural Anthropology as 'theatrical', but this thesis proposes that there are crucial limitations in this appropriation. The argument opens by addressing some of these difficulties; particularly the discursive obligation placed upon the 'theatrical' to be representative. The thesis proposes that theatrical events of this nature, rather than being merely symbolic reflections of a polity which exists elsewhere, are significant in the production and exertion of power itself. It proposes a theoretical framework based in the interpretation of space, in order to stabilise and account for their 'theatricality'.

To this end, the thesis addresses the work of the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, whose pioneering work on space and spatiality *La production de l'espace* (1974) has energised the field of spatial theory in significant ways. His arguments speak provocatively to the interpretation of theatrical events, as they offer a theoretical framework within which to address both the spaces 'produced' by theatrical enactments and to account for their effects. His arguments concerning the 'production' of space permit a reading of theatrical events in terms of the space that they, through their actions and organisation, produce. He offers a 'triad' of forms of space: the perceived, the conceived and the lived, within which the interpretation of theatrical events can be located. He also offers a historical chronology of spaces, and the thesis draws upon this chronology in the selection of examples with which it engages.

The thesis examines in depth the spectacular theatrical space of the British Coronation ceremony; the journey into abstraction staged by the Festivals of the French Revolution and the theatrical production of totalitarian space under the Third Reich in Germany.

The argument consolidates and builds on these investigations in its concluding section. It returns to spatial theory to investigate the question of resistance, positioning this enquiry in relation to the preceding accounts of the theatrical production of spaces of power. This analysis is then applied to the interpretation of resistance events in the U.S. in the 1960's, before some concluding perspectives.

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Finally, I thank, with much gratitude, my family, and dedicate this thesis to the memories of Alec and Jennie; Freda and Harry.

The Author.

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She is a Director and Trustee of the Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection.

As I write ...

I open this argument with three spatial stories - moments from my own experience which opened up for me some of the questions I raise about the spatial effects of theatrical acts.

As I conclude this project, in September 2001, a spatial story is unravelling of, it seems, far greater magnitude. The destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York, and the attack on the Pentagon in Washington DC are impacting on the space of the world. Described by commentators from the outset as 'dramatic' and 'symbolic', it does not seem out of place for me to offer some thoughts here.

The event itself had theatrical impact: the 18 minute delay after the first plane's impact ensured a global audience for the second. This same global audience participated in the three-minute silence held the following week, as other spaces, in the aftermath, became theatrical spaces of remembrance.

The ways in which people chose to remember, or express defiance, also seemed to be being shaped by a theatrical sensibility, informed by space. The image of the New York firemen raising the Stars and Stripes at Ground Zero not only recalled Iwo Jima; it staged the retaking of the destroyed Towers for America. It did this, not only as a representative act, but materially, and through the production of a space of presence. The act realised the reclamation of the space.

The WTC and the Pentagon are symbols - of America, and of corporate dominance - but they too are material. Many people, at their place of work, lost their lives. The event turned their workplaces into theatrical spaces - spaces which were being used to demonstrate, or stage, anger against the US.

When an object, or a space, is used in this way, the issue becomes about who has the right to define the symbolic vocabulary? Who can shape the theatrical space? For the terrorists, the buildings were used to symbolise 'America' as a vicious and interventionist world power. The President and Prime Minister of Britain reclaimed them as symbols of 'liberty' and thus the attack on them became an attack on liberty itself.

These exchanges have significant consequences. The conflict apparent in this battle to determine the symbolic vocabulary, and hence the meaning of the theatrical space, is now being played out over the space of the globe. The perpetrators have become enemies of freedom; their spatial presence sinister - 'tentacular' networks of influence which extend covertly; hiding in secret underground spaces. The West, mobilising a 'global alliance' against terror, has vowed to hunt them down. The lines have been forcefully drawn. The actions of opposition groups, such as the anti-globalisation movement, in carving out spaces of protest, and producing spaces of ambiguity, has suddenly become much harder: the world, and the 'other' world invoked by resistance, have both altered as irrevocably as the New York skyline.

## Chapter 1: Introduction.

### Three spatial stories.

In 1995, I was working at the University of Glamorgan, in South Wales. One day, Prince Charles came on a visit. There was great secrecy, for some reason, and the first we knew was when the Porters started to rope off the Administration building. As this was the building which also housed the canteen, there was some curiosity about what was about to happen. Soon, it was impossible to leave the adjacent building (where I worked) by the front door, as a network of crush barriers had been set up which extended half-way up the hill. I left by a side exit, passing a Porter, who I had said 'Good Morning' to every day for the past three years. He was not busy, but he had clearly been co-opted as a barrier shifter/ security person for the day. Standing very stiffly, and looking straight over my head, he did not acknowledge me at all. Odd, I thought. Has his incorporation into this newly 'theatrical' space caused him to act in this way?

In the early autumn of 1997, I found myself in Kensington Gardens, in front of the Palace. The flowers that had been left in memory of Princess Diana stretched for some forty or fifty feet from the gates, in a pile easily twenty feet wide and as high as the people standing around their edge. It was around nine o'clock in the evening, and dark, but the police had brought in lamps which illuminated the scene. I was struck first of all by how strange it was to be in a London park after dark, and, secondly, by the numbers of people who had come to be there. The streets around the Gardens were crowded with a steady stream of people making their way over to the Palace. I stood for a while, and then walked over to where some children were attaching poems and teddy bears to trees. People were clearly deeply moved by their presence in this space; by their participation in the making of this event. I found the whole thing utterly strange. This was clearly, to

me, a performance, a piece of theatre; yet the people there would have been insulted if you had suggested that their emotion was not deeply felt. The fact that the space of the park had been appropriated by mourners, and that the municipality was accomodating their wish to be there by lighting and policing it was not being treated as exciting, or fun, or transgressive. It was acknowledged by the people there as somehow appropriate. These mourners were performing, but with no self-consciousness of performance. Something else was generating the script. Was it, perhaps, the production of the Gardens as a theatrical space?

On Mayday 2000, I was in Parliament Square for the anti-globalisation 'Guerilla Gardening' protest. For several hours, this was a rather boring event. I managed to miss the trashing of McDonalds, having gone to the National Gallery to get a sandwich. While I was in there, the Gallery was closed, and I made my way with a group of bemused tourists to a rear exit. Trafalgar Square had been blocked off, so I walked back to Parliament Square through Horseguards. Every Whitehall backstreet was full of vans of policemen getting changed. This clearly had some consequences for the enactment of their 'roles': men who as shirtsleeved be-hatted 'bobbies' had been chatting and joking to the crowd suddenly refused to speak, shouted a lot and used menacing body language. This performative change was a little alarming, but the really scary thing was spatial. Shortly after my return to Parliament Square I noticed that the police, in full riot gear, were now blocking every exit. It was impossible to leave. By not allowing anyone near them, and shouting at you to get back if you approached, the police had made a boundary between the demonstrators and themselves. Spatially constructed, this line ascribed roles. Through the production of this 'line', everyone (including me) in the Square had been effectively criminalised. My presence in the space in the middle had already determined me as one of 'them'. This strategy is called 'containment'. You won't be able to say 'it wasn't me', because you're there. And the people in the middle, because they need to be

contained by the police, as all can see, are trouble-makers. It occurred to me that the space was now writing the script.

When I started this project I was interested in the ways that states, powers and governments present themselves to 'their' people through theatre in the form of Coronations, State Openings of Parliament and so on. I also had questions about the ways in which resistance and opposition were so often described as theatrical. Much of the work in this field, discussed below, addresses these sorts of events in public space in this way. However, it began to be clear to me that this work seems to rely on the presumed formal qualities of 'theatre' determined as limited, representational and legible. It thus produces a tautology - these events are theatrical because they are like the theatre - in other words, because they use actors, props, scenery, narratives. Furthermore, they are like theatre because they are pre-rehearsed, and, my most significant anxiety in this context, because they 'represent' something 'else'.

I didn't feel that this accounted fully for their effects - it marginalised them as a site of the actual manifestation of power, and the ways in which it acts on people. Secondly, it left a real area of difficulty in the extent of the 'theatricality' of the practices: they had to cease being 'theatrical' at the moment they became effective, becoming either 'ritual' or 'real'. This became one of the defining problems for me: is a demonstration a piece of 'theatre'? And why does it cease to be when it turns into a riot? My project became concerned with accounting for these events as a 'real' politics, with 'real' effects. These effects are not just to do with the implementation of political programmes. They are to do with how they make people behave.

The events of which I speak are often made up of chains of signs: representational objects, ceremonial scripts. They may disguise their production in 'tradition' and 'antiquity', but they were designed to be read, and therefore

performing a 'reading' on them to decipher a meaning which they intended all along has limitations. In a way, what became clear was that to account for their effectivity, it would be necessary to re-draw the 'theatrical' as something more than the superficial, the legible, the rehearsed and the 'representative'. The effects they produce are more than the sum of their signs.

This left me looking for a discursive framework within which to account for the specificity of the events I wished to discuss. A possible answer to some of these problems has been, for me, the introduction of a form of spatial analysis drawn from the disciplines of social and cultural geography, and it is these insights, and their application which are the basis of this argument.

Introducing spatial theory to the interpretation of theatrical events in public space offers a new way of seeing them, accounting for their effects and addressing how they work.

To say that events take place in space seems so obvious as to barely need stating. However, just as it is necessary to account for the materiality of theatricality in this context, so it is necessary to account for the materiality of space, and the effects it produces. Is space just the gap between things into which events can march? Or does it have a more concrete aspect? The spatial theory which I will address identifies space as a 'product', and one produced by social experience of various kinds. It proposes that all spaces are contiguous, and therefore the interaction of one space on another is productive of social, cultural and hence political effects. In this way, it becomes possible to argue that as the space produced by the 'theatrical' event is not separate from the rest of social space, so the event is not 'separate' from the rest of social experience. Thus the work of the event, which is built out of representations, is not *only* representational.

As a material product, space itself can be subject to a meaningful analysis - what *kinds* of spaces do the events under discussion produce? What kinds of *effects* do these material spaces produce?

What spatial analysis offers is a means to move outside the use of the theatre metaphor in interpretation of events of this kind. They can be determined by a frame of enquiry which does not rely on their closeness to or distance from a 'theatre' practice in order to interpret them. If we can identify the kind of space 'made' by these events, it should be possible to determine their limits. This does not indicate the space they *inhabit*, or the space they *imply*; rather the space they *produce* through their existence and organisation.

Theatrical events in public space are often examined as texts of representation. This is an important part of their work. However, rather than seeing them as empty spaces 'full' of representations which 'are' their meaning, I want to move towards being able to see them as spaces made of representational practices and objects. In this way, these practices and objects can be viewed as the legible surface of the event, in which they 'express' their meaning. Their material work, as I shall argue, is in the space they produce, and how the experience of being in that space conditions, determines, and scripts people's actions.

#### Disciplinarity and Context: towards the materiality of the 'theatrical'.

The events which are the object of this study are not 'theatre' events. They are 'theatrical': presentations in public spaces of ceremonies, performances and acts to do with the exercise of power and the expression of dissent. The pioneering work of the anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner, and the performance theorist Richard Schechner have all helped to broaden the scope of theatre analysis and a rich field of scholarship has developed around this area of interest.<sup>1</sup>

There are however, for me, a number of problems with the treatment of these events in these fields, which the next section of this Introductory chapter will address. Firstly, there is a certain inspecificity in the use of terms. Events seem

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Geertz (1973), (1980), (1993); Turner (1967), (1974), (1982), (1987); Schechner (1988), (1990a), (1993); Manning (1993); MacAloon (1984); Schechner and Appel (1990).

to be being accounted for as 'theatrical' due to their sharing of characteristics with the 'theatre', and the tracking of similar characteristics becomes the main focus of the study in question.

Schechner, for example, notes that

in direct theatre, large public spaces are transformed into theatres where collective reflexivity is performed. Everything is exaggerated, ritualised, done for show. (1993: 83)

Here it would seem, the space becomes a 'theatre' because a 'performance' is taking place in it. The performance is 'ritualised' and hence 'theatrical'. However, it is Schechner who is providing all these self-referential designations. Elsewhere in his work, as I shall discuss shortly, he emphasises a difference between ritual and theatre: one supposedly efficacious, the other mimetic. In fact, in order to evade his own designation, in the essay cited above, he reassigns ritual qualities to 'entertainment'. (1993: 51) Secondly, there is here no account of exactly *how* a public space is 'transformed' into a theatre - and what the nature of that theatre might be. These are the questions with which I am concerned in this argument, to which I will return shortly.

In his study of political ritual, David Kerzer makes a similar move.

Ritual provides one of the means by which people participate in (such) dramas and thus see themselves as playing certain roles. The dramatic quality of ritual does more than define roles, however, it also provokes an emotional response. Just as emotions are manipulated in the theater ... so too these elements ... give rituals a means of generating powerful feelings. (1988: 11)

While I do not disagree with the substance of this point, I feel that here again, the 'dramatic' and the 'theatrical' are assigned as qualities almost so natural as to need no explanation. Again, an event has dramatic qualities because it produces effects that are like the effects of drama. How can we disrupt this circularity? As Erving Goffman writes, 'all the world is not a stage, but the ways in which it is not are hard to specify'. (1959: 78) I propose that the difference is spatial:

different social and theatrical practices produce different spaces, and that through the interpretation of theatrical spaces we can address their specificity without having to locate them in relation to pre-existing notions of the theatre. This leads me to the second problem, which is with the limitations imposed on the term 'theatrical'. This circular discourse has consequences for the interpretation of the theatrical itself, as it becomes tied to a 'theatre' which is limited discursively in crucial ways. As Herbert Blau notes:

We are aware of theatrical behaviour outside the theatre ... what we characterise as theatrical seems to be measured by some generally accepted behavioural norm, though it should be clear that no behaviour is theatrical/ dramatic except so far as we have an image of theatre in the mind. (1982: 9)

Jill Dolan develops this thought:

performative metaphors get extended into many cultural avenues through cultural studies, but rarely is theatrical performance a site of such extension. If the practices of everyday life and media textuality appear multiple, contradictory and open, theatre performances are positioned by other scholars (as) simple, closed ... 'known' and coherent. (1993: 422)

In other words, the properties of 'theatre' find themselves overrestricted to conventional theatre practice (the acting of a play in a theatre). These are extended into cultural analysis as the 'theatrical', which comes to mean 'having the properties *like* theatre' and indicating such concerns as pre-scripting, rehearsal, illusion, a self-conscious 'acting', decorative elements and an organisation of appearances. While many of these elements are certainly present in the events I will address, again, my contention is that a means must be found to root the identification of these events as 'theatrical' in more than a surface likeness to 'theatre', and in more than metaphorical terms. The 'theatrical' must be seen as having a set of qualities and practices - and forms of spatialisation - which may certainly be present in, but are by no means limited to, the practices of theatre.

The third, and more significant, problem, for me, arises out of the insistence on the 'representative' function of theatre (and hence the 'theatrical'). This would seek to preclude the materiality, 'reality' and effectivity of theatrical practices, which are one of the central concerns of this argument. There has been a tendency to interpret events in public space, whether initiated by ruling bodies or resistance groups; organised and regimented (the parade, the demonstration) or chaotic and spontaneous (mourning Diana, the riot) as either moments outside the usual run of lived experience, or as symbolic reflections of a somehow 'real' politics which exists elsewhere. (Kerzer 1988: 3) In fact, events such as these, as I will argue, are indeed 'theatrical', but not according to the notions of theatricality that have hitherto been applied. Those notions are based in a separation and marginalisation of 'theatricality' as something heightened, hived off from and referring to something else, something 'real'. As I shall show, the discipline of Theatre Studies has maintained this discursive division between theatricality and efficacy in two ways. I shall discuss briefly the designating of 'performance' as the term which can encompass cultural and social practice: again relegating the theatrical to a purely representative function. Secondly, tracing the history of the theatre in ritual forms, the 'theatrical' comes into being discursively as the point at which an event ceases to be efficacious and becomes mimetic. The term itself thus becomes a marker for artificiality.

Josette Feral offers that theatre is dependent on the 'subject', on narrative, and on its formal properties. It can escape narrativity, and representation (becoming 'presence') only through reconfiguring as 'performance'<sup>2</sup>. (1982)

Based on this version of 'theatre', Jill Dolan continues this thought. By dislodging the historical inquiry undertaken by Theatre Studies from the

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<sup>2</sup> This point has been developed by scholars of postmodern theatre and theatricality, who again mobilise the performative (as fluid) over the theatrical (as static and mimetic) to account for 'presence'. See particularly Auslander (1993) and (1997).

constraints of architectural location, and examining new intersecting axes of texts and spaces ... performance studies widens the range of locations, and suggests that all of culture is in some way performative. (1993: 431)

The first difficulty here is again in the discursive restriction of theatre to certain highly limited and codified practices. Richard Schechner, in his discussion of 'magnitudes of performance' claims seven levels for performativity (from 'brain activity' to 'social drama') of which theatricality is implicated as the 'bit', the 'sign', the scene or 'sequence of signs' and the system of scenes. (1990a:19-49) This subordinates theatricality to performativity, and again, positions it as both 'legible' and 'theatre-like'.

Yet the 'theatrical' is actually *different* from the 'performative', not just a sub-set of performative practices that are not fluid. Indeed, while the attention of performance scholars to cultural practice has produced very interesting work, and has gone some way to retrieving the inspecific use of performative metaphors from elsewhere in the academy by forcing greater specificity, nevertheless it has had some rather problematic effects, not least the finding of 'performance' everywhere.

For Herbert Blau

the really stunning puzzle is that the metaphor has become so ubiquitous and attenuated that it is evaporating into the processes it is describing. We used to speak of the 'production ethic' in industry. Now we see it as a theatre production with 'desiring machines' which ... play their parts ... and also write their own scripts. (1982: 10)

The work of social analysts such as Judith Butler, too, have identified ways in which gender, identity and sexuality are 'performative'.<sup>3</sup> While these insights are valuable, and have allowed performance study to take a central place in social studies, they do have some difficult consequences. A metaphor which extends everywhere and applies to everything becomes a description of social reality. If performative elements are in all aspects of lived experience, then the

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Butler (1988)

performative becomes a strategy of life itself, and the 'authentic' a diminishing moment marked only by the lack of self-consciousness. This problem is evidenced by the ultimate reduction of the presence of performance, for Schechner, to the 'awareness' or consciousness of performance.<sup>4</sup> (1990a: 44) While theatrical acts and spaces, as we shall see, are shaped by human agency, not all their effects are conscious. The performative must, it seems, simultaneously be 'aware' and 'active'. The theatrical, on the other hand, can produce social actions that are not self-conscious performances - indeed, this is part of their effect.<sup>5</sup> Theatrical space, once 'produced'<sup>6</sup> can coerce through its existence, and the human experience produced by its existence. It can produce effects through 'being', rather than through 'doing'. This, of course, is my second difficulty with Dolan's point, above. Just as the 'theatrical' is not limited to 'drama', nor is theatrical activity limited to theatre buildings. Theatrical activity in public space creates and produces it *as* theatrical space. This is often concerned with representations - it is a space full of representations - but, as I will argue, it is a space of *presence*, whose effects are produced through being experienced and not being read. An efficacy must be claimed for the theatrical, which has tended to be granted within this field to the ritual only. The origin of this representative descriptor for both theatre and theatrical events lies, to an extent, in the treatment of theatre's origins in ritual.

For Schechner, something actually changes or is made different through the ritual. The evolution of ritual into drama is therefore seen as a journey towards a purer mimesis, with ritual efficacy replaced with the 'imitation' of the originating efficacious moment. Dramatic metaphors are again in evidence. John Macaloon notes that rituals, as cultural performances, are

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<sup>4</sup> I will use this idea later in the reclaiming of popular uprisings and 'riotous' behaviour as 'theatrical'.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, my discussion of the 'effects' of the theatrical space of the Coronation in Chapter 3.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 2.

occasions in which as a culture or society we reflect upon and define ourselves, dramatise our collective myths and history, present ourselves with alternatives ... points at which a culture reflects on the structure of its relationships and their possibilities (1984; cited in Dolan 1993: 431)

The repetitive, collective and 'witnessed' aspects of theatrical events in public space, their 'making visible' of something collectively held, their supposed moments of 'efficacy' often lead them to be described as 'rituals'. Yet, like 'performance', this is not an adequate designation. As I shall discuss in the following chapters, particularly in reference to some of the ceremonies staged by states and authorities, their claiming of a 'ritual' efficacy is part of the artificially legible surface of the event. When they are not 'efficacious', they are 'theatrical re-enactments'<sup>7</sup>, acting as signifiers of an assumed 'real' social world and a 'real' polity, which they represent but do not constitute.

This assumes two distinct spheres - the 'actual' and the 'symbolic' - and positions the work of the ceremonial acts of authorities, or the demonstrations of pressure groups, as seeking to establish a dominant 'imaginary' which legitimates the dominant 'actual'. This interpretation, however, relies on a sense of a symbolic realm which refers to and represents a world of actual power relations. Certainly, ceremonial events appear to be separate: as this project outlines, they mobilise very specific and heightened vocabularies, and distinguish themselves through various means from the run of everyday experience. This separation, however, is part of their deceptive and misleading legibility as they disguise themselves as the 'not-real'.

The point is that both symbolic and 'real' practices are equally real and affective; both are parts of a continuous practice. For example, the State Opening of Parliament by the Queen is treated as though it were a symbolic summarisation of the 'actual' relations of power. In other words, the fact that the Queen is the Head of the British state, and has powers to ratify Government legislation causes the event to be seen as a representative projection of these 'realities'. Often,

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<sup>7</sup> See Burns (1972); Cannadine (1983).

particularly when articulating state or authoritarian power, theatrical expressions of power make visible something which otherwise would have no material presence: the state, the nation and so on. Again, this lends itself to the view that the symbolic 'represents' the 'real'.

The point here is that the symbolic has its own materiality. While *representing*, it occupies space; is *present*. It constitutes, by this presence and its internal organisation, a form of space which, by being contiguous with other lived and conceptual spaces, permits or obstructs other forms of social practice, particularly political ones. The State Opening of Parliament does not merely describe the constitutional position, the status quo. It does not merely refer to a fictionalised 'past' out of which tradition springs as though born of nature. The State Opening of Parliament constructs the material and conceptual space within which a constitutional monarchy can exist. Part of the work of events such as this, as I shall explore, is precisely to present themselves as description, as referent, as sign of power: all of these are part of the ideological work of the legible surface of the events.

This seeming to refer to, summarise or represent 'something else' disguises the fact that these 'two' things ('real' and 'representation') are in fact one: a condensing of the conceptual and the material space of a particular model of power. The test would be whether the conceptual model of a particular power system could maintain itself without the parallel materialisation of its ideology as theatricalised space. In fact, political structures, powers, ideas and spaces would not be the-same-but-less-visible if the 'symbolic' structures were not immediately available. Certainly, the mace 'symbolises' the power of the British Parliament, and the business of Parliament could be undertaken without its literal presence. However, the spatial effect of this piece of 'symbolism' is to construct a version of the conceptual space of polity which speaks of historical continuity, of 'the mother of parliaments', of '1000 years of uninterrupted tradition'. This in turn contributes to the construction of the conceptual spaces that are 'England',

'Britain', 'the 'United Kingdom'. To imagine that this construction has therefore nothing to do with political positions arising from those conceptions of nation: views on immigration, minority communities and Europe, would be naive.

The notion implicit in the work of Geertz, Turner and others - that it is different discursive or representative versions of the world and not different spaces being brought into dialogue in expressions of power and dissent - is therefore ultimately restrictive. It causes a theatrical event in public space to be an apprehension of reality, symbolised, representational and 'un-real'. This leads Turner to talk about events of this kind as 'restored' or quoted experience. (1990)

The form of spatial analysis I propose enables us to address these events as constitutive of direct experience. If, as I will argue, the social is more than spatially located, but is actually spatially produced, then any action which shapes space has the capacity to re-inflect the social.

For this reason, this project will resist referring to ceremonies of power and opposition as '*representations*'. The concept of a representation, as I have mentioned, implies a second thing which is 'represented' by the action or symbol. To propose a 'real' social or political order that exists elsewhere and is being alluded to or summarised separately in ceremonial is to ignore the significance and seriousness of ceremony in bringing political orders into being. This project contends that they are *presentations*, producing real effects in space and time, while incorporating and being made up of representations.

Could this be a question, not of different discursive 'versions' of the world, but of opposing spatialisations? The question would become - which space will dominate? Who is able to regulate the space? Can the space of power incorporate a temporary 'libidinal' space? After all, if carnival or festival events get out of control, they are repressed spatially, not symbolically. Power does not stage a 'Festival of the world-the-right-way-up' in an adjoining field - it retakes

the subverted space and re-organises it in its own image. If this cannot be done and the carnival moment becomes a revolutionary moment, the whole of social space (and hence the social) is under threat. This may go some way to explaining the disproportionate response of authorities to unauthorised demonstrations and festivals. More than a field, or a street, or a bridge, is at stake. If people are free to mass in the streets whenever they want, to march about, to be 'libidinal' with no parameters, then the fabric of the social, and its spatialisation, are threatened. Power must retain its ability to shape and dominate social space.

I think what is needed is to see the 'theatrical' less as a 'place for looking' and more as the production of a space in which looking is experienced. Theatrical space, I will propose in the forthcoming chapters, disguises itself as a place whose meanings are derived from looking (as the events that produce them disguise themselves as chains of signs). Although this focus on looking is part of what designates a space as a 'theatrical' space, this is one of its *acts*. It does not describe how it *works*.

With a spatial inflection, the events are not determined because they represent, or because they appear to be like theatre. They are determined by their production of this 'theatrical space', the characteristics and limits of which it is possible to identify. This space is effective because, being part of a spatial matrix of overlapping practices, it cannot help but act on, interface with and inflect wider social practice through its space, a point which I expand in Chapter 2.

Furthermore, not only are the events which take place in it and shape it 'real', for this reason, but the effects it produces are derived from its space. To articulate properly how this works, I will mobilise a frame of analysis drawn from the field of geography and spatial analysis, which is capable of reconstructing the ephemeral, spatialising the theatrical, and relocating the experiential. I will argue that the theatrical is something which operates as power, not just in support or

reflection of power, and its effects are permanently present (although metamorphosing) and permanently effective. I will argue that the definition is spatial: that a particular kind of space is being produced by an event, which, along with all spaces, is real, is affective and is ultimately permissive or exclusive of social practices.

Theatrical events function by making a space, within which certain things are possible, and certain things are not possible. This space (or rather, these spaces) are available to semiotic and other forms of analysis but not at the moment of their making. They are made through experience, in and through the moments which constitute their existence and which they constitute by existing. In a sense, this parallels the observation made by Lahr and Price: that an actor does not explain, but *dramatises*. (1973: 41) This dramatisation may involve a representation (of 'character' for example), but that representation is nevertheless present in space. Analysis of that space should allow a different series of meanings to become apparent. Ceremonial or other events in public space are not only symbolic, or representational: the space they produce is effective. In this way, the theatrical spaces produced by the ceremonial or oppositional event can be seen to be making power: they exert power, they embody and act as power.

The analysis I propose offers simultaneously a means to materialise events, and a means to mobilise a discursive framework to speak about them. Lefebvre's model of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all spaces provides a theoretical framework for the interconnectedness and interdependence of theatrical politics and practical politics. It also explains how theatrical politics works. They are constituting and constituted by spaces - and not spaces *in which* things are stated. The spaces they produce *are* the statement. The event doesn't just 'reflect' the structures of a society: it constitutes, describes and

spatialises them in a condensed form, thus acting directly on the wider space of the social.<sup>8</sup>

It is worth noting in this context that it has been necessary to remain critical when geography thinks it is talking about theatre: the introduction of terms such as 'drama', 'spectacle', 'theatre' is not always as specific as a theatre writer would like. Writing on certain forms of post-modern architecture, David Harvey refers to the 'organisation of spectacle and theatricality' (1989: 93) and cites Klotz's discussion of the Piazza D'Italia in New Orleans 'It conceives of history as a continuum of portable accessories ... it presents a nostalgic picture of Italy's renaissance ... but at the same time there is a sense of dislocation. After all, this is not realism, but a facade, a stage-set'. (Klotz: 1985)

Edward Soja, accounting for the lack of a proper spatial critique of social life claims that space was treated as 'little more than backdrop or stage'. (1989: 85). Lefebvre too makes this point, arguing that space 'has become more than the theatre, the disinterested stage or setting of action'. (1991: 410)

This reduces the theatrical to the scene: a spatial consideration for sure, but one which seems unproblematically two-dimensional. It refuses to theatre and theatricality a spatiality of its own, complete, produced and fully three-dimensional and experiential.

This project argues for the materiality of *theatricality* by using the strategies and discourses of a field that keeps insisting on using its more material aspects (those of a narrowly defined *theatre*) as definitive of artificiality, superficiality and emptiness. In a sense, my project is two-fold: to introduce the analysis of space

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<sup>8</sup> While there has, particularly recently, been some good and useful work on space and the theatre (See McAuley (1999); Chaudhury (1995); Scolnicov (1987); Mackintosh (1993) and some less useful (See Carlson (1989)), these texts are limited to the provision of a taxonomy of spaces *in* the theatre (McAuley; Scolnicov) or in drama. (Chaudhury) They do not address the question of the space theatricality *produces*, and thus have not been of great relevance to my argument. Carlson's text I find particularly problematic, as it applies a semiotic reading to the surface of theatrical space: my contention is that the analysis of space is precisely a means to evade this kind of interpretation.

into the interpretation of the theatrical, and then to account for the impact of those spatialisations on the importance and power of public theatricality.

From 'reading' to 'experience'.

I mentioned above the limitations of semiotic or 'reading' based analysis. In my view, the inability of semiotic analysis to deal adequately with the ephemeral and experiential aspects of any kind of theatre performance<sup>9</sup> are exacerbated when it comes to public presentations of power and opposition. Their 'legibility', and hence apparent fitness for a reading of their symbols and signs, is as I shall explore, a part of the intention of such an event. In this way, interpreting them from this perspective risks merely reproducing intentionality. I propose that rather than constituting a 'message', these events produce an 'experience' which is contained in, and accessible through interpretation of, the spaces they produce.

Both the assignation of 'legibility' to theatrical events in public space (based on their combination of elements and the assumption that they contain or consist of a 'message') and the strategy of 'decodification' in order to unpack these meanings assume that the space within which they take place has, if not no meaning, then one unproblematised and disconnected from what surrounds it. Space, as Lefebvre contends, is not just a natural void, a container for things and events. It is both produced and productive. An analysis which ignores space-over-time and replaces it with mise-en-scene cannot address the effectivity of a theatrical event, only the surface meanings. Since the event is always already disguising itself as its own surface meanings, analysis of this kind is not merely unable to talk of effectivity in a meaningful way, it is also colluding with the illusion of legibility that ceremony claims. The ways in which theatricality makes 'space' must be read in conjunction with the wider space of the social, of power

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<sup>9</sup> For semiotic and sign-based systems of theatre analysis, see Esslin (1987); Eco (1977); Elam (1980); Aston and Savona (1991); Carlson (1989).

and of the formation of political and social identity. These thoughts will be explored and developed in reference to particular examples of theatrical practice in forthcoming chapters.

There are, of course, some practical consequences here. There is a problem with the ephemerality of the events and spaces under discussion, and the reliability or otherwise of sources for them. Since my project is to apply the insights offered by spatial theory to different examples of the imposition and generation of spaces of power and opposition through theatricality, it has been necessary to draw material from history, to elucidate the differences (and similarities) in their operation, and to properly historicise the argument.

The source material available to me has been for the most part secondary illustrations and accounts. In these documents, a mediation has already occurred between the experiential aspect of an event and the representation of it. The eye-view offered in an illustration is often of a quality and centrality that the participants themselves may not have enjoyed. Alternatively, it may have been deliberately altered or tidied-up by the generator of the image. A two-dimensional representation of a space is even more likely to seem to be available for a semiotically-based reading due its impression of accessibility. This, of course, reinforces the illusion of legibility that the event already manifests. Similarly, eye-witness accounts and statement of intent on the part of the organisers do not account fully for the effects of the event. Some of the effects of which I will speak would not necessarily have been consciously intended by the organisers: the effect of exaltation through exclusion, for example, which accompanies monarchical pageantry, as I explore in Chapter 3.

'Being there' is also not an adequate source for the interpretation of the theatrical and spatial practices under discussion. As I will argue later, one of the deceptions practised by theatrical presentations (especially those of power) is precisely to produce effects which are experienced as 'authentic': one thinks here of the outpouring of grief which followed the death of Diana. Many aspects of the

management of that mourning were theatrically and spatially generated, but the people who flocked to Kensington Gardens with flowers, or lined the route of the coffin were not necessarily experiencing their participation as inauthentic or unreal.

It seems to me that the only way to critically access 'experience' is to outline the spatial practice through a theory of space: space organised in particular ways can be supposed to produce particular effects. The cross-referencing is augmented by the provision of a theoretical strategy which has a wide frame, and can deal with and incorporate seemingly *individuated* and unique events as being rather parts in a continuous yet *differentiated* spatial practice.

This strategy of combining the two fields is intended to permit a fuller theoretical engagement with the ephemerality of the events under discussion by materialising the event as space: this space can be located through the framework of the theory that supposes its there.

Theatrical spaces (along with most kinds of lived space) do not just produce meanings: they produce behaviours. Evidently, all social space is brought about by some form of human intention, whether in terms of design, architecture or use. Part of the exertion of power (authority or custom and convention) on space is the permission and restriction of actions that may take place in them. This can be literally regulated, in terms of published rules: 'do not walk on the grass', 'no running in the corridors', 'no entry'. However, once a space is produced, it suggests itself certain forms of behaviour. A person might lower their voice in an empty cathedral.

This is not to suggest that produced spaces are always and entirely successful in enforcing their effects. They may certainly have a rigid intention, but the uses of those spaces, the imaginaries which they represent and the different experiences people may have in relation to them, are indicative of a sort of tension. The most effectively and coherently constructed spaces contain the tension of maintaining a rigid 'version', and the most superficially 'legible' of these spaces tend to be the

most totalitarian. They are also the ones most open to symbolic subversion; a point I will raise in Chapter 6. There are tensions between the 'versions' of political realities being proposed and enacted; between the kinds of space being mobilised (actual, concrete, lived; conceptual, utopian, transitional), and often between literal practices in space; conflict between demonstrators and the police for example. All in all, it is these tensions which produce them as political, rather than the fact that they have political content. It is this tension which causes them to be a real politics, to do with power, control, and the ability to author the orthodoxy.

Lefebvre claims that his theory of space analyses textures, and a texture implies a meaning of a rather different kind: it implies meaning, not for a 'reader', but 'rather for someone who lives and acts in the space under consideration: a 'subject' with a body - or sometimes a 'collective' subject. The theory raises a lived sense to a conceptual level'. (1991: 132) This parallels productively the questions I raise in regard to the effectivity of the theatricalised event, in terms of how events in space are affective at the level of the lived experience of the individual who witnesses or participates, or of the collective body of the state as it makes its presence present. Secondly, it offers a model for approaching that experience theoretically without over-privileging the subjective or the representation or the stated aims of an event.

I think the strategy of spatial analysis responds to both these issues simultaneously: a space is produced by the event: is given 'texture' by the actions of the participants, their spatial inclusion or exclusion; the organisation of lived space, the articulation of imaginaries, the referencing of fictional spaces such as 'nation' and so on. In the interstices of these two simultaneous and co-dependent modes of production is the experience. This is not to preclude the possibility of either resistant readings or resistant modes of participation. I intend this argument to be a resistant reading of the theatrical spaces of power. Resistant practices will be the subject of discussion in Chapter 6.

### Organisation of the argument.

My argument is organised in the following way. I initially address in Chapter 2 the insights and problematics which I am engaging with from the field of spatial analysis; particularly the work of Henri Lefebvre. I then apply these insights to the interpretation of three historical examples of the production of theatrical space: the British Coronation, the Festivals of the French Revolution, and the spectacular monumentalism of the Third Reich in Germany. All of these in different ways account for the production of theatrical space by power and mark three journeys into abstraction; my rationale for this selection is included in the more detailed chapter summaries, below. The argument then concludes by addressing the question of resistance and opposition in the final chapter, returning to the key points raised by this theoretical perspective, and suggesting that spatial analysis returns to opposition an importance and efficacy which, in this moment of postmodern spectacularisation, is denied it.

### Chapter 2: The Production of Space.

This chapter outlines the work that is being imported from the area of spatial analysis to drive my argument. I offer a brief disciplinary history, and track the simultaneous 'cultural' turn in spatial studies and the 'spatial' turn in studies of culture that have combined to make this field so rich and productive. The chapter then focuses on the work of Henri Lefebvre, particularly his text *The Production of Space*, whose translation into English in 1991 has invigorated so much work in the fields of geography, cultural theory, urban studies and beyond.<sup>10</sup> I have chosen in my discussion of Lefebvre to involve the work of four key theorists: Edward Soja, Derek Gregory, David Harvey and his biographer Rob Shields. These writers have engaged in examination of Lefebvre's work, and

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<sup>10</sup> In addition to work cited in this chapter, see for example Keith and Pile (1993); Duncan and Ley (1993); Liggett and Perry (1995).

also are engaged in a series of published exchanges with each other, which has made their writings particularly useful in this context.

Lefebvre's book is a somewhat difficult text, as Shields points out: 'This is a difficult project, and Lefebvre often fails to maintain his focus'. (1999: 155) A central problem is the use of the term 'space' itself. Lefebvre speaks of 'space' as a totality which is made up of 'spaces', which, as Shields notes, seems tautologous. Yet the tautology is driven by what Lefebvre addresses as a misconception about space: that it is empty and formless - merely a container for social life. As an 'object' with content, space (as an entirety) is capable of containing many forms of differentiated spaces.

I organise my reading of Lefebvre's work around three key insights, which will underpin my argument, and three problematics which respond productively to the questions which I raise about the practice and interpretation of theatrical events. Firstly, I address his identification of space as something produced by and productive of social activity. This deceptively simple manoeuvre brings the interpretation of space into a central position in any analysis of social action, including, of course, theatrical activities. Lefebvre's work here is organised around two further insights. He asserts that space is produced in three forms (rather than the two (conceptual and physical) which are usually identified), these being spatial practice (the perceived), representations of space (the conceived) and spaces of representation (the lived). His triad of spatial forms as I shall show, provokes a radical re-thinking of space as it is lived: power's production of social space organises life, as it is lived, around visual (hence perceived) paradigms, while colonising the spaces of representation within which a fully realised life would be possible. This triad offers to my argument a means of siting the strategies of power and resistance in relation to the manipulation of these different forms of space.

Lefebvre then works through a chronological account of the history of spatialisations: from 'absolute', or undifferentiated space, through the 'historical'

moment, in which representation, visual dominance and abstraction begin to occur, to the contemporary moment of 'abstract' space. He argues that this latter space masquerades as a coherence, disguising its contradictions, which can be mined by opposition to provoke a 'differential' space of resistance, and of resistant forms of experience.

It is this chronology which has guided my selection of examples for this argument, which serve both as exemplification of aspects of spatial analysis, and also apply that analysis to concrete materialisations of space. I detail these below.

I then address the problematics in Lefebvre's work which respond productively to my own questions. The first of these is the question of semiotic reading of space, and the limitations which Lefebvre perceives in this approach. As I have detailed above, this is also a point of concern for me in the interpretation of forms of theatricality. The second useful correlation lies in Lefebvre's account of space as a 'totality': as I mentioned above, a continuous yet differentiated series of spaces which nevertheless connect to and impact on each other in a single social spatialisation. This has significance for my intention to identify theatrical acts as central to the exertion (rather than just the expression) of power, and resistance to power. If all spaces are contiguous, then theatrical space cannot help but impact on, inflect and produce the space of the social. Finally, Lefebvre offers a crucial manoeuvre: towards identification of space as a 'texture' not a 'text'. This speaks productively to my identification of 'experience' and not 'message' as the way in which theatrical events produce their effects.

Chapter 3: 'Just Like the History Books': Spectacular Space and the Coronation.  
This chapter addresses the production of theatrical space by the event of the British Coronation. This event has been chosen as it marks the first of the three

abstract theatrical spaces which I argue are the forms of theatrical space produced by power.

It also provides a context within which to introduce Lefebvre's identification of monumental space, and to clarify my distinction between the 'legible surface' of an event, and the experience it provokes.

The Coronation, which claims its origins in deepest antiquity, has altered in its practices, particularly since the end of the nineteenth century. The chapter examines two accounts of this historical genesis (Milton 1972 and Cannadine 1983) in order to identify the limitations in both. I account for the 'legible surface' of the Coronation: the meanings which it claims for itself, before turning Lefebvre's account of 'monumental' space. This is the closest he gets to discussing a space approaching the qualities of theatrical space. Notably, none of the critics who engage with Lefebvre's work pay any attention to this space, but in the context of my argument it is significant. Lefebvre proposes that it is in monumental space that all aspects of a social spatialisation are condensed and summarised. This work establishes the principle which I mentioned earlier: that theatrical space is productive, rather than reflective of, social realities.

As the legible surface of the Coronation is also concerned with a summarising function, this analysis provides the 'spatial turn' here. I argue that in its increasingly symbolic and spectacular form, the Coronation is productive of a monumental and spectacular theatrical space, which acts on its spectators in particular ways. While disguising itself as an 'absolute' space, the theatrical space in play here is abstracted and abstracting.

I then introduce Lefebvre's identification of 'horizons of meaning', a strategy whereby monumental space can engage with and abstract its own history (although this concept is also important to strategies of resistance, as I discuss in Chapter 6). I examine the development of monumental spaces with the help of the work of Louis Mumford and Bruno Zevi, before turning to the particular

histories of the monumental spaces of London. The Chapter then examines the spatial construction of experience for spectators of the Coronation.

Chapter 4: 'Making the people for the Laws': the French Revolutionary Festivals. This chapter addresses the Festivals of the French Revolution. As Lefebvre and others have argued (see below), the French Revolution stands at a crucial point in the history of the West and of Western spatialisation. It marks the transition from historical to abstract space. For this reason, it is sited after the discussion of the Coronation. While historically it precedes it, in terms of Lefebvre's chronology of spaces, the transformation of absolute to abstract space implied in Chapter 3 is invoking a space which comes before historical space. Secondly, the Coronation is dependent for its meanings on the fact that the ceremony has been performed more or less continuously throughout this change. It is not an invented ceremony; its spatial organisation has had to change for it to serve the interests of abstract space. The Festivals of the French Revolution, like the ceremonies and practices of Nazism which follow in Chapter 5, are created in their moment. Their journey into abstraction is therefore more directly reflective of, in the case of the French Revolution, the evolution of the power system itself, and in the case of Nazism, the strategy of abstraction itself as a means of wielding power.

Chapter 4 stands as a sort of 'parting of the ways', as I shall show, between the abstract theatrical space of power, and popularly generated and fully lived theatrical space. These two trajectories are therefore developed in the chapters which follow the historical moment of this division: the excess of abstraction in the Third Reich in Chapter 5, and the attempts by resistant movements to reproduce a fully lived theatrical space in Chapter 6.

This chapter takes a chronological journey through the Festivals, addressing the question of how far their management, organisation and the debates they stage over the production and control of space reflect the larger direction of the

Revolution itself into abstract space. There are two key trajectories here: firstly, the battle between the riotous and spontaneous theatrical spaces generated by the 'people' on which and through which the Revolution comes into being in the first place, and the ensuing regulation and domination of this space with the increasingly formal and abstract Festival as the Revolution seeks to consolidate and institutionalise itself. The second concern is to track the nature of this abstraction, as it dominates the 'people' through substituting and excluding them in the form of their 'representation', and regulates their experience through producing a coercive and spectacular theatrical space.

#### Chapter 5: 'The Word in Stone': Theatrical Space in the Third Reich.

This chapter investigates aspects of the theatricalised presentation of power in support of the Third Reich. This chapter develops the idea outlined earlier: that theatrical spaces of power do not merely describe, but can constitute the 'real'. In the case of German fascism, they constitute the 'real' *as it is not*. The theatrical space comes almost before the social space: it attempts to condense and cohere that social space in the image which it is producing for it. Through the production of a brutally abstract and abstracting theatrical space, it attempts to *produce* the social space by effectively colonising everyday space and experience with the monumentality and barbarous force of its vision of itself.

The designers of the ceremonies, and the propaganda of the leaders of the movement describe the organisation of ceremonial and architectural space as manifesting 'the word in stone', and are explicitly concerned, not just with appearances, but the effect that these space have on the participant. I propose that the space produced in this context is totalitarian, not merely because it is a space produced to support a totalitarian ideology, but because it functions by operating in a coercive and monolithic way itself.

As I address in Chapter 2, one of the points made by Lefebvre about the effects of the manipulation of space is that it demarcates (or is controlled in such a way

as to demarcate) what is allowed to happen in it and what is proscribed. The restriction of opposition, and the establishment of a coherent ideological and material social reality was the agenda for all actions of the Reich. That the propagandists paid such close attention firstly to theatricality and secondly to space is of clear pertinence to my argument.

This chapter examines the 'theatre-like' aspect of the propaganda of the regime (the use of symbols, ceremonies and emblems) as part of the theme of this thesis that the 'theatre-like' must be reconfigured as the 'theatrical' if we are to recognise the full complexity of the ideological work in play. It then addresses the awareness from within the regime of the need to construct space suffused with the ideology of the movement. The Reich's architectural programme is examined: a programme written about in propaganda material as not only a representation of a vision of the desired community, but crucially conceptualised as the materialisation of ideology. There is treatment in these writings of the effect that observation of and immersion in these spaces will have on people. The constitution of the spatial manifestation of their ideology was consciously intended to affect people and cause them to either fall in line with the ideology, or alternatively, to be too threatened by its dominance to do anything about it. Thus, I argue, through inhabiting the produced theatrical spaces of the Reich, the ideology forces itself into lived experience. It is not merely a case of finding oneself swayed by propaganda images or overwhelmed by spectacle. If the space is totalitarian, there is simply nowhere else to be. Through the experience of ceremonial (and social) space and how it articulates what may or may not be done; who belongs to a community and who doesn't; what the nature of that community is; social existence is determined. This is not to suggest, of course, that this cannot be resisted. But the coherence of the spatial/ ideological vision of the fascists, reinforced by random and brutal violence, restricts it as far as possible. One of the few means of escape from this vicious regime was literally spatial - to flee into exile. In the end, space defeated it - the vastness of the

Soviet Union on the Eastern Front and the monstrous losses suffered by the Red Army; the global scale of the war. And subsequently, the discovery of those secret spaces where the word was fully made stone - Bergen-Belsen, Dachau, Auschwitz, Mauthausen.

#### Chapter 6: Protests and resistances: some conclusions.

This concluding chapter of the argument consolidates the discoveries made in preceding chapters by applying the insights they supply to the interpretation of dissent. Resistant and oppositional practices are quite widely approached from the perspective of their theatrical or performative nature. However, as I have explored in relation to the theatrical practices of power, the frame of analysis provided by spatial theory necessitates a reappraisal of their theatrical functioning based in interpretation of the spaces they produce. This chapter therefore revisits the theory of the production of space in order to address the particular problems (and potentialities) which it provides for the study of resistance. I revisit here several points, flagged throughout the argument, which have begun to suggest that it is resistant theatricality that can challenge the totalising tendencies of abstract theatrical space. I mobilise again the work of Lefebvre, and also recent work in the field of geography which has begun to think the question of resistance in productive ways.

I use these insights to propose the theatrical spaces of resistance as spaces of *presence*, which, through their production of alternative forms of social experience, can expose the artificiality of the 'presence' produced in abstract theatrical space. To aid this part of the argument, I draw on some of the theoretical writings of Lefebvre's students: the Situationist International. I then explore these points in relation to some of the oppositional practices undertaken by resistant movements in the U.S. in the 1960's. While there are many forms of resistant theatrical practices which could furnish examples for this chapter, I

choose to look at these events, again, because they fall at a crucial moment in the evolution of Lefebvre's chronology. His identification of abstract space seems to correspond with the formal moment of modernity. The events of the 1960's, just before (and perhaps provocative of) the turn into postmodernity (see below), would seem to have been a possible pivot for the shift into differential space which he anticipates. Secondly, these movements are based in an explicit critique of the theatrical strategies of power. I use the interpretation of these events to track the ways in which resistant theatres disrupt the theatrical spaces of power and intervene in crucial ways in the way power dominates space. The spatial perspective allows us to see the ways in which the battle between power and opposition takes shape: that it is not just a question of competing viewpoints, but of competing spatialisations. Just as power uses its theatrical spaces to summarise, condense, and produce its social space; so resistant theatrical spaces point to an alternative social spatialisation. They materialise this alternative theatrically: through the production of this space, and through being present in this space, it is possible to evade the colonisations attempted by abstract space.

A brief word about time ...

Clearly, time is an essential co-ordinate of any form of theatre or theatrical behaviour: events contain time (even if they consciously work to obliterate it), may evolve over time, may imply time (conceptual, historical, evolutionary), may be about time or its ownership and direction. This project does not seek to assert the spatial over the temporal in a hierarchy of affective factors. However, it is a project about space, and therefore will not address time as a central concern. It is important to note here, however, the work that time does in relation to the spaces that will be discussed in the following chapters, and the ways in which time should be read as implicated in that work.

Part of the remit of this argument is to locate a means of talking about the effectivity of selected theatrical events through, to an extent, spatialising the historical. Clearly a corollary of this process is the historicisation of the spatial. Lefebvre's project, dealt with in Chapter 2, proposes a chronology of moments in the evolution of spatialities; this, and the critiques of his work will be covered as part of that broader discussion.

Time, as a facet of public theatricality and the spaces produced, is notable in the following ways. Many of the events, ceremonies and monuments under discussion have conceptions of time implicated in what they appear to be saying. Secondly, the spaces they constitute are temporally located, have a duration. Thirdly, the times they mobilise are in a relationship with each other. A mechanism by which we are able to compare and differentiate between the events under discussion in this project is in the ways in which they deal with and produce time.

Monumentality, as a starting point, is to an extent an attempt to obliterate time. Statuary, as the most basic implementation of the 'monument', fixes a nodal point in and of time against which the flow and changeability of the 'everyday' is forced to unfold. The statue monumentalises a moment: an event, a figure from history, a summarisation of a particular view of the world. (The statue of Churchill 'outraged' by the grass mohican applied to it by Mayday 2000 protesters is the bulldog, warlike patriot, grizzled and dogged. It does not commemorate the ordering of troops to open fire on strikers in 1911.) The statue stands over time and, as things change around it, cannot help but imply permanence, something plucked out of the flow of events and demarcated as important and transcendent of its own moment. The statue, being artificially legible, gives an illusion of permanence. It strengthens, by the invisibility of its mechanism and the disguising of its own effectivity, whatever version of power and vision of the world it supports. Part of the work of the monument is to imply the destruction of time and hence the permanence and therefore the legitimacy of what is

supported by its presence. Of course, this implication only works if it exists over time. With this in mind, it becomes easier to understand the continuing significance of monuments after they, and the version of power they support, are defeated. The former Eastern Bloc is littered with 'monument graveyards', which express through their spatial marginalisation, the end of the power that built them. Lenin himself is yet to be moved and buried. The French Revolution destroyed statues of Louis XVI and replaced them with (impermanent) Revolutionary structures. The body of 'Louis the Shortened' himself was broken to pieces and buried in quicklime; yet the Festival organisers repeatedly felt the need to incorporate the burning of 'emblems of kingship' in their ceremonies. The festivals of the French Revolution, too, are engaged with the production of time, perhaps most notably in the literal re-organisation of the calendar into the Revolutionary months, and the 'beginning again' of history itself in the re-dating of years into the life of the Revolution. This commencement from 'Year One' (a retrospective allocation: the first Revolutionary year was year Two) was not an absolute beginning: the authorities and festival *ordonnateurs* rooted the authenticity of the Revolution in an antique 'time of nature'. Year One is a resumption of a supposedly more authentic mode of being. The adoption of the Revolutionary calendar by the insurrectionists of 1968 mobilises the third implication for time mentioned above: the relationship of different times to each other.

The events, covered in Chapter 5, of the period of the Third Reich in Germany, demonstrate a particular self-consciousness around time. Firstly, and most famously, what is being constructed is a continuity; a common manoeuvre on the part of those organising state-sponsored events. (One thinks here of the '1000 year tradition' of the British Coronation or the allusions to classical society in the French Revolution.) The 1000 Year Reich was not only projected forwards in time, but also backwards, claiming a legitimising heritage from Greek and Roman civilisation, from an Aryan historiography, and from a specific

organisation of German imperial and military history. At the end of the Second World War, a film about the battle at Colberg was in production. 100,000 soldiers were drawn away from the fighting to act as extras. Goebbels said 'Gentlemen - don't you want to play a part in this film, be brought back to life in a hundred years time? ... For the sake of this prospect ... hold out now, so that a hundred years hence the audience does not hoot and whistle when you appear on the screen'.<sup>11</sup> The 'time of the Reich' was implicit in the production of Nazi ceremonies. Many of them were to do with commemorating and monumentalising moments in the history of the Nazi movement, for example the abortive Beer Hall Putsch of 1922.

The 'time' of the ceremonial event itself is subject to the same sleight of hand as its space: it appears as a separated period during which the activities of the state and its people are presented in summarised form. As I have made clear, I argue that a separation of this nature further permits the fake legibility of the events to function, and diminishes the possibility of any analysis of these things as mobilisations of real power and affectivity.

This is the opening section of Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*, worth quoting here at length.

The tradition of the dead weighs like a nightmare on the minds of the living. And, just when they appear to be engaged in the revolutionary transformation of themselves and their material surroundings, in the creation of something which does not yet exist, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they timidly conjure up the spirits of the past to help them; they borrow their names, slogans and costumes so as to stage the new world-historical scene in this venerable disguise and borrowed language...the revolution of 1789-1814 draped itself alternately as the Roman republic and the Roman Empire; and the revolution of 1848 knew no better than to parody at some points 1789 and at others the revolutionary traditions of 1793-5. In the same way, the beginner who has learned a new language always retranslates it into his mother tongue: he can only be said to have appropriated the spirit of the new language and to be able to express himself in it freely when he can manipulate it without reference to the old, and when he forgets his original language while using the new one. (1973: 146-7)

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<sup>11</sup> Cited in TV Documentary 'We Have Ways of Making You Think' on Nazi film propaganda.

The latter part of this observation clearly chimes with my argument: what is being proposed by Lefebvre and other proponents of radical social change is that for revolutionary change to stick, a complementary spatial organisation must be inaugurated which supplants and transcends the old one. This, after all, is what agencies of power do in their establishment of material and conceptual spatial articulations of the preferred social organisation of state, nation or capital. The opening section of this piece of writing also offers insight into the ways in which this is achieved through theatricality, although Marx's reading of theatricality as 'staging' in 'costume' encapsulates precisely the misconstruction which, as I have argued, this argument resists.

There is a difference in the 'quoting' done by ceremonies of power, and that undertaken by resistance. It is to do with time.

Events such as those organised in support of the Third Reich, or the Revolutionary Festivals in France refer to various 'pasts' in order to provide historical continuity and therefore legitimacy for what are, after all, new configurations of power and polity. The events which follow them chronologically, however, begin to quote these ceremonial repertoires themselves, and to invoke the meanings which they themselves produced. One thinks, for example of contemporary uses of the swastika by extreme right groups in Europe. When originally adopted by the nascent fascist movements in Germany and Spain, it was a Jain symbol, intended to represent the movement of the sun. Now it is always and forever referential of the atrocity and horror of the Third Reich. Contemporary use of it cannot help but invoke those meanings.

The Nazi rallies and the Festivals of the French Revolution may have been temporally limited (they began, they ended), but they nevertheless alluded to a permanence and historical rootedness of their right to be. They appeared to be heightened and summarising moments of a new order that had a deep origin and would endure, thus invoking a conceptual space which paralleled material space. Of course, this is part of the work of such events: they appear to summarise a

political arrangement or ideology which already exists, whereas in both of these cases they are actually part of the mechanism which is bringing that arrangement into being. The Nazi Party rallies appeared to describe a 'real' social experience (which, as I detailed, is supposed to exist 'elsewhere'); in fact they are constituting that social experience. Nevertheless, their treatment of time is as the unending.

Ceremonies of opposition often have a different relationship to time. Theatrical modes of opposition tend to draw attention to their own time-boundedness, partly in terms of their own internal coherence, but also, crucially, in terms of the moment at which power will put a stop to them. Oppositional events position themselves in relation to the space and time produced by whatever is being resisted. Often, their effectiveness is only fully complete when power has stepped in and completed the play. The narrative begun by the students in Tianenmen Square through the erection of a statue of Liberty was completed when the Chinese tanks destroyed it; a production of a 'horizon of meaning' (see below), or superimposition of moments on top of one another to complete the account of the relations of power in play in the event. This positioning of oppositional events in relation to the existing social order means that they are not a fully realised alternative, but a demarcated space and time of dissent and potential - what Lefebvre calls 'differential space'. Because of this provisionality, they are not obligated to produce a complete and rooted temporality.

In 1848, in France, insurrectionists shot out the clocks. Many powers and opposition groups have alluded to time in their slogans. 'Tomorrow belongs to me.' 'Seize the time.' 'Our time will come.' No time can come without space for it to exist in. This project is about the production of that space.

## Chapter 2: The Production of Space.

In this chapter I address the theoretical insights which I am importing from the field of spatial analysis to inform my argument. As I outlined in the Introduction, I will give a brief account of the disciplinary context in which the work of Henri Lefebvre has become so significant. The focus of the chapter will then move to the theory of space which he outlines in his 1974 *La production de l'espace* (Paris: Anthropos), whose translation into English in 1991 as *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell) has invigorated this field of enquiry. I organise my treatment of Lefebvre's work around three key insights: the notion of the 'production' of space; the 'triad' of space with which Lefebvre replaces the usual binary division of space into the conceptual and the physical; and his chronology of spaces - all of which inform the trajectory of my own argument. I then turn to three key problematics, identified by Lefebvre, which speak productively to my own agenda. Firstly, his resistance to 'readings' of space is paralleled in my own resistance to 'readings' of theatrical events. Secondly, his insistence that space must be seen as a totality (despite being divided through use and agency into discrete spaces) offers to the differentiated spaces of theatricality power in the shaping of social space. Finally his identification of the 'texture' of space provides a frame of analysis within which to approach my question of 'experience', and the function of that experience in producing the effects of theatrical space.

### Disciplinary context.

Part of the strategy of the writers on geography whose work I will reference in this thesis is to reinsert spatiality and the significance of the spatial into social theory and interpretations of how the social is constituted. Its absence seems to have been as much to do with the interests of the discipline of geography as well as a historically motivated social theory.

Edward Soja tells us that,

Throughout its history, the institutionalised discipline of geography has repeatedly sought philosophical legitimacy in its distinctive (if not unique) perspective, often using this sustaining legitimisation as a means of confining geographical analysis to pure description of phenomenal forms regardless of their causal origins. (1985: 103)

This tended to cause social space to be analysed and interpreted as if it were physical space, and spatial analysis remained static, and tangential to developments within historiography, philosophy and social theory.

Space was regarded as a context; a container of the places of production, having no interest or influence in their occurrence.

I think it possible to show that a certain myopia has persistently distorted spatial theorisation for centuries by creating an *illusion of opaqueness*, a short-sighted interpretation of spatiality which has focused on immediate surface appearances without being able to see beyond them. Spatiality is accordingly interpreted as a collection of things, as substantive appearances which may ultimately be linked to social causation but which are explainable primarily as things-in-themselves. (Soja 1985: 99-100)

Foucault, in his chapter 'On Geography' from *Power/Knowledge*, speaks of the resulting privileging of time over space, of history over geography, so to speak.

'Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic.' He continues

For all those who confuse history with the old schemas of evolution, living continuity, organic development, the progress of consciousness or the project of existence, the use of spatial terms seems to have the air of an anti-history. If one started to talk in terms of space that meant one was hostile to time. (Foucault 1980: 70)

Clearly, part of their project is to address this omission within their own discipline, and also to move outwards into social and cultural theory. Indeed, the project is not entirely derived from the geographers. There had been recognition of the need to re-activate ideas around space.

Anthony Giddens, in 1979, wrote

most forms of social theory have failed to take seriously enough *not only the temporality of social conduct, but also its spatial attributes*' (his ital). At first sight, nothing seems so banal and uninformative as to assert that social activity occurs in space and time. But neither time nor space have been incorporated into social theory; rather, they are ordinarily treated more as 'environments' in which social conduct is enacted. (1979: 202)

Soja develops this thought, observing that an approach incorporating both space and time

differs significantly from the commonly adopted conceptualisation of space as the reflective mirror or embracing container of social life. While the former obscures the specificity of the connections between spatiality and society, the latter breaks the connections by externalising spatiality into a receptacle or backdrop. As a result, both these illusive simplifications divert attention away from the problematic complexity of the social production of space and time and the space-time constitution of social systems. (1989: 96).

This reassertion of space into social theory is clearly of significance to any project engaged with social formations, such as those of interest to me, to do with the establishment and maintenance of regimes of power, and oppositional practices which resist them. If space is implicated in the production and reproduction of the social in its entirety, then it follows that it is also implicated in the production of parts of that social - in the case of this project, of 'theatricalised' presentations of power and opposition in public space. This manoeuvre allows us to avoid the problem of space as a 'backdrop', which merely emphasises the performative and 'stage-like' elements of theatrical events. As we will see, the geographers' insistence on the material effects of spatiality, of their centrality to understanding of social practice is of significance to the interpretation of the events I want to talk about. It also provides both a reason and a means to resist the 'reading' of theatrical events and spaces.

### Reassertion: the spatial turn.

Soja and Derek Gregory, in their accounts of the re-spatialisation of social analysis, refer to what is now being called the 'spatial turn'. Soja, in an extended critique of Giddens' work in the field of social theory<sup>1</sup> observes that, while his work provides 'for the first time, a systematic social ontology capable of sustaining the reassertion of space in critical social theory' (1989: 115), yet there is still a considerable underuse of the spatial in the theory itself. For Soja, there has been work contemporaneous to the work of Giddens and early Harvey<sup>2</sup> which has indicated the usefulness and appropriateness of the spatial as not only a 'new slant' on existing issues in social theory, but perhaps as an essential aspect of the existence of social reality and its theorisations. He cites Poulanzas' 1978 'State, Power, Socialism' as a place where analysis of the institutional materiality of the state was refocused around

the formation of 'spatial and temporal matrices' manifested in the themes of territory and tradition ... these matrices were defined as the 'presuppositions' (versus merely preconditions or outcomes) of capitalism, implied in the relations of production and the divisions of labour. Temporality and spatiality are presented together as the concretisation of social relations and social practice, the 'real substratum' of mythical, religious, philosophical and experiential representations of space-time. (1989: 143)

Gregory, too, speaks of Poulanzas' 'brilliant sketches' of the materiality of the state and its spatial structures, and also tracks similar manoeuvres in feminist and structuration theory. (1994: 95) Although structure as a form of political critique and analysis used spatial metaphors (the structure as a spatial conceptualisation of the relation of things and people in the social) it nevertheless did not fully activate analysis of the material and lived spaces arising from these perceptions: the literal dispersal of people and things in space that constitutes the 'structure', and the ways in which these dispersals contribute to the production of consciousness.

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<sup>1</sup> See Soja (1989) Chapter 6: 'Spatialisations: A Critique of the Giddensian Version' pp.138-156.

<sup>2</sup> Soja indicates here Giddens (1979) and Harvey (1973).

Yet,

a form of social theory was being projected into human geography as a means of addressing 'internal' concerns, and ... as a direct consequence of this conceptual mapping, the a-spatiality of the original formulation was itself called into question, thus rendering consideration of the spatial newly significant and productive. (Gregory 1994: 111)

It is this 'turn' which Soja and other radical spatial theorists are generating and building upon, as they articulate the 'socio-spatial dialectic', the socially produced geographical configurations and spatial relations which give material form and expression to society. 'To be alive', he notes, 'is to participate in the social production of space, to shape and be shaped by a constantly evolving spatiality which constitutes and concretises social action and relationships'. (1985: 90)

Spatiality is socially produced and, like society itself, exists in both material forms (concrete spatialities) and as a set of relations between individuals and groups. (Soja 1985: 91-2)

This 'provocative extrapolation of social and spatial structure' was, according to Soja, anticipated in the work of the French philosopher and social theorist Henri Lefebvre, who wrote *La Production de L'espace* in 1974.

Its translation into English in 1991 (thus making it accessible to non-French speaking geographers and cultural theorists) has energised the field significantly, and it is to his work that I will turn shortly to provide the account of space that will be employed in forthcoming chapters.

The majority of this work on space and spatiality was formulated explicitly to address questions of the relationships between modernity and postmodernity within a framework of the development and evolution of capital. This had two main trajectories: firstly, as described above, an attempt to reinsert analysis of space into a range of social scientific thought which had increasingly privileged the temporal over the spatial. Secondly, they represent an attempt to seize hold

of and challenge some of the perceived excesses of post-modern thought. These simultaneously articulate a radical schism in historical continuity, and deny the formulation of resistance to this by any 'total' scheme of thought which relies on historical continuity (such as forms of Marxism). This trajectory, notable particularly in the work of David Harvey, and also in a less explicit way in the work of Henri Lefebvre, proposes and articulates a continuity by deploying analysis of space and time to find a recognisable analytical frame to address the manipulations and manifestations of the particular time-space configurations present in various moments of pre-modern, industrial and financial capitalism.

I propose to focus the insights available within this broad range of concerns onto the interpretation of public theatricality, and to use this imaginative, challenging and deeply political work to speak to the discipline of theatrical analysis.

#### Lefebvre's project.

This important work represents the first, and perhaps the most thorough attempt to retrieve space from the realm of discourse; to assert a 'social' space as distinct from, and in relation to, the 'mental' space of epistemology and associated reasoning systems and thereby to resist the use of space as a metaphorical descriptor of the 'real'. Lefebvre is also concerned to provide a framework of analysis capable of bringing the 'total' nature of the space of global capitalism into view and subjecting it to a meaningful interpretation. His project is explicitly political, and he seeks to use this exposure of space to identify gaps and inconsistencies within its illusory wholeness which permit a radical or revolutionary reading and potential intervention in the realm of action.

Clearly, a contemporary scholar must be aware of the critique of such 'grand narratives' mobilised in certain branches of postmodern and poststructuralist thought. It must be noted, however, that many of the geographers working in

this field are trying to find a way of discursively addressing the lived experience and space produced by the post-modern moment, and are 'finding a place to stand' by looking at the material production of that space.

Lefebvre himself seems to articulate his formulation of a 'science of space' not so much as a statement of unproblematised 'truth', but rather as a tactic, a 'strategic hypothesis', which must remain essentially temporary, and subject to revision. As a long-range theoretical and practical project, his work 'seeks to point the way towards a different space, towards the space of a different (social) life and of a different mode of production' (1991: 60), straddling the breach between 'reality and ideality, the conceived and the lived' and surmounting these oppositions by exploring the dialectic between the 'possible' and the 'impossible'. What Gregory calls Lefebvre's 'utopianism' must certainly be noted, yet the position remains, essentially, hopeful.

Rob Shields asks

Why is this work important? Lefebvre goes beyond previous philosophical debates on the nature of space, and beyond geography, planning and architecture, which considered people and things merely 'in' space, to present a coherent theory of the development of different systems of spatiality in different historical periods. The 'spatialisations' are not just physical arrangements of things but also spatial patterns of social action and routine as well as historical conceptions of space and the world (fear of falling off the edge of a flat world). They add up to a socio-spatial imaginary and outlook, which manifests itself in our every intuition. (1999: 146)

Lefebvre's proposal is to formulate a 'science of space', without which, he argues, a large amount of the legitimate attributes and 'properties' of social space will be assigned to, and discussed only within, the realm of discourse. (1991: 7).

He is aware of the paradox of doing this within a discursive format, and notes that

(t)he project (he is) outlining does not aim to produce a (or THE) discourse of space, but rather to expose the actual production of space by bringing together different kinds of space and the modalities of their genesis together within a single theory. (1991: 16)

He argues that habits of philosophical (and political analytical) thinking have created a distance, separating 'ideal' or mental space (the space of discourse, of analysis, of abstract thought) from 'real' space (the space of social practice), when, 'in actuality, each of these two kinds of space involves, underpins and presupposes the other'. (1991: 14)

His aim is therefore twofold - to produce a discursive 'science of space' that is able to acknowledge and encompass the 'totality' of space, and secondly, to account for material space through examining the ways in which it is produced. It is necessary to unpick the ways in which space has been spoken about, and also its illusory coherence. This insight informs this project. I simultaneously wish to find a means of speaking about theatrical events which does not reduce them to 'scenery', or allusions to 'real' politics and practice, but recognises that their impact is precisely to do with their interpenetration with the broader space of the social - material and conceptual - and their contiguity. Secondly, by examining the space produced by and for the event as a material facet, indeed a determining facet of their existence, it will be possible to account for their effectivity without having to take them at face-value by performing a 'reading' on them.

Lefebvre dismisses the possibility of drawing his 'science of space' from within the realms of philosophy, literature or general scientific notions. Philosophy, as an 'interested party', has, for him, disqualified itself, by aiding and abetting the creation of the schism of mental and physical space by expressing its debates within an abstract and metaphysical representation of a rational and homogenous space. (1991: 14) This goes against the origins of classical philosophy which were tied up in the development and shape of the 'real' Greek city, with its paradigm of ordered unities of space. This close relationship was later severed, and thus the development of philosophy itself away from an integral relationship to its own context of production leaves it unable to speak with any authority on the mutually dependent relationship between material and conceptual space.

Literature and architecture are also not possibilities for the kind of grand scale that Lefebvre is aiming for. Although there are many evocations of space in literature, they are 'too prevalent to provide a model from which a usable framework of analysis can be extrapolated'. (1991: 14) Architecture, too, requires a 'prior analysis and exposition of the concept of space' before it can itself be defined. (1991: 15)

The kinds of generalised scientific thinking being undertaken at the time Lefebvre was writing, based in concepts of text, message, codes and communication are perceived by him to be equally limited, owing to the fact that their application may result in the analysis of space becoming a single and specific area of investigation, thus exacerbating the dissociations mentioned above.

Knowledge of spaces wavers between description and dissection. Things in space or pieces of space are described...what is always overlooked is the fact that this kind of fragmentation tallies ... with the goals of existing society. (1991: 91)

Studying fragments, in other words, produces partial knowledges.

This leaves Lefebvre seeking a 'universal' notion. 'Do such notions exist?' he asks. He claims that 'the concepts of production and of the act of production do have a certain abstract universality'. (1991: 11) These concepts, he argues, have survived both annexation by philosophy and political economy, and therefore can be mobilised in this context and put to work.

Is it conceivable', he asks, 'that the exercise of hegemony might leave space untouched? Could space be nothing more than the passive locus of social relations, the milieu in which their combination takes on body, or the aggregate of procedures employed in their removal? The answer must be no. (1991: 11)

Yet, he adds, 'to speak of 'producing space' sounds bizarre, so great is the sway still held by the idea that empty space is prior to whatever ends up in it'. (1991:

15). Questions immediately arise here: what spaces? and what does it mean to speak of 'producing space'?

### The Production of Space.

Space, argues Lefebvre, has tended to be seen as a void in which events and objects 'are'. However,

space is neither a mere frame, nor a form or container of a virtually neutral kind ... (it) is a social morphology; it is to lived experience what form itself is to a living organism. (1991: 77)

Therefore, '(t)he approach (today) should analyse, not things in space, but space itself, to expose the social relationships embedded within it'. (1991: 89)

It is this relationship of the social and the spatial (what Soja and others would later call 'the socio-spatial dialectic'<sup>3</sup>) that is crucial to this element of Lefebvre's work.

Any activity developed over (historical) time engenders (produces) a space, and can only attain concrete existence within that space. (Lefebvre 1991: 115)

Most importantly, space must be recognised as a concrete 'thing', not just a discursive metaphor - as we have seen, for Lefebvre the restriction of spatial analysis to the mental realm has impeded the understanding of space as an agent of social formations and change. He does acknowledge the difficulty in this shift in thought.

"Space" is not a product in the sense that a bag of sugar is a product; we cannot so clearly identify and point to the moments that go to make it exist. Nor can it be viewed as a conglomeration or contents list of everything that exists.

It is a product to be used, to be consumed, it is also a means of production; networks of exchange, flows of raw materials and energy fashion space and are determined by it. The means of its production cannot be separated from the productive forces which make it, or the social divisions of labour which shape it. (1991: 85)

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<sup>3</sup> See Soja (1985) and (1989).

Rob Shields addresses the difficulty here

How can spatialisation (Lefebvre's 'space') be both a product and a productive medium in which other products are created and within which exchanges take place?

He responds,

Space has both a material reality and a formal property that enables it to constrain other commodities and their social relations. It continually recreates or reproduces the social relations of its production. (Shields 1999: 159)

For Lefebvre, 'the social relations of production project themselves into a space, becoming inscribed there, and in that process, produc(e) that space itself'. (1991: 129)

To elucidate this, we could elaborate on Lefebvre's 'bag of sugar', a supposedly easily recognisable 'product' in that it is produced, exchanged and consumed. Sugar is grown, from a UK perspective, on the 'other' side of the world. The development of sugar as a crop for export has displaced original sustenance farming, bringing the growers within the constraints of the 'global' economy. It is sold on the international market for a sum determined by supply and demand, which, in turn, affects the lives of the growers. It is imported into this country, distributed to the shop round the corner from where I live. I take my money, earned by participating in production in a role for which I have been equipped by class, family, education (social relations of production), leave my small flat (unit of property) in a gentrifying area (gentrifying because people like me, with all that implies, are coming to live here) walk round the corner and buy the sugar. The relationships between all these things are inscribed in the spatial relationships; distance, exchange, production, consumption. The spatial relationships conspire to perpetuate the social and economic relationships. I do not fly to a small farm in the third world to buy my sugar. Even if I did, the inequality of the situation would not be altered. The best I can manage is to buy

'fair-trade', which is, of course, a modestly more equitable version of the same thing. To do this I have to invoke a further social/spatial consequence - I have to get on a bus and go to a health food shop.

Because of this relationship and interrelationship between space and the social, space (and the production of space) is vitally implicated in power and the production of power, whether of state, nation, empire or mode of production. So control over the social is also control over the spatial and the production of space, in any given moment and by any particular group or force.

This is a crucial perspective for my project, which is to centralise theatrical enactments of power and opposition in the discussion of how power and resistance function. The importance of these events and practices is not only that they 'represent' and summarise actual power relations, or bring otherwise intangible abstractions into concrete visibility. It is that they are a condensation of social space as a whole. In this way (discussed in detail in Chapter 3), they serve as a summarisation of the concrete, conceptual and ideological expressions of the social, and the battle for the production of these spaces summarises the battle for the production of all social space. It may seem as though I am falling into the trap outlined by Lefebvre above, of studying a fragment and producing a partial knowledge. Yet the theatrical space I discuss both implies and is implicated in all wider social space. Also, of course, my intention is to develop and test Lefebvre's project - is his account of the totality of space useful to an informed analysis of a part of it?

According to Soja, both Castells and the (earlier) Harvey<sup>4</sup> felt that Lefebvre had gone too far, and was perhaps moving into the realm of 'spatial separatism'. (Soja 1989: 76) This was a misapprehension on two counts; firstly, Lefebvre at

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<sup>4</sup> See Harvey (1973) and Castells (1972).

no point argues for the necessity of (and indeed he explicitly refutes the usefulness of ) replacing time with space.

The historical and its consequences, the 'diachronic', the 'etymology' of locations in the sense of what happened at a particular spot or place and thereby changed it - all of this becomes inscribed in space. (1991: 37)

Time, he argues, is inseparable from space, though it remains for him necessary to spatialise the historical, and to account for the history of spaces, rather than to allow 'sections' of time to be carved out and interpreted, which is his somewhat restricted view of 'conventional' historical practice.

The importance of time in the construction and effects of theatrical space is perhaps particularly crucial, as so often what is being articulated is a legitimacy based on history. The superimposition of events in space over time is part of what energises them as theatrical spaces, particularly the theatrical spaces of power. (see Chapter 3). Yet this principle of the spatialisation of history, and Lefebvre's assertion that space, in the face of its history, nevertheless proposes a continual 'present' will become important in the discussion of resistant theatrical space in Chapter 6.

This accusation of 'separatism' also evidenced a misunderstanding of Lefebvre's treatment of space, perhaps best represented by the question asked by Harvey in his 1973 *Social Justice and the City* : 'Is space a separate structure, or the expression of social relations of production?' (Harvey 1973: 306) The framing of this question clearly still determines the position of space in social analysis and critique as somehow secondary to the primary, and therefore more 'real' actual social relations of production (and by extension the production of social relations).<sup>5</sup> This parallels the treatment of theatrical manifestations of power as secondary to and reflective of 'real' relationships of power which somehow exist

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<sup>5</sup> See also Soja's discussion of this work in Soja (1989) p. 77ff

elsewhere. It is worth noting that theoretical strategies developed for spatial analysis provide not only a means by which to interpret public forms of theatricality, but also a model for their interpretation, freeing them from their subjugated place in the realm of representation, and allowing them to be acknowledged as creative of actuality. They realise a space of representation; although they mystify where they seem to elucidate.

In terms of space, Lefebvre is arguing precisely for the unified reading of space and social relations. Within such a theoretical framework, it is impossible to effect the kind of separation that Harvey demonstrates in this question. Space is neither a separate structure, either physically or conceptually; nor is it a reflection or mirror of what it contains (like a handprint in wet concrete). Rather space IS social relations, and social relations ARE space: they embody a space by inhabiting it. If social relations are not present in a space, they are, quite literally, not *there*. They take on form only through existing in space: otherwise social relations would be mere abstraction. In this way, all activity produces space, including, of course, theatrical activity.

This is of course not to say that subsets of, for example, mental or philosophical space do not exist. The point is rather that these cannot serve as a basis from which to interpret social space, which concerns the material and the lived. For Soja, as for Lefebvre, the physical view of space has so imbued all forms of spatial analysis - the philosophical, the theoretical and the empirical - and has been incorporated into a materialist analysis of history 'in such a way as to interfere with the interpretation of human spatial organisation as a social product'. (Soja 1989: 79)

All spaces, at all moments, form part of a spatial matrix of overlapping practices which constitute a homogenous *and* fragmentary space. They are, in other words, constituted and defined/ delineated in part by their own relationship/ spatial relationship to other spaces. So, what are these spaces made of?

### Accounting for space.

Since the project of *The Production of Space* is to formulate a singular 'theory of space' that can resist the kinds of separations into physical, mental and social space which most discourses on space make, Lefebvre outlines a triad of forms of space which interact with each other and condition each other, and must be regarded together in the production of space. This triad consists of: spatial practice (the perceived); representations of space (the conceived) and spaces of representation (the lived).<sup>6</sup>

Lefebvre's text is based in two key insights. The first is that of space as a product. The second is this division of space into three parts. He argues that space is not two - conceptual and physical, thought and lived - but made of one physical space and two kinds of mental space. Furthermore, space as it is *lived* is not necessarily in the physical realm, but in the conceptual. This will be important later in articulating strategies of resistance.

This triad is present in all differentiated spaces, so the totality that is being suggested is twofold - firstly, a three-dimensionality (sort of x-ray) of space which exposes the conceptual, the perceived and the lived as different, yet co-dependent 'parts' of any single space, and secondly, that all differentiated spaces so constituted are connected in a totality of time, history, development and geographical matrices. Thus the perceived-conceived-lived triad in, for example, the Renaissance is not in the same configuration as the triad for contemporary space, but they are linked because one has evolved into the other. No triad works by producing spaces that are all the same. In the contemporary moment, The Mall is not the same as my street, but they are both formed by the concepts, perception and spatial practices of contemporary life. I can move from one to the other, and my consciousness of them, myself and the society I live in is conditioned by their relationship to each other. All of the examples of theatrical

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<sup>6</sup> Lefebvre's discussion of this aspect of the work is in Lefebvre (1991) p. 33, and, typically, is discussed again on p. 38 in slightly different terms. See also Shields (1999) p. 162ff and Gregory (1994) p.403.

enaction in the forthcoming chapters have these different kinds of space implicated in them. One of the conditioning factors of my identification of 'theatrical' space is that it condenses them.

There have been innumerable difficulties in the ways this triad has been explained. Lefebvre's account is somewhat confusing in the first place: he initially outlines this triad in the lengthy opening section of *The Production of Space* (which was published initially before the rest of the text) which summarises the contents and argument of the rest of the book. As Rob Shields notes, the rest of the book, although referring to this organisation, does not follow the pattern of elucidating it, but rather accounts for a 'history' of spatialisations, which I shall turn to shortly.

The discursive language employed is also problematic - Shields criticises the translation of the text for blurring what need to be very fine distinctions, since all three of these aspects of space are present in any particular space. He re-translates, for example, what the original translator of the work, Donald Nicholson-Smith, calls 'representational spaces' as 'spaces of representation'. This distinction is, for me, more useful, and it is the one I shall employ here.

Lefebvre's designation of the space that we would probably recognise as the space we live in as 'perceived' space, and 'lived' space as 'spaces of representation' is somewhat confusing at a basic level of logic - you find that you don't want to call it that. David Harvey, in his 1989 *The Condition of Postmodernity*, generated a grid of spatial practices, based in part on Lefebvre's work which makes exactly this sort of switch. (Harvey 1989: 220-1) He designates 'representations of space' (for Lefebvre, the 'conceived') as the 'perceived', and material spatial practices (for Lefebvre the 'perceived') as the experienced. Although Harvey's grid is useful as it begins to assign practices of spatiality (mapping, home, distance, monumentality) to categories, I will not be

using it here, as his taxonomy actually departs from Lefebvre in quite crucial ways.

Perceived space: spatial practice.

This is space as it is perceived by people who live, and it is the space that is perceived as we look at what people do and where they go. Shields calls this the 'percu' or 'everyday' - 'spatial practice with all its contradictions in everyday life, space perceived in the commonsensical mode - or better still, ignored one moment and over-fetishised the next'. (1999: 160)

This, for Lefebvre,

secretes society's space ... it propounds and presupposes it ... (and) produces it as surely as it masters and appropriates it. The spatial practice of a society is revealed through deciphering its space. It has a certain cohesiveness, but is not necessarily coherent. (1991: 38).

It is a space concerned with the relations of production and reproduction and is 'made' of the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation.

Conceived space: representations of space.

These are the conceptual organisations, or dominating logics of space. They are employed by scientists, planners, cartographers, urbanists, and also certain practices in philosophy or social theory which involve an underpinning of a conception of time and space, for example, the rational, the perspectival, the sacred. All of these practices, for Lefebvre, identify what is lived and perceived with what is conceived. (1991: 38)

Lefebvre describes this kind of space as 'tied to relations of production and the 'order' those relations impose, of knowledge, signs and codes.' (1991: 32) It is, however, subject to revision, and read in conjunction with the other two elements of the triad, plays a part in political and social practice. These spaces,

despite being conceptual, 'have a practical impact ... they intervene in and modify spatial textures informed by effective logic and ideology'. (1991: 42)

He goes on to explain that conceived spaces play a substantial part in the production of space, as they cause architecture (actual construction) to be, not so much the building of a palace or monument, but a project 'embedded in social context and texture which calls for 'representations' that will not vanish into the symbolic or imaginary'. (1991: 42) Conceived space is therefore the 'dominant' space in any system.

#### Lived: spaces of representation.

These are discourses of space, the space of the social imaginary, and hence at the heart of 'lived' experience. The space of representation overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects, and is, for Gregory, where dominant spatial practices and spatialities are imaginatively challenged. (Gregory 1994: 404) Its symbols and signs are primarily non-verbal; it is 'dominated', passively experienced, but nevertheless, the space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. This is space 'as directly lived through its associated images or symbols - the space of "inhabitants" and "users"'. Lefebvre notes

ethnologists, anthropologists and psychoanalysts are students of ... spaces of representation ... but they nearly always forget to set them alongside those representations of space which co-exist, concord or interfere with them, they even more frequently ignore social practice. (1991: 42)

The relationship between the three is crucial.

The perceived-conceived-lived triad ... loses all force if it is treated as an abstract 'model'. if it cannot grasp the concrete, then its import is severely limited ... It is reasonable to assume that spatial practice, representations of space and spaces of representation contribute in different ways to the production of space according to their qualities and attributes, according to the historical period. Relations between the perceived, the lived and the conceived are never simple or stable. (1991: 40/46)

Because Lefebvre is not entirely clear about what these three elements literally consist of (especially in the case of spaces of representation) different critics have interpreted him in different ways. This is my understanding of the interaction of the three elements in my daily experience.

Spatial practice is that way we perceive that we are living, the way that we perceive space - as either invested with meaning (over-fetishised: for example, Buckingham Palace) or empty (the gap between the houses down my road that enables me to go and buy the sugar). We move through spaces to do things - space is a surface - a collection of objects arranged in such a way as to facilitate or hinder our lives. (One thinks here, for example, of bus routes, houses, size of one's garden, networks of exchange that put the apples on the shelves in the supermarket.) Behind this spatial practice is a representation of space, a particular conceptual ordering of it according to discourse (urban planning, transport planning, forbidden spaces, histories). These are unified as the lived space of representation, by which I absorb the ideology of the representation of space that conditions it (nation, citizenship, consumption). Edward Soja, who revisited the particularities of spaces of representation in his (1996) *Thirdspace*, observes that 'spaces of representation contain all other real and imagined spaces simultaneously'. (Soja 1996: 69) It is this incorporation of other forms of space as lived experience which makes spaces of representation potential sites of resistance: an alternative mode of being may be implicated or even materialised within them. As producers of experience (a point which I will develop shortly) both the forms of theatricality produced by authority and those produced by resistant or oppositional groups are operating in and productive of this form of space.

Lefebvre is aware of the significance of his interpretation of space for the study of history. He notes,

If this distinction were generally applied, we should have to look at history itself in a new light. We should have to study not only the history of space, but also the history of

representations ... History would have to take in not only the genesis of these spaces, but also, and especially, their interconnections, distortions, displacements, mutual interactions and their link with the spatial practice of the particular society under consideration. (1991: 42)

It is within the scope of these considerations that I situate this project.

#### Lefebvre's history of space.

The bulk of *The Production of Space* is dedicated to a linear and chronological account of such a history of spatialisations. This manoeuvre on Lefebvre's part has been criticised, particularly by Shields and Gregory (Shields 1999: 170; Gregory 1994: 360) for returning to a time-dominated account of the history of production, and for acceding to an 'anti-dialectical' stress on succession, leaving the text contradictory. Nevertheless, it is a useful account of different 'moments' in the history of space, and has offered insights and furnished examples for the discussion in this thesis, as I indicated in the Introduction.

#### 'Absolute' space.

This is 'original' space - the space of nature which is overlaid with human practices derived from the necessities of the body.

Rob Shields notes

Absolute space is intrinsically tied to the daily foraging patterns of primitive hunting bands and the earliest farming villages ... (in which) space was conceived of analogically, and analogy between the village form and the different functions of various areas and a 'holy body' being drawn. Space was thus visualised through an anthropomorphism that shaped the mental representation of space, the discourses on space. Thus physiological and mental 'frontiers' (the separation of the natural and supernatural) are reproduced in the village and its surrounding environment. (1999: 174)

Lefebvre extends this periodisation to include the development of the city-state; 'sacred space', in which the town produces and positions what lies outside it (the 'countryside') to make a 'texture'. (1991: 235) Indeed, he observes, the establishment of the town as political and religious 'centre' was often marked by

conflict between urban and agrarian spaces (formulated, for example, as civilisation vs. barbarism). Absolute space is made up of 'sacred or cursed' locations - and, although it does not govern the private sphere, nevertheless, the private is implicated in it. (1991: 240) It is, above all, about a totality.

It is located nowhere ... It has no place because it embodies all places ... it is a space, at once and indistinguishably mental and social, which comprehends the entire existence of the group concerned. (1991: 236)

There is no 'intellectualisation' of this kind of space, because within it, time and space, symbol and sign, have yet to be separated<sup>7</sup>, and therefore its 'meanings' are 'addressed not to the intellect but to the body'. (1991: 236) In this way, it is a space of representation and not a representation of space, lived rather than conceived.

In an extended discussion and comparison of the spaces of Greek and Roman sacred spaces (1991: 231ff), Lefebvre raises some provocative points about the 'real' vis-à-vis the 'imaginary'. 'What is the mode of absolute space?' he asks. 'Is it imagined or is it real?'

The choice, he argues, is an artificial one, which would leave us oscillating between its two poles.

There is a sense in which the existence of absolute space is purely mental and hence 'imaginary'. In another sense, however, it also has a social existence and hence a specific and powerful 'reality'. It is the categories themselves which are the problem - they post-date absolute space. 'The 'mental' is 'realised' in a chain of 'social' activities because, in the temple, in the city, in monuments and palaces, the imaginary is transformed into the real. (1991: 251)

In this kind of society, theatrical enactments are part and parcel of lived experience, and will not be a central concern for me. The enactments which I am

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<sup>7</sup> See Mitchell (1988) 'There is nothing symbolic in this world ... the grain does not represent fertility and therefore the woman. It is in itself fertile and duplicates in itself the swelling of the pregnant woman's belly. Neither the grain nor the woman is merely a sign signifying the other, and neither, it follows, has the status of the original, the 'real' referent or meaning of which the other would be merely the sign.' (1988: 61)

interested in rely on a degree of abstraction in terms of the workings of power, the perceived 'separation' of the 'real' and the 'representative', and the dominance of 'visual' space. Absolute space contains the schisms that will give rise to this relativised and historical space.

### 'Historical' space.

This next 'stage' is the space that marks the inauguration of what will become, for Lefebvre 'abstract' space - that of fully developed capitalist accumulation. It is signified by the shift from the sacred to the secular via the Renaissance discovery of perspective and the human scale. Its central node is the city, based on re-discovered Vitruvian architectural paradigms, and inaugurating the dominance of the visual. This 'perspectival' approach is the reason that Lefebvre designated spatial practice as the 'perceived' - because it takes place in a spatialisation that is typified by visual organisation. This dominance of visual paradigms is posited by Lefebvre against his utopian spatialisation for 'fully lived experience of the body'. (Shields 1999: 176)

The transformation of space towards visualisation and the visual is a phenomenon of the utmost importance ... (Perspectival space) recaptures nature by measuring it and subordinating it to the exigencies of society, under the domination of the eye and no longer of the body as a whole. (Lefebvre 1978: 287, cited Gregory 1994: 389)

Spectacularisation starts here. For Gregory 'perspective was not only a 'visual ideology' ... but also what Foucault would have called a 'technology of power'. (1994: 391) The upshot for Lefebvre was the mistaking of seeing for living. (1991: 75).

Historical space, with its appearance as 'a built social space with room left for citizens actions' (Shields 1999: 175), marks the beginning of abstraction. Productive activity (labour) becomes disconnected from the process of reproduction which perpetuated social life. The producers of the space (peasants and artisans) become differentiated from the managers who organised social

production and reproduction, who appropriate and own social space. (Lefebvre 1991: 275ff). Historical space is a space of accumulation, made of networks of exchange, communication, conceptualised as maps and architectural principles. It prefigures the centrality of geometry, the visual and the phallic, which will become the approved mode of expression of power and the state. One thinks here of the practice of Philip II of Spain in keeping his maps locked away: knowledge of space becomes power over space. (Harvey 1989: 247). For it is also the moment at which the exertion of power is fully brought to bear on the production of space, and the inauguration of spaces becomes to do with power, sovereignty and violence.

This space was ... the birthplace and cradle of the modern state. it was here, in the space of accumulation, that the state's 'totalitarian vocation' took shape ... the concept of 'sovereignty' ... enabled the monarchic state to assert itself against the Church and the Papacy and the feudal lords ... Sovereignty implies space, and what is more it implies a space against which violence, whether latent or overt, is directed. Beginning in the sixteenth century, the accumulation process exploded the framework of small mediaeval communities, towns and cities, fiefdoms and principalities. Only by violence could technical, demographic, economic and social possibilities be realised. (Lefebvre 1991: 279-80)

The aim of this violence is to consolidate a unit which looks like a coherence - the state, the empire, the nation. In fact, argues Lefebvre, what is constituted is a balance of power between classes and fractions of classes, as between the spaces they occupy. For without concepts of space and its production, there can be no concreteness, no location for the state to exercise its exclusions: of other states, nations, religions, classes.

(T) he state framework and the state as framework, cannot be conceived of without reference to the instrumental space that they make use of ... each new form of state, each new form of political power, introduces its own particular way of partitioning space, its own particular administrative classification of discourses about space and about people and things in space. (1991: 281)

This is also, crucially, for Lefebvre, the moment at which conceptualisations of space begin to be exercised. The invention of spatial codes (in this case, the

visual) which correspond to spatial practices and representations of space, (rather than spaces of representation permeated by magic and religion) initiates the abstraction of space into discourse.

People stopped going from urban messages to code to decipher reality, but from code to messages, so as to produce a discourse and a reality adequate to the code. The code thus has a history, and eventually would allow the organisation of cities ... to become knowledge and power - an institution. (1991: 47)

Thus representations of space (conceptions) can be the starting point, rather than spaces either of the everyday or the mythic. Once a discourse of space is possible, spaces can be produced to be read. Lefebvre argues that 'the code served to fix the alphabet and language of the town' (1991: 47) - facades were harmonised, entrances and exits, perspectives, palaces, organised into a composition. Thus historical space begins to propose the illusion of homogeneity which will develop into abstract space - the space of abstract production, abstract labour and abstract thought.

#### 'Abstract' space.

'Abstract space' writes Lefebvre 'is not homogenous - it simply has homogeneity as its goal, its orientation, its lens'. (1991: 287) It is a space built, similarly to historical space, on visual paradigms, but which is not honest about what its appearance represents. It is a repressive space, not only because it functions on repression - of difference, of alternatives - but also because it disguises its true meanings, its true constitution, and its true effects.

The dominant form of space, that of the centres of wealth and power, endeavours to mould the spaces it dominates (i.e. peripheral spaces) and it seeks, often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistances it finds there. (Lefebvre 1991: 49)

These differences are forced into symbolic forms, which are hindered by being constructed out of the vocabulary of the rulers. Abstract space flattens and smoothes differentiation through its rational organisation, its disinvesting and commodifying of the cultural and social spheres and its imposition of its own logic.

The spatial practice in abstract space is concerned with the reproduction of social relations, the representation of space is in thrall to the knowledge/ power of this social formation, and spaces of representation become commodified as images, memories, nostalgia.

Abstract space disguises the conditions of its own production, much as the social relations it houses (global networks of capitalist exchange) disguise networks of production of goods to the extent that more critical attention is paid to 'consumption' and 'spectacularisation of commodity' than to where things are made, by whom and in what conditions. For Lefebvre, it 'is an apparent subject - the abstract 'one' of modern social space', yet 'hidden within it, concealed by its illusionary transparency - the real subject, namely state (political) power.' (1991: 51). And of course, these days, corporate power.

The paradigmatic example of it is, for Shields, private property, under which, space is 'pulverised' into fragments which appear as a unified whole. (1999: 177) Mumford, too, makes observation of the privileging of the visual in abstract space.

The abstractions of money, spatial perspective and mechanical time provided the enclosing frame of the new life. Experience was progressively reduced to just those elements that were capable of being split off from the whole and measured separately ... Anything not expressible in terms of visual sensations and mechanical order not worth expressing. (1961: 419)

Yet lest the dominance of capital and state seem total in their production of an unassailable space, Lefebvre concludes his chronology of space with an account of the ways in which abstract space is filled with contradictions, giving rise to a

space whose fragmentations are apparent, and which can be pressurised into yielding a new and optimistic form of space.

### Contradictory space.

This is abstract space under pressure - the pressure of maintaining its own illusory coherence. It is the space associated with Jameson's 'late capitalism'<sup>8</sup>, and the explorations of post-modern theory into fragmentation, surfaces and spectacularisation are all relevant to this moment of space. The practices of capitalism, whose space is abstract space, cause social space to become more and more fragmented.

Social space becomes a collection of ghettos: those of the elite, of the bourgeoisie, of the intellectuals, of the immigrant workers ...These ghettos are not juxtaposed, they are hierarchical, spatially representing the economic and social hierarchy, dominant and subordinated sectors. (Lefebvre 1978: 309-10, cited in Shields 1999: 178)

The effect is to cause the individual simultaneously to be socialised and integrated into a 'totality', while actually being separated and isolated.

Lefebvre argues that capitalism seeks to colonise all space, through marginalising non-capitalist spaces and activities and extending its logics, where possible, to 'non-productive' spheres such as the arts, cultural and educational sectors. Leisure becomes determined by being 'non-work' and is filled with consumption, of things, of spaces, of things-as-images. It forces social practice to exchange its value for a value that serves exchange: land becomes real estate, works become products, things become images, history becomes nostalgia. This contradictory space is able simultaneously to contain a globalised spatial practice (multinational capitalism) and a lived experience based on the smallest units of space - private property. Its illusory transparency causes it to appear 'solely in its reduced forms' (Lefebvre 1991: 313). This space eventually becomes, for

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<sup>8</sup> See Jameson (1991) *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* London and New York: Verso.

Lefebvre, the simulacrum of a full space - it appears to be natural and legible, when it is surface and disguise.

What escape can there be from a space thus shattered into images, into signs, into connected-yet-disconnected data directed at a 'subject' itself doomed to abstraction? (1991: 313)

The space he proposes as the way to a genuinely fully lived experience is 'differential' space, carved out of the contradictions and fissures in abstract space. Here, radical alternatives can begin to be imagined, and spatialised.

Clearly, there are a number of difficulties with this chronology. Lefebvre does seem to substitute for the history of production a linear history of the production of space, and one in which one kind of space gives way to another in a logical development. He is careful to clarify therefore, that none of these kinds of space ever vanishes utterly, leaving no trace. Were this so, there would be no interpenetration 'whether of spaces, rhythms or polarities'. (1991: 164) In fact, part of the domination of, or battle over, space consists of mobilising aspects of the 'earlier' spaces - the differentiating of a 'sacred' space of monarchical pageantry within the 'abstract' space of capitalism, for example, is a manoeuvre which consolidates power through juxtaposition of both material and conceptual spatial practices. Equally, no space is ever implemented totally; not just in the case of abstract/ contradictory space, but throughout the entire chronology. The interplay between different aspects of perceived, conceived and lived spaces (the resistance implicit in, for example, a spatial practice which resists the dominant conception of space such as squatting in a society built on principles of property ownership) all form part of the battle to control the production of space which is crucial to the exertion of any kind of power or opposition: to dominate or appropriate space.

### Domination and appropriation of space.

These are the practices through which space is produced by different groups. Broadly, for Lefebvre, the dominant space in any historical moment is space which has been dominated and shaped by the repressive exertion of power. It is space transformed or mediated by technology and practice, through the introduction into a pre-existing space of a new form - generally rectilinear or rectangular, such as military architecture, fortifications or ramparts, dams, irrigation systems or roads. These, for Lefebvre, are distinguished by their sterile nature. They are, he writes, invariably the realisation of a master's project. (1991: 164)

The contrast to these spaces is 'appropriated space'. This is a 'natural' space 'modified in order to serve the needs and possibilities of a group, which can then be said to have 'appropriated' that space'. It is often a structure, such as a monument or building, but can also be a site, a street, a square. Typically, he points out that it is 'not always easy to decide in what respect, where and by whom and for whom they have been appropriated'. (1991: 165)

This binary would seem to offer a useful model for the designation of the spaces of different kinds of public event - as either state-sponsored and therefore 'dominated', or oppositional and therefore appropriated. It is necessary to acknowledge a couple of caveats here. First of all, as Gregory points out, Lefebvre tends to utilise a 'top-down' hierarchical model of power, rather than an anatomisation of micro-circuits of power of the sort identified by Foucault. (Gregory 1994: 364). Secondly, appropriation is not always oppositional, or perceived as oppositional - the people who camp out on the Mall, for example, before a Coronation or Royal event are certainly 'appropriating' the street for their own purpose. Their very appropriation, however, is incorporated into the narrative of the event, as it positions the monarchy as responding to the

'demands' of their public to appear, and restates the class relations implicit in monarch vis-à-vis subject - both actually and spatially.

The rise of abstract space is explicitly connected to the domination of space. Lefebvre observes that there was appropriated space before there was dominated space, indeed the early 'stages' of his chronology of spaces propose an appropriated space carved out of and adapted from 'absolute' original, natural space. They may, in principle, he adds, be combined, and ideally ought to be, but the history of accumulation (and thus power) is a history of their separation and antagonism. He further insists that this is not merely a discursive separation, but a conflictual tendency that is played out over the control of the production of space. (1991: 166)

A further criticism of this chronology is its Western bias. Shields particularly is somewhat scathing about Lefebvre's 'ignorance of the conditions and spatialisations of most of the world' and says this 'detracts from his credibility and distracts from his overall message'. (1999: 182). I have taken on board this critique, and limit my analysis to examples of theatrical spatial practices drawn from the history of the West.

#### From 'text' to 'texture'.

For Lefebvre, strategies of interpretation based in linguistics and models of language are not adequate to address the complexity of spatialisation. He proposes an analysis rooted in the understanding of spaces as a series of points in a totality, rather than a series of individuated and discrete entities, thus reactivating the involvement of power in the production of space. He points towards the idea of 'texture' in interpreting meaning, derived, not from reading, but from the identification of the experience of the lived body in space.

Certainly, for Lefebvre, language strategies contain ways of expressing and articulating space, and language 'conceptualises' using metaphors of measurement drawn from particular ranges of discourse, of which one is the spatial range. He asks, 'do spaces formed by ... activity have meaning? Yes'. Yet he goes on, 'can space be treated as a message? Yes and no: it contains messages but is not reducible to them'. (1991: 131) From this perspective, he enquires

... does it make sense to speak of a 'reading' of a space? Yes and no. Yes, inasmuch as it is possible to envisage a 'reader' who deciphers or decodes and a 'speaker' who expresses himself (sic) by translating his progression into a discourse. But no, in that social space can in no way be compared to a blank page upon which a specific message has been inscribed (by whom?). (1991: 142)

A part of the work of *The Production of Space* is to critique the semiotic model of interpreting space, and propose an alternative means of speaking about its effects - texture and immersion.

When codes worked up from literary texts are applied to spaces - to urban spaces, say - we remain ... on the purely descriptive level. Any attempt to use such codes as a means of deciphering social space must surely reduce that space itself to the level of a *message*, and the inhabiting of it to the level of a *reading*. This is to evade both history and practice. (1991: 7)

He does allow for the possibility of the creation of a 'system of space', although one which 'in common with all systems' would really only apply to a discourse on the object. (1991: 16) Within this context,

There is a proper role for decoding of space: it shows transition from representational space to representations of space. But, they reduce and reduce, becoming increasingly specialised and specific, so there is arguably a limit to the effectiveness of such a project. (1991:163)

He challenges particularly the work of Roland Barthes and the five codes of interpretation outlined in his (1974) *S/Z*: the level of knowledge, functional

analysis, symbolic interpretation, personal responses and the application of empirical data leave untouched two realms of paramount importance to Lefebvre and his project. Firstly, his concern is the realm of the body, and the sense impressions available through the presence of the body in a space: not only visual impressions but those of smell, taste, the texture of walking there. He develops this thought later in the book, as he observes that the separation of the ego and the body, through introduction into patriarchy, language and history, permits an interstice into which signs slip, allowing meaning to escape the embrace of lived experience. (1991: 202). I will return to this idea of 'experience' shortly.

What he proposes is therefore a theory which is able to point to the existence of practice. Reading, as an interpretative strategy, allows the work of power in producing space to evade notice.

That space signifies is incontestable. But what it signifies are do's and don'ts - and this brings us back to power. Power's message is invariably confused - deliberately so; dissimulation is necessarily part of any message from power. Thus space indeed 'speaks' - but it does not tell all. Above all, it prohibits. Space is at once result and cause, product and producer; it is also a *stake*, the locus of projects and actions deployed as part of specific strategies. (1991: 142)

Semiotic analysis is therefore limited in the ways it enables us to approach the work of space. It wishes to render space 'readable', and thus the legitimate object and result of a practice: that of reading and writing.

The first problem here is that this precisely suits the power that is producing the space in such a way as to make it appear to be legible. This apparent 'legibility' of space should be treated with suspicion, since one of the foremost functions of the space within which we 'experience' (our lives, ourselves, our systems of power and governance) is to dissimulate and disguise its own existence as a made thing, and by extension as something subject to potential change.

'The impression of intelligibility' writes Lefebvre, 'conceals far more than it reveals ... Nothing can be taken for granted in space, because what are involved are real or possible acts'. (1991: 143)

A second difficulty with the textual model of the interpretation of space is that it cannot help but imply authorship. Certainly, there is agency in the self-conscious and deliberate production of certain spaces, and it is with some of those spaces that I am concerned here. Yet to imply that all space is so successfully 'authored' is to credit power with too much: with the ability to make space so totally and so completely (and so competently) that any potential for resistance which may be located in the lacunae and contradictions of this space is negated. The relationship of the social and the spatial must be seen as dialectical. Further, once produced, space itself can begin to act as agent of practice and experience. As Lefebvre notes,

Activity in space is restricted by that space; space 'decides' what activity may occur, but even this 'decision' has limits placed upon it. Space commands bodies, prescribing or proscribing gestures, routes and distances to be covered. The 'reading' of space is thus merely a secondary and practically irrelevant upshot, a rather superfluous reward to the individual for blind, spontaneous and *lived* obedience. (1991: 143)

A crucial part of Lefebvre's project is to see space as a totality; as a series of continuous though differentiated practices. A failure to examine space in this way can disguise the fact of there being a total subject acting to maintain the conditions of its own existence (namely the state) and a total object (absolute political space) seeking to impose itself on what is real despite being itself an abstraction. The error of theory in separating spaces into discrete areas of analysis inadvertently supports the strategies of power in fragmenting space, creating boundaries and sub-sets of space to elude a systematic analysis. From this critical perspective proposed by Lefebvre, the differentiation of spaces,

rather than appearing natural or organic, can be identified and interpreted as one of power's strategies

Visible boundaries (for example, walls) give rise on their part to an appearance of separation between spaces, where in fact there exists an ambiguous continuity. What we inhabit is a totality, a space which fills the world (and these days in the realm not only of the imaginary (heaven/hell) but actuality (the moon). Thus divisions such as the private or the public, the sacred and the profane, are artificial lines which prevent us from perceiving the totality: which make us look on too small a scale. Thus, the representation of abstract space disguises itself, tells us a lie. (1991: 87)

Lefebvre proposes, then, a theory of space which analyses textures, and a texture implies a meaning of a rather different kind: it implies meaning, not for a 'reader', but 'rather for someone who lives and acts in the space under consideration: a 'subject' with a body - or sometimes a 'collective' subject. The theory raises a lived sense to a conceptual level'. (1991: 132)

Every space is already in place before the appearance in it of actors; these actors are collective as well as individual subjects inasmuch as the individuals in question are always members of groups or classes seeking to appropriate the space in question. This pre-existence of space conditions the subject's presence, action and discourse, his competence and performance; yet the subjects presence, action and discourse, at the same time as they presuppose this space, also negate it. The subject experiences space as an obstacle, as a resistant 'objectality' at times as implacably hard as a concrete wall, being not only extremely difficult to modify in any way but also hedged about by Draconian rules prohibiting any attempt at such modification. Thus the *texture* of space affords opportunities not only to social acts with no particular place in it, but also to a spatial practice that it does indeed determine, namely its individual and collective use. (1991: 57)

The proposal of spatial 'texture' as a method of addressing its meanings theoretically locates and also provides a framework of analysis for 'experience'. In this way, analysis is able to access aspects of the work of a space which otherwise remain inaccessible. The centralising of 'experience' as a theoretical tool enables the discussion of how space acts on subjects who are in it. This will be an important insight in my discussion of the theatrical spaces of power and opposition.

My initial resistance to the 'reading' of theatrical presentations of power and opposition was to do with the fact that a lot of this kind of work relied on an assignation of the theatrical to the realm of the 'symbolic', and a sort of metonymy. The crown 'symbolises' the monarchy and hence the monarchical state. A parade 'represents' the military might of a nation and hence its organising principle for war. But, in exactly the same way as Lefebvre argues for spaces, these symbolisms and representations are a *part* of the meaning of these events - but they cannot be *reduced* to them. A critique which focuses on the 'meaning' alone is limited in two ways - firstly, theatrical enactments cannot help but be 'marginalised' in discourse concerned with the execution of power. The real can, it is assumed, continue without the representation. Thus they are de-politicised, as any political efficacy they may be executing is denied to them. In fact, they are only accorded, in public discourse, an efficacy when they cease to be representative and become 'real', for example the point at which a 'demonstration' becomes a riot. This is the same point, for media and government alike, that the demonstrators transgress the limits that have been negotiated in order for the demonstration to 'take place'. In this way, 'performative' dissent is contained, because it is only permissible up to the point at which it becomes effective.

Lefebvre's model of a 'total' space, in which history, imagination, lived experience and conceptions of space are all implicated and all connected, resists the differentiation of theatrical spaces as the 'merely' representative - rather, as actual and conceptual spaces, they cannot help but be effective, as they impact on, describe and re-inflect the wider space of the social.

Secondly, 'reading' as a mechanism accords exactly with the intentionality of the event/ space - it is designed to be read and hence 'reading' it is to complete its work. It is designed to maintain the illusion that spaces are separate, and therefore dealing with it as a 'separate' space is not properly critical. To be aware of, and to interpret from, a perspective of the spatial interactions in play is to

resist the intentionality of the event and the space it produces, and to politicise its critique. The theoretical model, which accounts for the ways in which the social produces space and is spatially produced, also argues explicitly for resistance to 'reading', by pointing out that the visual organisation of space is not 'natural' (although it seeks to 'naturalise' itself), but one particular political organisation of space.

The intrinsic linking of the event and its spatiality also offers insights into its effects, as Lefebvre points to 'textures' and hence 'experience' as a point at which the event is able to act on people. Furthermore, it becomes possible to speak of space as agent, rather than as something manipulated by agency - as actor as well as acted-upon. Not all space is inaugurated by intentionality, although all space serves interests. Space can write the script.

### Chapter 3: 'Just Like the History Books': Spectacular Space and the Coronation.

This chapter addresses the production of theatrical space by the event of the British Coronation. As I indicated in the Introduction, this event has been chosen as an example of abstract theatrical space, which I argue are the forms of theatrical space produced by power. I will examine the treatment of the history of the Coronation; an event which has continued more or less uninterrupted for a thousand years. In terms of Lefebvre's chronology of spaces, the event originates in 'absolute' space: a time in which reality and representation are as yet undifferentiated. David Cannadine, as I discuss below, has argued that at the turn of the twentieth century, monarchical pageantry came to hold a particular symbolic and signifying function. While I do not disagree with his account, I believe that a spatial perspective reveals more. As the Coronation becomes explicitly representative, it produces a form of theatrical space which is spectacular and coercive. It invokes a form of 'absolute' space, yet the theatrical space in play here is abstracted and abstracting. To help identify this space, I call upon Lefebvre's identification of 'monumental' space, in order to clarify my distinction between the 'legible surface' of an event, and the experience it provokes.

#### Reading the Coronation.

This section will briefly address two contrasting historical readings of the British Coronation, in order to expose the limitations in both. The first is the account claimed in popular discourse of British pageantry as an uninterrupted and unchanging tradition. The second is David Cannadine's re-reading of pageantry as an invented series of traditions, mobilised by the need in British culture at the turn of the twentieth century to materialise and stabilise political concepts of nation and Empire. Both of these, I feel, treat the Coronation (and its

surrounding ceremony, with which I will be more concerned) as firstly, representative, and secondly, peripheral to the exercise of power.

There are many popular texts concerning the British monarchy and its pageantry.<sup>1</sup> We learn from these sources that the Coronation of British monarchs has been staged since 1066 in Westminster Abbey, in a specially designed nave known as the 'theatre'. Further, since that time, the central elements of the ceremony remain the same. These are: the election, and its confirmation; the Coronation oath; the anointing of the new monarch; investiture with the Robe, the Mantle and the Regalia; the Enthronement; the paying of homage by the monarch's subjects; the Coronation of the Queen Consort, if applicable; finally the Coronation Mass and Communion, the Te Deum and the recessional.

Roger Milton tracks the origins of the contemporary Coronation ceremony back as far as the tenth century. (1972: 56) Elements of the ceremony were, he argues, borrowed from the investitures of the Holy Roman and Byzantine Emperors. The Election, the recognition and the Sword of State, as emblem of military might, are borrowed from the Germanic tradition, and the Ring, the Sceptre, the Rod and the Mantle from the Byzantine. The ceremony is also rooted in scriptural authority, and for this reason, the central parts of the Coronation are administered by the Church, more or less as laid down in the *Liber Regalis* in 1307. The period in which these ceremonial strategies were originated is Lefebvre's moment of 'sacred' space, at the juncture of absolute and historical spatialisations. Ceremony was not 'representative', but incorporated in a literal way into the life of the state and the society. The anointing (the most important element in the pre-modern Coronation) was the literal descent of the power of God into the head of the Monarch, at which point he (or, extremely less likely, she) became the head of society. Yet while the Coronation today may seek to invoke this sacred and 'naturalised' set of relations, it is not taking place

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Broad (1953); *British Orders and Awards* (1968); Makin (1935); *Royal Pageantry* (1967); Tanner (1952); *Great Events* (1953); *Coronation Souvenir* (1937).

in a social spatialisation predicated on these sorts of beliefs. Therefore, as I shall explore, while it may disguise itself as a 'sacred' or 'absolute' space, we may find that its work in the present moment of abstract space is productive of a different sort of theatre.

David Cannadine was the first scholar to undertake a radical re-reading of British pageantry in his 1983 article on the invention of tradition.<sup>2</sup> The trajectory of the essay tracks the decline of monarchical ceremony in Britain after its great moment under the Tudors and Stuarts. Cannadine then focuses on the changes in symbolic purpose of monarchical pageantry in the latter part of the nineteenth century and at the turn of the twentieth century. At this point, he argues, these ceremonies are strategically spectacularised, to serve, not as a statement of social reality, but as an idealisation and materialisation of the abstract entities of nation and Empire. This chronology certainly suits the interpretation that Lefebvre's account of space allows: as the West enters its moment of abstract social space, the visual paradigms originating in 'historical' space develop into the increasing abstraction of things, objects and people into images, concepts and ideas.

Cannadine argues that when the monarch had 'real' power, it was not necessary to stage elaborate spectacle. When the state is built on family, property, inheritance and so on, it makes sense that the King should be the head of society, as the chief landowner whose claims are based precisely on family and inheritance. When this is so, he argues, Royal ceremonies are not shared events, but 'a group rite in which the aristocracy, the church and the royal family corporately reaffirmed their solidarity ... behind closed doors'. (1983: 116) Through the eighteenth century, monarchical pageantry was often inept, casual and badly executed. The Coronation of George III was delayed for two days because the workmen had gone on strike, and on the day, they found that the

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<sup>2</sup> See Cannadine (1983) 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition', c. 1820 - 1977' in Hobsbawm, E. and T. Ranger (eds) (1983) *The Invention of Tradition* Oxford: Blackwell. pp. 101 - 164.

canopy, the chair of state and the sword of state had been lost. The Bishop of Salisbury got lost in the service, which nevertheless lasted six hours and was drowned out by the clattering of cutlery as the guests ate throughout. George III was the last to be styled King of France, even though, of course, he wasn't, and two actors were hired to impersonate the Dukes of Normandy and Aquitaine. George IV staged a coronation of farcical pomp, spoiled somewhat by Queen Caroline pounding on the door of the Abbey demanding to be let in to be crowned. At the banquet (later abolished by Victoria), the King's Hereditary Champion rode in to throw down the gauntlet on a horse borrowed from Astley's, which walked backwards up to the King. His successor, William IV, hated ceremony so much that his Coronation was popularly known as the 'Half-Coronation'. (Brown and Cunliffe 1982: 234) Even the pageantry for the mighty Victoria was inept in the early stages of her reign, and it is not until she was persuaded to come back from private life in the 1880's that things began to change. While her long absence seemed to have put the monarchy itself at risk, in a sense it also saved it, for the time elapsed allowed the whole idiom to be reinvented.

While I do not dispute Cannadine's account of the changes in pageantry, I propose there is more to the re-invention than meets the eye. Spectacular forms of ceremony produce, I will argue, forms of theatrical space which are organised around the visual, but are productive of particular and repressive forms of experience. They do their work, not just through the things they represent and symbolise (their 'legible surface'), but through the spatial organisations which these symbolic expressions *materialise*. I will return to these thoughts shortly.

Walter Bagehot, writing in 1867, almost pre-empts the shift into spectacularisation.

When a state is constituted thus (monarchy, aristocracy, democracy), it is not true that the lower classes will be wholly absorbed in the useful ... (but) the ruder sort of men will

sacrifice all for some attraction which seems to transcend reality, which aspires to elevate men by an interest higher, deeper, wider than that of ordinary life. The elements which excite the most easy reverence will be the *theatrical* elements - those which appeal to the senses, which claim to be the embodiment of the greatest human ideas, which boast in some cases of far more than human origin ... that which is mystic in its claims ... is occult in its mode of action ... which is brilliant to the eye; that which is seen for a moment and then is seen no more; that which is hidden and unhidden ... palpable in its seeming and yet professing to be more palpable in its results. (1964: 63).

These 'theatrical' elements, 'brilliant to the eye'; 'seen for a moment and then seen no more', exemplify the strategies of the reinvented pageantry: spectacular, visual, well-organised ceremonies addressed to the general populace and not just the small circle of the court. Under Disraeli's guidance, monarchical pageantry was reinvigorated in the late years of the nineteenth century. It was also configured so as to *obliterate* the memory of its years of ineptness and self-referentiality. The journey, as I have noted, is into increasing abstraction.

The ceremonial vocabulary and calendar were streamlined. As the Queen was reconfigured as emblem rather than divine ruler, so the aspects of ceremonial that had referred to this divinity were occluded: 'touching for the Kings Evil', for example, based in the belief that the monarch could cure scrofula, had been discontinued, along with elements of ceremony designed to speak of the monarch's humility. Victoria was not expected to wash the feet of the poor on Maundy Thursday. (Brown and Cunliffe 1982: 230)

She was also to become the figurehead of state, rather than the head of society. Thus, the State Opening of Parliament was revived as a grand ceremonial event. Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887 was the first of the great pageants of the new dispensation, and was marked by her naming as Empress. This pageant was the prototype for the kinds of imperial visual spectacle typical of the Coronations in the twentieth century, and I will discuss them shortly. Outdone only by the Diamond Jubilee in 1897 (fig.1), the effects of these pageants, as I hope to show, brought home only too effectively the conclusion of Bagehot's warning.



fig. 1: Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, 1897.

'Men', he wrote', are governed by the weakness of their imaginations'. He noted

'The Queen rules by Parliamentary decree (6 Anne, c.7., which established the heredity of the House of Hanover), not by God's grace. When her family came to the Crown it was a sort of treason to maintain the inalienable right to lineal sovereignty, for (that was) saying that the claim of another family was better than hers: but now, in the strange course of human events, that very sentiment has become her surest and best support. (1964: 88)

Spectacular ceremony obliterates other possibilities. As power becomes invested in abstract ideas, its ceremonial expressions become symbols for those abstractions: nation, Empire, consensus, democracy. It appears to be less connected to actual relations of commerce, ownership and governance. So the ceremony comes to symbolise abstract and not literal power: empire, nation, pride and not money, land, privilege. The ceremonial materialisation of abstraction takes the form of spectacle. Its legible surface disguises the actual relations - power is still exercised by the people with land, money, factories and so on. People's acceptance of this is produced and manipulated, as I shall explore, in the production of space of the ceremonial events.

I will develop these thoughts by looking in more detail at some of the ways in which the Coronations of the early part of the twentieth century were described at the time. This should allow us to get as close as possible to the events themselves, which are, of course, unavailable. In line with Raymond Williams argument that the 'structures of feeling'<sup>3</sup> of a particular moment are detectable in the ways it represents itself to itself and not posterity, and in the shorthands and assumptions it makes that need no explanation because they are present in the cultural landscape, the stories that are told about the Coronations reveal the ways in which they were being culturally mobilised. To this end, I will refer to Jack London's account of the 1902 coronation, the Daily Express Coronation Number from 1911, and the Illustrated London News Coronation Number from 1937.

In order to clarify what I see as the difference between the 'legible surface' of the event and the space it produces, I will first address the way in which the event presents representations in space, and *represents* space itself, before looking at Lefebvre's proposal for 'monumental' space, and the space *produced*.

#### The 'legible surface': representations in space: representing space.

The Daily Express Coronation Number (Friday June 23rd 1911), marking the Coronation of George V (fig.2), opens its coverage with the following:

With all the ancient pomp and ceremonial which links the England of the past to the great Empire of today, the King was crowned at Westminster Abbey. A mighty gathering representing all that is greatest in the nation and the Empire, and including envoys from almost every State in the world sent to do honour to Britain's King, witnessed the solemn ceremony.

Hundreds of thousands of loyal subjects thronged the streets and with enthusiastic cheers bade the King 'God Speed' as, the centre figure in an imposing pageant, he went from Palace

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<sup>3</sup> Williams addresses the 'structure of feeling' in *Marxism and Literature* (1977) Oxford: as 'a way of defining forms and conventions in art and literature as inalienable elements of a social material process: not by derivation from other social forms and pre-forms, but as social formation of a specific kind which may in turn be seen as the articulation (often the only fully available articulation) of structures of feeling which as living processes are much more widely experienced.' (1977: 133)

to Abbey to the supreme moment of his life. Hundreds and thousands roared a people's welcome as he returned with crown on head and sceptre in hand. In every town and village of the homeland and in every corner of the far-flung Empire, the myriad people who own King George as monarch gave themselves up to rejoicing ... throughout the world, wherever a gathering of British subjects was to be found, loyal celebrations showing their complete accord with the great central act at Westminster took place. (Express 1911)



fig. 2: The Coronation of George V, 1911.

Present in this opening paragraph are all the aspects of the legible surface of the event: the linking of past and present, through ceremonial vocabulary, legitimating the present through association with the deepest antiquity and tradition; the performance of hierarchy, as the 'great and good' are called to witness the crowning of the greatest and best; the construction of a circle of legitimising frameworks - the Coronation of George given credibility by the presence of other monarchs and princes and the aristocracy of Britain and their rank given credibility by the fact of the Coronation; the positioning of 'subjects', as outside of the ceremony, and yet approving of it and what it represents. Finally, the materialisation of the huge realm of the British Empire through simultaneity. All of these aspects are materialised in symbol and performance.

So, what is the 'message' of the Coronation? No longer the literal descent of power in front of one's eyes into the body of the King, what is it that it seeks to

'represent'? The answers lie, not in the anointing and the crowning, but in the pageantry that surrounds them. This is where the unification of the estates of the nation is staged as spectacle and materialised as space.

The Express reports that in 1911, a series of 'little pageants' preceded the main event. Firstly, into Westminster Abbey, processed the heads of the Church of England, bearing the regalia, 'emblems of sovereignty'. The Church has always retained control of these items, which in itself repeats the assumed subjection of the monarchy to God. Next come the royal guests, led in by Rouge Dragon and Portcullis, dignitaries of the College of Heralds. It almost seems too obvious to point out that powers invent ceremonial to use in order to invest themselves with power, but this is what the College of Heralds administers: they are the gatekeepers.<sup>4</sup>

Next comes the 'advance of the spiritual guard' - the chaplains and the canons in their ceremonial dress, also revived in its full pomp at the close of the nineteenth century. The next group are the peers and the privileged men entitled by ancient right to do some particular service in the Coronation ceremony. These include the swordbearer, champion, cupbearers, Knights of the Garter and the Scholars of Westminster, who earned their right to be the first to shout 'Vivat Rex' or 'Vivat Regina' from James II as a reward for publicly kneeling at the execution of Charles I. These rights have been the source of some historical disagreement, which is not surprising when you consider the chequered history of monarchical succession. Before every Coronation, a Court of Claims convenes to decide which rights are still enforceable.<sup>5</sup> (fig.3) In 1911, one of the Kings spurs was carried by Lord Loudon and the other by Lord Grey, neither of whom were prepared to cede their right in the matter. Needless to say, the 'rights' are given in reward for services rendered in the past to the crown, a reward of a

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<sup>4</sup> For a full discussion of the ceremonial responsibilities of the College of Heralds, see Milton (1972) pp. 19 – 53.

<sup>5</sup> See *The Sphere* 1953 p.355.

ceremonial place in the representative *summary* of state for services in the *physical* administration, or even conquering, of the state.



fig. 3: Court of Claims, 1953.

The Queen follows her regalia in the procession, on this occasion (1911) wearing a gown embroidered with the floral emblems of the three kingdoms (England, Scotland, Ireland) and those of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, all connected with an embroidered cable 'symbolising the unity of Empire'. (Express 1911) The presentation of Empire is important, and I will return to it shortly.

The King and the King's regalia are preceded by Lord Norfolk, the Earl Marshall of England (responsible for the staging of monarchical pageantry) and the Lord High Constable of England, and is carried in by more aristocrats. Lords Kitchener, Roberts and Beaufort carry the swords, Dukes Richmond, Northumberland and Somerset fetch the sceptre, orb and crown

Finally, the Bishops of London, Ripon and Winchester carry in the Paten, Bible and Chalice, closing the series of processions where it began, with the Church.

Thus, unwitnessed by the majority, the great institutions of monarchical power perform themselves to themselves. This spectacle is only available in 1911, after

the event, to the readers of newspapers. By 1937, radio broadcasts enabled an estimated five hundred million people to hear it live,<sup>6</sup> and by 1953, television brought it into the homes of the people. Although this is not, obviously, the event itself, the mediation becomes the event, as no-one has direct access to it. The ways in which it is written, edited, filmed, all contribute to the way it produces its effects, to its legibility. They mediate the spectacle, but nevertheless discursively reproduce it. They are what remains for the historian to work with, and so must be referred to for accounts of the event. However, they don't disrupt the legible surface of the event in any meaningful way, rather reproducing its 'message', so it is to the actual space of the event itself, rather than the audience in the diverse spaces implicated in its mediation, to which I will again turn.

Who is 'represented' in the Abbey? In 1911, we are told, it is the

living men of great fame in the Empire - for the Coronation has taken on a new significance since the sister States across the seas have assumed the dignity and power of statehood - not under, but with, the Motherland. (Express 1911)

This is a very interesting observation, not only for its disingenuous racism. For the state that represents itself to itself in 1911 is not just made up of the internal offices and officers of Great Britain. It is the administrative centre of a huge proportion of the globe. The attendance of neighbouring monarchs at each others' coronations was a long standing habit, whose point is clear - the recognition by ruling families of each others' rights to rule. Imperial imaginings have further aims. They involve the colonised in the logics of their own colonisation by incorporating them into the body of a ceremonial which legitimises the rights of their colonisers. In fact, much of the signifying excess of the Coronation account of 1911 is in the spectacle of the visitors and guests:

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<sup>6</sup> See *Illustrated London News* 1937 p. 859.

Lord Curzon; the Speaker with the mace; a coal-black Ethiopian prince in a robe of gold and silver and a great green plume; a Turk swathed in medals; a Chinese 'Manchu Brigadier'; the Begum of Bhopal in brown silk and a coronet. (Express 1911)

Spoken of as though so natural as to need no further justification, this spectacularisation of Empire as ceremony in London only really began, as I mentioned above, with Victoria's investiture as Empress in 1887, and the Imperial Pageant of 1897, at her Diamond Jubilee. As I have said, the point at which Victoria becomes Empress is also the moment at which the monarchy comes to represent something other than itself and its own power, and begins to stand in for the abstractions of 'state', and the idea of 'nation' and 'Empire'. The resulting presence at the Coronation of Imperial 'representatives' also has a further important consequence. It materialises the vast space of the Empire, makes it visible through summarisation and representative function. Outside the ceremonial arena, a Begum is just a Begum. In it, she is lifted out of everyday context, and 'represents', 'stands in' for her whole nation. What is present in the Abbey are the summarised nations of the world - and hence the nations of the world. All the space in the world accedes to this coronation.

Even the bloody fights for independence are retrieved into the legitimising circle produced by the ceremony, as is made explicit in Arthur Bryant's essay in the Coronation Number of the Illustrated London News in 1937.

However the British Empire may have been won - and I am not one of those who believe it was won solely by the simple process of grab - there is only one justification for its continued existence ... if mankind as a whole can be brought to believe that the British Empire is a power that makes for just dealing and concord between men. ... Rooted in the principle of divine law and natural justice, British power is regarded as being held in trust for the furtherance of not mere earthly, but divine law. (Bryant 1937: 832)

If colonised countries *must* insist on their independence, then

after World War I, in the attitude shown to the alien peoples subjected to her rule; in Ireland, in India, in Egypt, Britain, abandoning her old attitude of Bulldog in the manger, showed herself ready to accept the opinions and claims of others even when they conflicted with her

own ... and freely and rejoicingly extended to her young dominions beyond the seas rights of free and independent nationhood equal to her own. (Bryant 1937: 832)

In this way, even the viciously difficult and punitive emancipatory struggles are reincorporated into the imagined order produced by ceremonial event and, as I suggest, the wider social spatialisation which the ceremonial event serves and condenses.

One of the most fascinating presences at the 1911 Coronation from my perspective, was the U.S. Ambassador, who was 'The most conspicuous man ... His plain white shirt front, his evening coat utterly devoid of decoration, pierced the eye'. (Express 1911) Plainness, in the midst of such decoration, actually undercuts it quite radically, as it offers the possibility of alternatives. Since ceremonial space is so heightened, all of its symbols summarising huge ideas, any disruption to its surface is writ equally large. What this innocuous dress, probably quite inadvertently, represented was a different social space - democratic rather than 'grace and favour', not organised around rank, class, honours. This part of the show did not, therefore, obey the rules of the ceremonial, in which everyone has to be recognisable within the vocabulary of the event. It does not participate in the visual display and is not co-opted into its logic (unlike the Begum, for example).

The Express disapproved. 'The American simplicity seemed almost presumptuous in its gorgeous plainness'. (Express 1911) It was probably the most radical counter-gesture of the day, because any disruption of the ceremonial vocabulary undermines the attempt at totalisation implicit in the ceremony itself. It must maintain its coherence in order to function: if there is anywhere to stand outside it, then it is not able to propose a summarised version all of the social structure.

Even the 'people', whom we must assume to be the intended recipient audience of an event of this kind, are incorporated into the representational logic of the event, precisely in the persons of their 'representatives'.

In 1911, the Speaker of the House of Commons arrived at around 9.30 in an ancient coach drawn by two dray horses supplied by prescriptive right by Meux's brewery. Described in the Express as 'the premier of the Kings untitled subjects', it was 'truly significant of the relations between the monarch and the people that he was the first person to enter the Abbey by the Royal door ... a dramatic recognition of the fact that the foundation of the kings throne is the affection and goodwill of his people'. (Express 1911) As far as the ceremony is concerned, he *is* the people.

1911 was also notable as

the first time in the history of the Coronation (that) the Prime Minister has had a definite place in the order of precedence. At other times, the Prime Minister appeared as Lord Privy Seal or Lord President of the Council, or Archbishop. But never before as Prime Minister, for there was no such post until some five years ago, when the Prime Minister was placed, at his own request, after the Archbishop of Canterbury, just preceding the Archbishop of York. (Express 1911)

The necessity of finding a position in precedence in the newly spectacular ceremony for the Prime Minister focused the thinking on the role, evidently. The position of Prime Minister was a distinct one from the early eighteenth century - Robert Walpole being generally seen as the first. The term was derogatory - implying the stealing of power from the monarchy. The role became more defined through practice: as cabinet chair channelling information to the monarch, and, through the slow development of political parties through the nineteenth century, ultimately coming to signify the leader of party of government. In fact, the office was not recognised in law until the Ministers of the Crown Act of 1937 consolidated what had been formalising in parliamentary practice for some time. The Prime Minister is, of course, still formally First Lord of the Treasury.<sup>7</sup>

The Prime Minister and the Speaker participate - so Parliament, and by extension the people, are under the Crown. There are three estates: Lords,

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<sup>7</sup> See Hanson (1973) p.20; Jennings (1965) p.85ff

Bishops, (Lords Temporal and Spiritual) and the Commons. Only one represents the people. And in the ceremonial summary of social power, it is the smallest and most humble. Bagehot observes that 'Constitutional monarchy acts as a disguise. It enables our real rulers to change without ... people knowing it'. (1914: 97) Unfortunately, this would seem to enable our real rulers to stay the same, without people knowing it.

The legible surface of the Coronation, as we have seen, condenses and summarises in symbolic form the social relations and hierarchies of a state. This is the story that the event itself tells. What I propose, however, is that the event does this, as Lefebvre proposes, in space and by making space. It may mobilise a representational or symbolic vocabulary, but those representations and symbols are *present*, are realised and materialised in a space. This is the particular energisation of theatrical space. Two things become clear. Firstly, the constitution of that space, and the effects it produces on those within it, must therefore be taken into account in any interpretative strategy which seeks to address it theatrically. Secondly, the relationship of this theatrical space to the wider social space within which it is constituted also becomes available for analysis. I argue that an event which symbolically summarises social relations must produce a theatrical space which summarises and condenses a version of social spatialisation.

#### Monumental space.

To develop these thoughts, I turn first to Lefebvre's identification of 'monumental' space. Lefebvre does not explicitly address theatrical space, yet monumental space as he articulates it would seem to have very productive correlations with my interest in 'theatrical' space.

Lefebvre singles out monumental space for particular attention in the much broader science of spatial analysis in *The Production of Space*.

(Usually) space is produced before being read . It is not produced in order to be read and grasped, but rather in order to be *lived* by people with bodies and lives in their own particular urban context. Spaces made, or produced, to be *read* are the most deceptive imaginable. The graphic impression of readability is a sort of *trompe l'oeil* concealing strategic intentions and actions ... Monumentality ... always embodies and imposes a clearly intelligible message. It says what it wishes to say - yet it hides a good deal more: monumental buildings mask the will to power and the arbitrariness of power beneath the signs and surfaces which claim to express collective will and collective thought, conjuring away both possibility and time. (1991: 143)

Lefebvre is speaking of more than a space which contains monuments. Rather, he means a space which is of itself monumental, in the sense that it embodies a projection of political realities. Its intention is to be legible - to produce a readable surface which will appear to be the whole 'message' and work of the space. Yet, as he points out above, the work of power (which tends to be the 'author' of such spaces) is much more provisional, much less authoritative than the narratives of its monumental spaces seek to suggest. For this reason, monumental space and its successful production is crucial to the exertion of power: the spaces in which it expresses and projects its narrative of its own authority must be coherent, for they not only *disguise* its actual provisionality, they *replace* it.

This insight correlates very productively with my own sense of the work of the ceremonial events which take place in and help to form monumental space. They, too, attempt to summarise social relations in a version which is more coherent than the 'reality' they claim to unproblematically represent.

They obstruct many things: a clear look at the real and messy execution of power, which are not presented publicly in a legible form, but exist in spatial practices spread out and private: the visit of one officer of state to the office of another to hold a meeting about some policy, or the arrangements for a contract that will cause a factory to be built or not built, the jockeying of vested interests for position, the parts of power that are nowhere stated - influence, favours, patronage. They disguise the true relations of power as I will show, by

substituting a monarch and a cheering throng for a Government and its electorate. They 'conjure away', as Lefebvre has it, 'both possibility' of things being different, and 'time', for time contains change. If things have always been this way, surely they are natural, and how can they change? Thus the monument, the ceremony, erase time, and claim that their message is transcendent of all moments, and therefore unconquerable.

To the degree that there are traces of violence and death, negativity and aggressiveness in social practice, the monumental work erases them and replaces them with a tranquil power and certitude which can encompass violence and terror. (Lefebvre 1991: 222)

Lefebvre continues,

Monuments should not be looked upon as collections of symbols (even though every monument embodies symbols - sometimes archaic and incomprehensible ones), nor as chains of signs (even though every monumental whole is made up of signs). A monument is neither an object nor an aggregation of diverse objects, even though its 'objectality', its position as a social object, is recalled at every moment ... The indispensable opposition between inside and outside, as indicated by thresholds, doors and frames, though often underestimated, simply does not suffice when it comes to defining monumental space.

Acoustic, gestural and ritual movements, elements grouped into vast ceremonial unities, breaches opening onto limitless perspectives, chains of meanings - all are organised into a monumental whole. (1991: 223-4)

In other words, monumental space is something more than the sum of the symbols that it houses. Through those symbols, it achieves a totality that is all-encompassing, and provokes an experience based on 'being' in it, rather than 'reading' it: an experience of 'presence' rather than representation. Monumental space combines architectural grandeur (the soaring ceilings of the cathedral, the gilded lavishness of the palace, the calm austerity of the state office), visual organisation of space (the ceremonial avenue, the limitless vista), the positioning of the individual (tiny, atomised), and bludgeons with its coherence. This relates closely to the provision of overwhelming spectacle and plethora of signs in ceremony, and will offer a model for their interpretation as well as accounting for some of their effects.

Lefebvre uses the example of a cathedral:

The cathedral's monumental space entails its supplying answers to all the questions that assail anyone who crosses the threshold. (1991: 220)

The work of monumental space, crucially, is not just to exist of and for itself. Once constituted, it can monumentalise anything, by incorporating it into its particular energisation.

Any object - a vase, a chair, a garment may be extracted from everyday practice and transformed by introduction into monumental space: the vase becomes holy, the garment ceremonial, the chair the seat of authority. (1991: 225)

Anything can be 'transformed' by its introduction into monumental space. This is a key aspect of the work of ceremony as it occupies space: to transform and transfigure objects and people by association with the meanings of the space it occupies. (see Begum, above). These are often, but by no means exclusively, meanings based in the history of the space ( an aspect of their work to which I shall return shortly), as the event colonises and adopts the past. This speaks to the suppression of historical time to which Lefebvre refers, above, and its replacement with a permanent moment present in state-sponsored ceremonial events. These often work to establish the legitimacy of the current order by connecting it with an often fictionalised past: a 'national' or 'racial' past, as in the Third Reich; a 'ceremonial' past, as in England, a 'natural' past in the ceremonies of the French Revolution.

Spaces of monumental power can certainly operate without a specific event: one would find it hard to raise one's voice in a cathedral even if there were no service being held. They are an example of the kind of theatrical space that can act as agent. Once produced, they can be effective in and of themselves, as one experiences and absorbs their textures. As objects, however, they can be and are

acted upon by those who colonise them with ceremonies (or oppositions; see Chapter 6) and attempt to harness both their meaning and effect. The relationship is reciprocal: monumental spaces infuse ceremonies or demonstrations with monumental force: ceremonies and demonstrations, through their theatrical and summarising functions, reinforce existing or produce new theatrical spaces. In the case under discussion here, the monumental spaces in which the Coronation and its surrounding events take place lend credibility to ceremonial events by bringing the force of their rhetoric to bear in the same direction as the rhetoric of the ceremony itself. The ceremony contributes to the 'monumentality' of the space by inscribing it with its own symbols and moments. The relationship is then deepened as the powers invested in (in every sense) monumental spaces generate more of them, ones which suit their purposes better and summarise their power more effectively. For the power of the monumental space is not just that it makes power *legible*. That is architecture. Monumental space makes power *felt*.

As Lefebvre concludes his examination of the monumental space of the cathedral:

(Visitors) enter a particular world, that of sin and redemption, they partake of an ideology, they contemplate and decipher the symbols around them, and thus, on the basis of their own bodies, experience a total being in a total space. (1991: 221)

The exertion of power, as Lefebvre has argued, has to be to do with control of the production of space. Usually, as he points out, spaces are produced before being read, in order to be lived, and, as detailed in the previous chapter, these spaces are made in part by living: they are shaped *by* social practice as they reciprocally *shape* social practice. Although there are of course systems of power in place in the production of social space, whether governmental, to do with economic networks, religious differentiations or forms of knowledge, they

are necessarily formed in tensions between all these practices and day to day patterns of living.

The distinction between monumental space and other forms of space referenced by Lefebvre in the opening quotation to this section is in intention. Monumental space implies a much more interventionist 'producer'. As the condensation and summarisation of the social world which power seeks to impose, it must, as Lefebvre says 'answer all its own questions'.

It thus proposes an intelligibility and transparency - a legibility - that disguises its true effects. For this reason, Lefebvre argues that the definition and interpretation of monumental spaces through semiotic or symbolic means should be resisted. This is not to say that monumental spaces are unconnected to (or not built out of) signs and signifying practices (statues, vistas). It is precisely their self-conscious rootedness in codes, signs and symbols that renders the reading of their surfaces so unreliable, a critique paralleled exactly in my argument about ceremonial events.

The complexity of both event and space lies not in the legibility of the surface, but rather in the production and reproduction of meanings through the lived experience of bodies and subjectivities; through their control of possibilities, prescribed or proscribed acts. In both cases, these restrictions are enforced through the organisation and hence production of space. This restriction of practices is crucial. Social acts produce space. If acts are restricted, occluded or forbidden, the space can maintain its integrity, and avoid being remade.

Monumental theatrical space is not a text, though it pretends to be one.

It can be reduced neither to a language or discourse nor to the categories and concepts developed for the study of language. A spatial work (monument or architectural project) attains a complexity fundamentally different from the complexity of a text, whether prose or poetry ... not texts, but texture. (1991: 222)

Crucially, Lefebvre proposes that 'social space, the space of social practice, the space of social relations of production and of work and non-work - this space is

... condensed in monumental space'. (1991: 225) This observation supports my suggestion, above, that a ceremonial event which symbolically condenses social relations materialises a summarising and condensing theatrical space. This function of theatrical space, as it condenses an entire social spatialisation, will be important later in discussing theatrical opposition. (see Chapter 6)

### Monumental spaces.

It is in the capital city of a state that the ceremonial and monumental spaces that speak it are to be found. While Lefebvre clearly has in mind edifices such as Cathedrals and Palaces, much state and official ceremony tends to locate itself in certain key streets of a city, thus utilising their force as monumental spaces. These are also the spaces in which the assumed 'audience' for the event under discussion here, the Coronation, experience it, so, before turning to the theatrical organisation of that experience, I will first examine the space in which they are standing.

Many cities have a monumental or ceremonial core. These areas of city-scapes were historically constructed at particular moments to communicate aspects of the idea of the nation, or the identity of the ruling authority. It is in these spaces that ceremonies and performances articulating power and subjecthood are enacted.

Mumford calls the development of the capital city a necessary corollary of the development of the modern state, whose marks are

a permanent bureaucracy, permanent courts of justice, permanent archives and records and permanent buildings more or less centrally located for conducting official business. (1961: 405).

This centralisation effectively settled the Court in one place, where hitherto it had been mobile. This was, he continues 'a reciprocal process: the centralisation of authority necessitated the creation of the capital city, commanding the main

routes of trade and military movement' and making a powerful contribution to the unification of the state. The consolidation of power in the political capital was 'accompanied by a loss of power and initiative in the smaller centres.' In this way,

the national territory itself becomes the connecting link between the diverse groups, corporations, cities: the nation was an all-embracing society one entered at birth. (1961: 405)

The social space of the nation is in this way already being determined in the capital, and the capital, which houses records, institutions and the law, is already condensing social space. One belongs to oneself, and the nation: there are no other allegiances. One of the jobs of monumental space, which condenses the social even further, is to continue to obliterate the possibility of other allegiances. It also measures out exactly *how far* one belongs to oneself and how far one belongs to the nation or state, through coercion, menace, identification and co-option.

Monumental space is in part constituted by monumental buildings: the Abbeys, Palaces, great offices of state. Yet access to these spaces is heavily restricted, often only being allowed, to 'ordinary' people, at special moments that thus become highly theatrical. These moments might include the 'open house' event each year in Britain in which buildings normally closed to the public are opened for a weekend in September, or the admission of a person into a 'closed' space to participate in some ceremony, such as being awarded an OBE, or attending a Guildhall dinner. Even those spaces to which the public is admitted as paying visitor, such as the Houses of Parliament or Buckingham Palace, only allow limited access, and therefore maintain their exclusivity through partial exposure. The most interesting monumental spaces for my argument are those which are 'public': the streets and squares of a city in which the people gather to experience the ceremonial event. As open spaces, their monumentalisation is much harder to enforce, and is thus much more emphatically theatrical. I will now examine the

production of the theatrical space of the parade route: the grand boulevard, avenue, or ceremonial way, so common in Western capitals.

Louis Mumford describes their development and the ways in which they inscribe social practice onto space.

Movement in a straight line along an avenue was not merely an economy but a special pleasure: it brought into the city the stimulus of swift motion, which hitherto only horsemen had known galloping over the fields. This design for speed of travel was increased in the organisation of the architecture as 'the regular setting of buildings with regular facades ... whose horizontal lines tended towards the same vanishing point as that towards which the carriage itself was rolling. In walking, the eye courts variety, but above this gait, movement demands repetition. (1961: 422)

This is therefore a visually determined space, which, as Lefebvre notes, is indicative of the shift from historical to abstract space.

Secondly, it is to do with the dispersal of people, as

the dissociation of the upper and lower classes achieves form in the city itself. The rich drive, the poor walk. The rich roll along the axis of the grand avenue - the poor are off-centre, in the gutter; and eventually, a special strip is provided - the sidewalk. (1961: 424)

In this way, class, and disparities of wealth are inscribed into the city space, ostensibly as architectures, but actually as the spatial formalisation of social practices. The rich ride. The space is engineered to accentuate riding. The architecture is designed to work passed at speed. The way in which the space is to be used is implicated in its production. Of course, the development of consumer capitalism from the late nineteenth century has re-inflected the shopping boulevard; the pavements now take you past the real spectacles - shop windows - and the road part is just a route from one place to another. Ceremonial boulevards, however, still marginalise the pedestrian. Walking down one of them, or across the great open space in front of Les Invalides in Paris, you feel absolutely tiny. Making you feel small (and hence powerless) is exactly the experience that this space wants to produce. The only way to feel big and powerful is to acquiesce to its invitation, feel part of it, accept that you are what

it tells you that you are, and in that way achieve some sense of ownership of what it represents.

The third intention of the monumental boulevard is to influence this decision by threatening you with what might happen to you if you don't fall into line. It permits the presentation of might. The interpretation of grand avenues as sites in which the military might mobilise goes all the way back to Palladio

the ways will be more convenient if they are all made the same ... that there be no place in them where armies may not march. (cited in Mumford 1961: 422-3)

Evidently, insurrection in city spaces is aided enormously by mediaeval streets and rookeries - soldiers cannot shoot round corners, and cannot form into the shapes of warfare in cobbled and winding roads. The destruction of the Paris rookeries by Napoleon III and Baron Haussmann as they forced through the massive boulevards; the clearance of Seven Dials by the Prince Regent and John Nash in London in the 1810's was informed by this pragmatic politics. The practicality of this explanation has led some urban critics to deny that boulevards are about military mobilisation: Donald Olsen points out that even cities which had no insurrectionary problems organised themselves along these lines, L'Enfant's Washington for example. (see Olsen 1986) This is to slightly miss the point, as the boulevards give rise to the possibility of a new form of power which is both disciplinary and spectacular. There is no need for an actual trial of strength if the spectacular space does its work properly.

As Mumford observes, 'the avenue is essentially a parade ground: a place where spectators may gather, to be duly awed and intimidated'.(1961: 423) Uniform lines of troops moving through a space that has been designed to have a vanishing point at some far point in the distance borrow that 'endlessness' for their own. They appear numberless, indomitable.

The two elements work together. Mumford notes

The buildings stand on each side, stiff and uniform, like soldiers at attention: the uniformed soldiers march down the avenue, erect, formalised, repetitive; a classic building in motion. (1961: 423)

The display of power and the architectural space of power act in exactly the same way. Thus the (produced and total) space of that power is doubly emphasised, and the effects it has are doubly reinforced, threatening and marginalising the ordinary person in both representational and spatial practice. The spectator remains fixed, and might marches by, sparing her (or him) from its dread attention only as long as she (or he) behaves herself. The question of the relationship of this new form of disciplinary power and the institution of permanent, national and drilled (rather than mustered) armies through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is certainly one for Foucault.

The mobilisation of the spectacle of might in ceremony will be addressed shortly. In the meantime, what this kind of architectural space supposes is a centralised and despotic kind of power - militarised and monarchical - exerting itself through spectacle and monumentalisation. The interesting thing is that having been originally produced to serve these ends, this architectural form becomes the 'style' of spectacle and monumentalisation - for any kind of power. Thus the cities that Olsen mentions, conditioned and controlled by different polities, nevertheless organise themselves along these principles. Mumford describes many instances of monumental boulevard building in the U.S., which, while promoting 'patriotic interest', reproduced 'in every respect what the architects and servants of despotism had conceived'. (1961: 461) He is especially critical of the ceremonial heart of Washington, which to his eye is too huge - by being too huge for the eye to encompass. The monumental, as I argue, works on visual principles - and this is why we must examine the space it actually produces to see past its own 'message'. If it does not obey its own principles, however, and is unencompassable by the eye, it is not awe-inspiring, but sterile. As Mumford argues about Washington, the monumental space will not 'read' if it is not

punctuated properly with the objects it intends to monumentalise. If the space between them is too great, they will seem, not grand, but tiny. If huge spaces are desired, huge buildings must be planned, as I will discuss in Chapter 5 in regard to the gigantic monumental plans of the Third Reich.

The avenues and boulevards discussed above are perceived to be generated very much from the top by 'power', whether that of Napoleon III, or of the democratic institutions of the United States. Power certainly produces ceremonial space in this way, but not always in the form of such uncomplex, entirely self-conscious and intentional interventions. London, for example, home of the 'greatest pageantry in the world'<sup>8</sup>, actually has very poor and incoherent ceremonial spaces and up until the turn of the twentieth century had virtually none. The view down the Mall from Trafalgar Square to Buckingham Palace is at an awkward angle and obstructed by the Victoria Monument. Westminster Abbey has its back to the Houses of Parliament, which are at the side of the road, rather than at the top of some immortal vista, like the Capitol. In Paris, there is an unbroken line from the Arc de Triomphe to the Louvre - in London, pageants must turn corners, negotiate statues, avoid obstructions.

Yet, as Lefebvre has demonstrated, social formations and social practices give rise to spatial formations, and the interests, values and ideologies of power are implicated in the productions of these spaces. London provides interesting examples of the development over time of a ceremonial heart, and the stories of its spaces contain absolutely the aspects that determine the social and spatial formation of the city: history and money. In some ways, their genesis implicates what many believe to be the real source of power in England - a practice of gentlemen in gentlemen's clubs. Although explicitly conceptualised to memorialise the greatness of nation, empire, great men, there is little sense of an authoritative 'power' reaching down to produce monumental spaces, at least until

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<sup>8</sup> See note 1.

the late nineteenth century. The great monumentalising moment of the early twentieth century was, of course, undertaken for monarchy by Government for its own purposes. Previously, these spaces had been generated out of a series of competitions, committees, public subscriptions, private donations of land and money. The absence of an autocratic power designing space in its own image does not mean that power is not at work, however. The 'gentlemen' who sat on the Select Committee on Trafalgar Square, for example (see below), may not have felt themselves to be exercising the interests of the powerful *per se*, but their own absorption into and place in the 'establishment' meant that they were. London is still different, however, and one of the key reasons for this is precisely that its ceremonial heart was not built from scratch - it acquires its legitimacy not just from the power that produces it, but from the power of the past. In the same way, its ceremonies invoke continuity and history as their key legitimising vocabularies. This, in a sense, marks the difference between the theatrical events and spaces of Britain, and those in nations who have imagined and produced their monumental space in the service of a particular moment. (see Chapters 4 and 5). The difference lies in the particular 'horizon of meaning' implicated in the space.

#### History and the horizon of meaning: London's monumental spaces.

Monumental space, although designed to be read, is not fixed in its meanings. Rather, it is formed of layers or sedimentations of often opposing spatial practices and events which superimpose upon one another to form a 'horizon of meaning'. Lefebvre explains this as

a specific or indefinite multiplicity of meanings, a shifting hierarchy in which now one, now another meaning comes momentarily to the fore, by means of - and for the sake of - a particular action. (1991: 222)

All monumental spaces have horizons of meaning, this is part of the way in which they produce densities of texture, and also, as I will explore in Chapter 6, part of the way in which they can be disrupted. All the moments which have gone to produce the space remain potentially present in it. This can work for or against power. As we will see, in the case of British monarchical pageantry, the space is calling on aspects of its own history to legitimate itself, just as the articulation of the social hierarchy in ceremonies is calling on historical 'continuities' to provide its legitimising framework. It aims to produce a spatial equivalent to the 'centuries of unbroken tradition' claimed for the symbols and forms of ceremony. The Coronation, for example, calls on a 'horizon of meaning' which supports this view, with repeated staging of the event in the same spaces. Nevertheless, this is as tenuously maintained as the symbolic meaning of the event itself: it only works by forcing the exclusion of moments in the history of the spaces which contradict that version - Cromwell, for example, or demonstrations in Trafalgar Square, have no place in the monarchical pageant. Yet they remain part of the horizon of meaning of the space, even if disavowed and repressed, and as such attest to the vitality, importance and political significance of the struggle over the production of space.

The areas of London most concerned with the monumentalisation of state (rather than financial) power are Trafalgar Square, and the roads radiating from it: Whitehall, which leads to Westminster and the Houses of Parliament to the south, and the Mall, leading to Buckingham Palace to the west.<sup>9</sup>

Trafalgar Square, so named in 1835, has a long and chequered history, being at different moments the site of a royal stable, a Civil War prison and the main place of executions in 1660 at the Restoration. Nash began the work of clearing the rookeries of Porridge Island, Seven Dials and St. Giles as part of his plans

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<sup>9</sup> The historical details in the following discussion of London are drawn from Piper (1972) and Weinreb and Hibbert (1992).

for Charing Cross in 1813, which also included escape routes for the Government and the Royal Family. (There is, allegedly, today, a secret tube extension from Buckingham Palace to Heathrow.)

The initial plans were conceived, not so much to produce spectacle, but to serve functionally to several ends. Nash's original proposal for the Square was for either a public or residential space, which would 'add to the beauty of the approach from Westminster to Charing Cross' and 'enlarge that space from whence the greatest part of the population of this Metropolis meet and diverge'. (Nash 1812: 90, cited in Mace 1976: 31)

Crucially, these plans were explicitly concerned with the division of social spaces so as to insulate the rich from traders and workers, especially for a New Street from Charing Cross to Bloomsbury, which would form

a boundary and complete separation between the streets and squares occupied by the nobility and gentry (on the West) and the narrow streets and meaner houses occupied by mechanics and the trading part of the community. (Nash 1812: 90, cited in Mace 1976: 33)

He was very specific that there would be 'no opening on the East Side'. When local traders complained, he responded in 1816 that 'it would spoil the beauty of the plan entirely for people riding up and down to see offal or something of that kind'. (Nash 1812: 90, cited in Mace 1976: 33) This of course echoes Mumford's commentary on the grand boulevard as the site at which social divisions are inscribed spatially.

Nash did not live to complete Trafalgar Square, and the plans were taken up by Charles Barry, who outlined plans for a grand Square, focused on what would become the National Gallery. Before it could be built, however, it was decided to inaugurate a memorial to Admiral Nelson in the middle of his Square.

The discussions that surround its design and building illustrate the negotiation, rather than the dictation, of this central space. Having held a competition and selected William Railton as the winning architect, the Select Committee on

Trafalgar Square convened to decide what should be done about Nelson's memorial. Barry gave evidence, and claimed that 'the irregularity in the form of the area, the variations in levels of the surrounding streets and the direction of several lines of approach, are not calculated to afford a favourable view of the column'. Furthermore, he claimed, 'if it is desirable in a great city to suggest the idea of space, and having obtained space, not to block it up again, the situation selected ... is most unfortunate', adding that he would place it in St James's Square, or at the top of Regent Street, or at Oxford Circus, or 'out of London altogether ... Greenwich Hospital?' (cited in Mace 1976: 71)

He lost, and Nelson's Column is today the most famous monument in the whole of London. It is interesting to note that the overlooked statue of Charles I has actually more about it than one might assume. It stands on the site of the original Charing Cross, and is the point from which all measurements to and from London are made. This is often assumed to be Nelson's Column, but a brass plaque in the road beside Charles puts the lie to this. Nevertheless, it has its own modest monumental function - Charles was five feet and four inches tall, but the contract for his statue, erected in 1675, specified a 'proportionate full six foot'. (Piper 1972: 94)

The building of Trafalgar Square was inhibited by its cost - no grand reaching down by Government here - a lot of the funds were raised by public subscription, and when Landseer's lions were added in 1867, there was no ceremony.

Its future as a key site in the staging of opposition was also anticipated at an early point, as the Committee reported 'It appears to us that other evils may be anticipated from leaving open so large a space in this particular quarter of the Metropolis'. (cited in Mace 1976: 87) The Square was opened in 1843. In 1848, the Chartists held the first of hundreds of public demonstrations in the Square.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For full details of demonstrations and their regulation in Trafalgar Square, see Mace (1976) Appendix 4: Bills for the regulation of meetings in Trafalgar Square

This points to the possibility for monumentality to work against the power it is intended to serve, by instilling an oppositional event with monumental sobriety, through an interpolation into the horizon of meaning of a space. As I have mentioned, space and events work reciprocally, investing each other as theatrical and summarising statements of wider social statements or debates.

Despite the evolutionary genesis of Trafalgar Square, it has been made part of the ceremonial space of London, and hence, at its moment of mobilisation in the ceremony, it is theatricalised as disciplinary space. I will develop this thought shortly, as I discuss the way the event produces space which determines the experience of the people.

The genesis of Whitehall illustrates a different aspect of the development of the ceremonial spaces of London: one based in a self-conscious historicity. From around 1245, Whitehall was the London seat of the Archbishops of York and was known as 'York Place', just as Scotland Yard was the site of the residences of the Scottish Kings. It was Cardinal Wolsey who first developed Whitehall, and at his fall from grace in 1530, it was a much grander space that fell to the Crown. Henry VIII made it his main Palace and it became the seat of the Government administration over England, while the legislature remained at Westminster, which had been the place of the Court for the previous 500 years.

The current Whitehall began to be developed in the 1720's, and the basis was laid for the geographical dispersal of the great offices of state: administration in Whitehall, legislature at Westminster, the Court on the Mall. The dispersal was completed when the main law courts of the Crown left Westminster in the nineteenth century. The Admiralty was built between 1722 and 1726, and the Treasury building was planned in 1732. The same year, a house in the Cockpit (now Downing Street) was assigned to Walpole as First Lord of the Treasury.

Horseguards was completed between 1750 and 1760, and the Scottish Office added in 1787.

The great expansion of Whitehall came, of course, in Victoria's reign, and therefore reflects that era's twin architectural obsessions: Gothic, and Italianate neo-classical. The Victorian Buildings are to a great extent echoes of the oldest building on the street - the Banqueting House, built by Inigo Jones after 1619 and the first building in London in the classic Italian tradition. Notably, it was also the first in Portland Stone, which has become the material of choice for London's monumental architecture. Louis Mumford observes that the kind of spatial perspective utilised in the ceremonial vista first manifested itself, 'not in the actual city, but in a painted street scene in the theatre by Serlio' (1961: 433) and that many early monumental city designers such as Inigo Jones were scenic designers.

The effect, when you are in Whitehall, is of a series of Medici Palaces. This somehow gives the institutions of government an antiquity (which is not real) and a sense of timelessness and hence legitimacy. It mobilises a monumental conception of space (state authority, grandeur, history, scale) that is very close to its representation of space (you are a subject of this power, it serves you if you serve it) and both inflect the spatial practice. As Lefebvre has outlined, usually spaces are practised before they are read. In the case of monumental space, the conception and representation of space are what is immediately apparent, and thus the way you can be in them is limited to awe or resistance. It is very hard (and I have tried) to walk down Whitehall indifferently, or even ironically. As Piper notes, 'at all times, (it) has a steady magnetism, not of spectacle, but of the sense of the exercise of power in administration'. (1972: 110) This existing monumentality is called on to reinforce the production of the theatrical space of the Coronation, when the processions to and from Westminster Abbey take place. Whitehall leads down to Westminster, which was the site of the main offices of the state for generations: Crown, legislature,

administration, law and Church. This is the aspect that is mobilised when, in state ceremonies, continuity and legitimacy are being produced. It *is* the site at which monarchs have exercised power as absolute rulers, and where they have in latter years, assented to and legitimated rule by Government.

The ceremonial heart of London was unified through the improvements of the Royal spaces in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as the national memorial to Victoria. The Mall (fig.4) remained a fashionable promenade for over a century, but did not take on its current character until 1903-4, when it was rebuilt as a 115 foot wide processional route and completed in 1911.

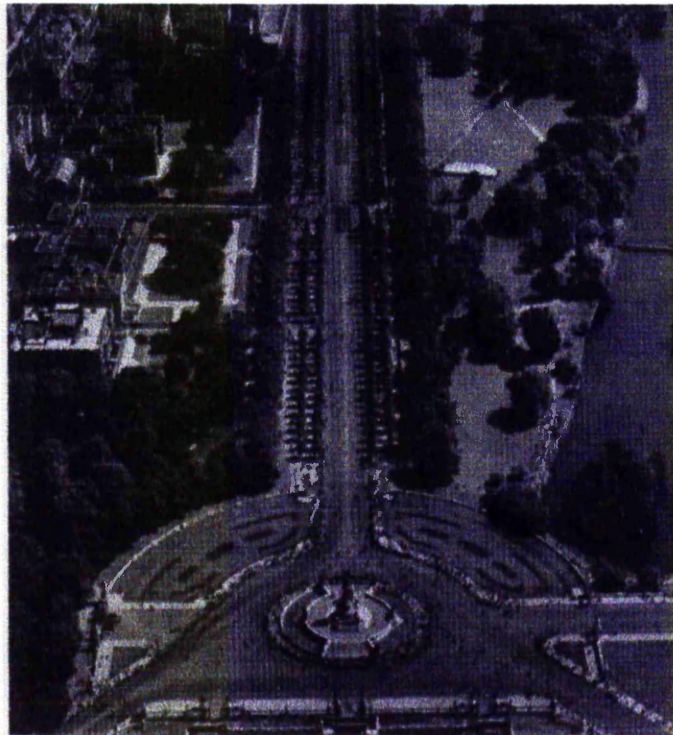


fig. 4: The Mall, 1953.

During this ten-year period, Admiralty Arch and the Victoria Memorial were added, and Buckingham Palace was re-faced in Portland Stone.

For London, then, it is not until the close of the nineteenth century that this whole area comes together, and even then, as we have seen, its histories have left it rather incoherent. Its casualness is both caused by and legitimised by this

history - it is because it is rooted so strongly in a tangible past that it does not need to overwhelm with spectacle. It overwhelms with time, emphasised and given density by horizons of meaning that for generations have said the same things. Nevertheless, at the close of the nineteenth century both the vocabulary and settings for state ceremony were overhauled, reinvigorated and spectacularised.<sup>11</sup> My interest is primarily in the How of the production of their effectivity. But I think there is an explanation for the Why that goes rather further than the claims that are usually made.

As we have seen, explanations have been given, by Cannadine and others, that suggest that the late nineteenth century was a moment at which the monarchy had diminished in actual power, and thus could be used to provide pomp and ceremony for the purposes of defining and redefining nation in the abstract. This is certainly an important consideration, for ceremony has always had the function of making visible the intangible and forging allegiances, and the turn of the twentieth century was the great Imperial moment.

What has been overlooked however, as usual, is the people. Of course, when authorities stage shows that forge allegiances and so on, they have the impression that they will make on the people in mind. But what tends to get concentrated on is the intention of power, and the existence of the show itself provokes the assumption that it worked. What are the political changes that may have prompted this shift into spectacular theatricality?

What had happened in 1884 was the extension of the franchise to all adult males in Britain through the third Reform Act. Essentially, for Britain, popular democracy is contained in this document, although the women of the nation had to wait a further 40 years for their chance to vote. Coupled with the nascent labour and union movements, the power of the people looked a much more plausible prospect, and alternative allegiances of labour and class were working

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<sup>11</sup> This term is clearly resonant of the work of the situationist writer Guy Debord. I will address his use of the term, and the critical reading of the social as 'spectacle' in my discussion of the theatricality of opposition in Chapter 6.

to undercut loyalty to state and nation. Additionally, many of the changes were initiated by a Conservative Party which had to rather quickly reinvent itself as a national party, appealing to a popular vote, in an era of Gladstonian liberalism.

It is no real surprise that the three notable moments of public ceremony in British history are the Tudor and Stuart periods and the late nineteenth century. It is argued that these were the moments at which national pride was at its greatest, and the ceremonies celebrate that pride. This is true, but they are all also moments of huge social change, which needs to be incorporated into the social summary that is theatrical space. The Tudors were negotiating the shift from Catholicism to the Church of England. The Stuarts were initially demonstrating their right of inheritance after Elizabeth, and later the restoration of the monarchy itself. The late nineteenth century is negotiating a very real shift in political reality - the introduction of the popular vote - and incorporating that new *electorate* into the national imaginary, as 'subjects' who give their assent through affection to the powers-that-be. That it is done through negotiation and persuasion rather than coercion does not diminish this effect. Rather it serves to illustrate the ongoing negotiations between different versions of the world that are summarised in ceremony. Not all of the effects of theatrical space, as I have said, are directly intentional. Power is not always so clear about what it wants, or even where it resides. I would imagine that in these cases, the intention was precisely to promote national pride and allegiance, and to reinforce the monarch as benign figurehead. Yet, the production of shows and spectacle does not merely sate the people's appetite for circuses: it causes them to be put in a spatial relationship with those shows that defines their social relationship to the sponsoring authority. The 'message' may not be coercive, but the spatial experience produced is coercive. This is why we must look behind the intention to the space, to interpret more fully what is actually happening: not what is being

articulated by these events, but the work they *do* through the space they *produce*, and what that does to people.

Being there: the experience of monumental theatrical space.

All the accounts of the Coronation that I have looked at mention the thousands of people who gathered to witness those parts of the ceremony that were made available to them. The Express, in 1911, talks of 'thousands of loyal people ... a whirlpool of humanity', packed so closely that 'hats could not be raised with the cheer'. (Express: 1911) Much attention is paid to the actual difficulty of seeing the procession pass. In 1937, the public ingeniously employed periscopes developed in the first world war to look over the heads of the dense ranks of people in front of them. (Illustrated London News: 1937) (fig.5)



fig. 5: Viewing the 1937 Coronation through periscopes.

The Express, again, makes much of instances of 'little urchins' lifted above the heads of the crowd or perched on railings so that they could also be uplifted by

the spectacle. This democratisation of a hard-won vantage point is presented as exemplary of the generosity and fellow feeling of those gathered for this great expression of their citizen-fellowship. What it actually illustrates is the way in which the event is playing a politics of distance. All people have to be generous with is a view. They are completely subordinated to the event, positioned as spectators both by its exclusive representational practices (who gets to be in it) and its spatial practices (who gets to see it). Having to strain to catch a glimpse of the spectacle as it goes by, coupled with the generation of suspense as you wait for the moment when it will pass your vantage point, produces one of the most powerfully energised theatrical aspects of the event. Spectators are given the impression, by the event, and the rhetoric that surrounds it, that they are the legitimising force - which of course, in a real sense, they are. This very real power, however, is incorporated and absorbed by the ceremony, in two ways. The inclusion of the 'representatives' of the people has been discussed above, and illustrates the inclusion of the people in the abstract into the spectacle in the form of a sign. The second strategy of incorporation is, paradoxically, an exclusion, but one stage-managed in such a way as to produce excitement, anticipation and gratitude. These effects contain assumptions about the relationships in play which are then repeated and reinforced discursively in the reporting of the experience.

George V, says the Express, 'acknowledged the homage of his people ... and this quickened them for they realised that they had touched his heart'. (Express 1911)

The way it is written naturalises the assumptions implicit in the event - he is the King and they are the subjects, therefore they are paying 'homage'. This is precisely the balance that the ceremony itself aims to describe. Nevertheless, the potential power of the massed people is implicated in the extremely stringent crowd control measures.

Some of these are entirely practical: barricades erected in Trafalgar Square and on the bridges to restrict the flow of people. These measures are even given reasonable prominence in the Coronation Numbers for 1911, 1937 and 1953, which included images of uniformed policemen putting up railings in the days before the Coronation. (fig.6) The Express in 1911 makes a special feature of the 'Peaceful Barriers', noting that

prognostications of trouble at the barrier were triumphantly falsified yesterday. Nothing happened, absolutely nothing. The barriers were harmless. (Express 1911)

This is an interesting turn of phrase: that the barriers themselves were harmless. This would seem to imply that they could have been injurious to the people, rather than the other way round. Even so, the Express continues in a somewhat satirical tone that 'No baulked multitudes scrabbled at the doors, no masses of men, made frantic by the thought of their infringed liberties, hurled themselves upon the hated timber, plying axe and crowbar'.



fig. 6: Crowd control barriers, 1953.

That they could so easily admit the possibility after the event indicates the success of the incorporation of the crowd into the ceremony, but notably, there is something of a sense of relief that their (and the authorities) version of this (based on 'homage', rather than restriction, of course) was not interrupted by any independent political action on the part of the people. They observe that 'this was the more gratifying because it is now known that the murmurings against the 'barricades' had created some apprehension in the authorities, who therefore took special measures to strengthen them'. (Express 1911) It would seem that resistance expressed to the idea of barricades caused more barricades to be erected. The potential power of the people is repeatedly invoked by the Express, as it struggles to tell the tale of how the people exerted no power.

The police here were infinitely tolerant and infinitely wise. Nothing was done to irritate the people ... They allowed all who wished to enter, knowing full well that a brief inspection of the backs of a file of cavalrymen, a double file of infantrymen ... would soon tire their curiosity. (Express 1911)

This military presence is, of course, the secondary level of crowd control measures. This one is expressed through the vocabulary of the ceremony, and therefore appears to be part of the spectacle rather than having a dual function. The display of military power is spectacular, in the sense that it is designed to be read. It illustrates through representation the might of the nation and the power of the state. Military cordons, perhaps more than any other aspect of a ceremony of this kind, are operating on several levels at once. This is, after all, really the army, whatever they might be doing or wearing. For the state to function, it must have the loyalty of its armed forces: many times in history, the loss of that loyalty has resulted in cataclysmic change, for good and bad. In the Coronation, or other forms of state-sponsored ceremony, the army authorises, through its presence, the rights of that nation and that state. Spatially, however, it does more than this. For its personnel are simultaneously objects of the gaze, participants in and spectators of the ceremony and also the cordon which

spatially separates the lookers from the looked at. Ostensibly there, as all are ostensibly there, to do homage to the Crown, in representational terms they complete the 'picture' of the nation: Crown, Lords, Church, Commons, Armed Forces, People.

In spatial terms they enforce the division that determines the nature of the theatrical space.

Jack London attended the Coronation of 1902 (fig.7), and later wrote

I saw it at Trafalgar Square, 'the most splendid site in Europe', and the very innermost heart of the Empire. There were many thousands of us, all checked and held in order by a superb display of armed power. The base of Nelson's Column was triple-fringed with blue jackets. Eastward, at the entrance to the Square, stood the Royal Marine Artillery. In the triangle of Pall Mall and Cockspur Street, the statue of George III was buttressed on either side by Lancers and Hussars. To the west were the red-coats of the Royal Marines, and from the Union Club to the embouchure of Whitehall swept the glittering, massive curve of the 1st Life Guards - gigantic men mounted on gigantic chargers, steel-breastplated, steel helmeted, steel-caparisoned, a great war-sword of steel ready to the hand of the powers that be. And further, throughout the crowd, were flung long lines of the Metropolitan Constabulary, while in the rear were the reserves - tall, well-fed men, with weapons to wield and muscles to wield them in case of need. (cited in Coulter 1999: 11-12)



*The coronation of Edward VII, originally set for 26 June 1902, was finally held on 9 August. The stars leading horsesmen in this view is the procession premier James Whitehead, next General Sir Alfred Gaseley, Admiral Sir Edward Seymour and Lord Kitchener. Figures named by Jack London in 'Instilling Spirit'.*

fig. 7: Coronation procession of Edward VII, 1902.

A presence like this cannot help but inflect the space with a sense of power in action. All the rhetoric of the event is being mobilised to encourage people to accede to its organisation of appearances, but this is backed up by the discipline

and coercion implied by the presence of so much armed force. Clear in London's account of Trafalgar Square in 1902 is his sense that these men could go into action at any time, of the potential for the execution and not just presentation of power. They are presented as spectacle, and indeed London describes them spectacularly, but their presence changes the space. It is not just a place for looking - it is a place for looking in a particular way. Its texture, rather than its outward appearance, is inflected through the experience of being so close to so many 'tall, well-fed men', to the 'great war-sword of steel' ready to act at the behest of the power-that-be, should they wish it so.

What the people see, from their hard-won vantage points, surrounded and separated by armed men, are the processions. Jack London's account, again, describes them:

But Hark! There is cheering down Whitehall; the crowd sways, the double walls of soldiers come to attention, and into view swing the King's watermen, in fantastic mediaeval garbs of red, for all the world like the van of a circus parade. Then a royal carriage, filled with ladies and gentlemen of the household, with powdered footmen and coachmen most gorgeously arrayed. More carriages, lords and chamberlains, viscounts, mistresses of the robes - lackeys all. Then the warriors, a kingly escort, generals, bronzed and worn, from the ends of the earth come up to London Town ... Broadwood and Cooper who relieved Ookiep ... Kitchener of Khartoum, Lord Roberts of India and all the world - the fighting men of England, masters of destruction, engineers of death! Another race of men from those of the shops and slums.

But here they come, in all the pomp and certitude of power, and still they come, these men of steel, these war-lords and world-harnessers. pell-mell, peers and commoners, princes and maharajahs, Equerries to the King and Yeomen of the Guard. And here the colonials, lithe and hardy men; and here all the breeds of the world - soldiers from Canada, Australia, New Zealand...Bermuda, Borneo, Fiji ... the Gold Coast ... from Rhodesia, Cape Colony, Natal, Sierra Leone and the Gambia, Nigeria, Uganda, from Ceylon, Cyprus, Hong-Kong, Jamaica and Wei-Hai-Wei, from Lagos, Malta, St Lucia, Singapore, Trinidad. And here the conquered men of Ind, swarthy horsemen and sword wielders, fiercely barbaric, blazing in crimson and scarlet, Sikhs, Rajputs, Burmese, province by province and caste by caste. (cited in Coulter 1999: 11)

I quote this at length, because he captures beautifully in this account the excess of signification which an event of this kind stages; almost 'too much' and 'too many' to take in. After a long time of waiting and anticipation, this explosion of noise and colour on the eye produces immense excitement. Suddenly one is *in the presence* of the long-awaited spectacle. The moment is charged with the aura

of the thing. All is 'now' and 'here'. This effect has been produced through spatial organisation.

The form of the parade itself is activating the spatial implications of the processional avenue which I discussed earlier: endless vistas, a marching through and beyond time. The procession does not stop before us, it goes by, like the supposedly unstoppable flow of history itself. In this way, it mystifies even as it is apparent. It is calm, it erases whatever history of bloodshed and conflict put it there, replacing it with certainty and inevitability.

This space is operating disciplinarily, but also through its organisation it wishes to promote more than acquiescence through fear. Although its effects are not restricted, as I have argued, to the sum of its stated meanings, it nevertheless wishes these meanings to be its true ones.

The Express describes that when the King and Royal Family appeared on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, 'people near the Palace were seized with a frenzy of loyalty and affection. Men shouted themselves hoarse, women waved handkerchiefs as if they were mad'. (Express 1911)

The effects of their appearance are not fake - they are *the same as* a 'frenzy of loyalty', indeed they may even *be* a 'frenzy of loyalty'. These effects are nevertheless conditioned by the organisation of space. This spontaneous outpouring of feeling is manufactured: it is experienced in the theatrical space, not in the bus queue two days later. It is conditioned by the heightening of the moment, by participation in an experience that is outside that of the everyday, by the mobilisation of legitimising frameworks that make you believe you are in the presence of something mighty. It is produced by the presence of that which is normally hidden and restricted (the body of the King), by the sense of specialness produced by disruptions in physical space, by one's spatial relationship to great wealth and great spectacle.

The Coronation itself, the literal anointing and crowning, though, as we have seen, taken seriously enough to be altered to fit political necessity, is not the

aspect of the event that does the work. The work is done in the organisation of space, in the staging of unity, and of power as 'spectacle'; unaffordable, unstageable by the 'ordinary' person (although it has to be noted, paid for by them)<sup>12</sup> and therefore un-generatable by them. The only way to be involved, it seems, is to accede to its demands, to position yourself as it wishes you to, to believe its version of your legitimising function, and pay no attention to your real power as a citizen. For if you concord with all this, it can belong to you - the King can be 'your' King, the version of the state that the event proposes can be 'your' England, 'your' Empire. It can even be 'your' pageant, a source of national pride, something 'this country does so much better than anyone else'. This mechanism of incorporation through ownership is apparent in the Express account of 1911, as the crowd shout 'Good old Bobs' as Lord Roberts passes. If power is expressed through ceremonial, then only those who stage ceremony (wealth, ancient right) can have power. The 'inclusion' of the people is produced through the experience of their spatial exclusion.

For Lefebvre, as I have argued, monumental space is the summary and condensed expression of the social space of that dispensation of power. In the same way, the state-sponsored ceremonial event is the summarised and legible representational account of the social relations implicit in that space. The experience of being in that space is what does the work of internalising social relations.

Lefebvre writes that

For millenia, monumentality took in all aspects of spatiality that we have identified ...: the perceived, the conceived and the lived; representations of space and representational spaces ... Monumental space offered each member of a society an image of that membership, an image of his or her social visage. It thus constituted a collective mirror more faithful than any personal one ... The affective level, that is to say, the level of the body, bound to symmetries and rhythms - is transformed into a 'property' of monumental space, into symbols which are generally intrinsic parts of a politico-religious whole, into co-ordinated symbols.

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<sup>12</sup> See, for example, the coverage of the public subsidising of Victoria's Golden and Diamond Jubilee ceremonies in *The Times* (July 6 2001)

The component elements of such wholes are disposed according to a strict order for the purposes of the use of space: some at a first level, the level of the affective, bodily lived experience, the level of the spoken word; some at a second level, that of the perceived, of socio-political signification; and some at a third level, the level of the conceived, where the dissemination of the written word and of knowledge weld the members of society into a 'consensus' and in doing so confers upon them the status of 'subjects'. (1991: 220-4).

I will let Jack London speak to the power of this process, as he closes his account of the 1902 Coronation.

... And now the Horse Guards, a glimpse of beautiful cream ponies, and a golden panoply, a hurricane of cheers, the crashing of bands - 'The King! the King! God Save the King!' Everybody has gone mad. The contagion is sweeping me off my feet, I, too, want to shout 'The King! God Save the King!' Ragged men about me, tears in their eyes, are tossing up their hats and crying ecstatically, 'Bless 'em! Bless 'em!' See, there he is, in that wondrous golden coach, the great crown flashing on his head, the woman beside him in white likewise crowned. (cited in Coulter 1999: 13)

He, too, wants to shout 'God save the King'. The theatrical space has so acted on the resistant London that he is moved by its rhetorical structures, drawn into its excitements, involved and acted upon by its production of presence. The artificiality of this presence, produced as it is through exclusion and abstraction, will be addressed in Chapter 6. I will conclude this section by addressing the relationship of this theatrical space to the wider space of the social which it serves.

#### Condensing social space.

Lefebvre's monumental space condenses and summarises social space: In the same way, monumental theatrical space condenses and materialises social space through employing symbolic vocabularies and dispersals of people in physical space. As I have indicated, the summarisation is not a *fait-accompli* - there is tension in the production of this theatrical space: much is at stake, and an intervention which works against the space produced by the event can suggest an entire alternative social spatialisation. I will develop this thought in Chapter 6. What I hope is clear is that a Coronation or Royal funeral procession passing

down the Mall or the interment of a body in the Pantheon are not the mere reflection of a 'real' politics which exists elsewhere; they, and the spaces they make and are made by, *are* the execution of power, as it defines itself, materialises itself, delineates itself against its 'other', and shapes its subjects, in both senses of the word.

Equally, this theatrical space expands itself outwards into the space of the social. Ultimately, a ceremony of the magnitude of the British coronation attempts to do more than maintain its own internal coherence: it works to colonise, in its moment of manifestation, all of the social space it implies in its summarisation.

As the Express represented in the opening paragraph quoted earlier, celebrations were held in 'every town and village of the homeland, and in every corner of the far-flung Empire'. (Express 1911) (figs.8/9)



fig. 8: Theatrical performances of Empire.

Simultaneity of timing compresses social space, and brings it under the sway of the theatrical space manufactured at the centre. Ceremonial events attempt a particular summarisation of social relations - it is when we (the people) are explicitly constituted as 'citizens' (or, in this country, 'subjects') and when the powerful emerge from offices, palaces, country estates, and take their places as the marshals and officers of the state. It is done through theatrical spectacle

because these relationships, supposedly, are not visible until they are materialised in ceremonial vocabularies. As I have argued, however, ceremonial events do not merely describe: they constitute. Because of the way that ceremony condenses social relations, as a coherent and naturalised description of social reality, the story it tells us of ourselves causes us to be those things (citizens, officers of state, monarch) all the time. The production of theatrical space that contains the ceremonial event can at these moments reach out and colonise the wider social space which it summarises. This is its greatest moment of power, as it re-organises the everyday in its own image, not as an on-going and difficult process of government, but in a single instant of inclusion and euphoria.<sup>13</sup>

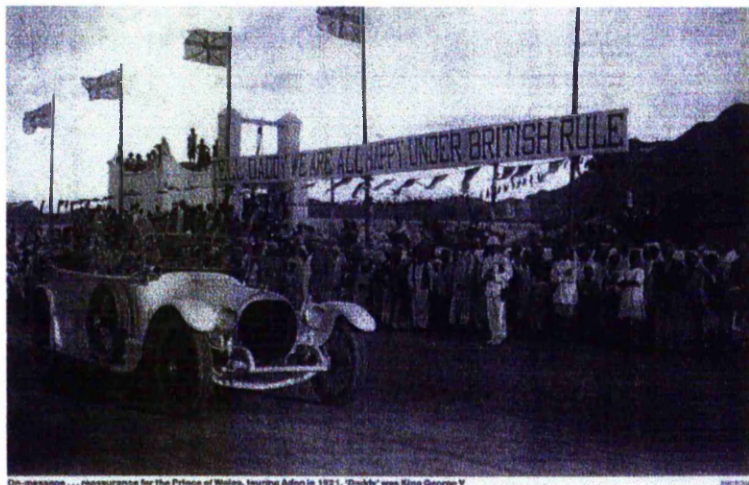


fig. 9: Theatrical performances of Empire.

For this reason, the struggle over the production of theatrical space is a central one to systems of power, and, as I shall explore later, in resistance to them. Spatial interpretation has exposed the staging of the Coronation as the disguising of experience as legible surface, and as the production of abstract and monumental theatrical space. Abstract space, as Lefebvre argues, seeks to

<sup>13</sup> The simultaneous proclamation of the succession of the monarch in diverse towns and cities speaks to this, as does the central issuing of, for example, forms of commemorative service to be used on the death of George V 'in all Churches in England ... on the day of the Funeral'. (Special Forms: 1936)

paper over all difference, to homogenise space and to obscure historical contradiction: as he put it earlier, 'to conjure away ... time'. Witnessing the King in 1911, 'arrayed in all the emblems of temporal power ... the king's majesty become a living truth', a little child commented 'Mummy ... it's just like the history books.' (Express 1911)

#### Chapter 4: 'Making the people for the Laws': the French Revolutionary Festivals.

The French Revolution stands at a key moment in the history of the West and of the history of Western spatiality.

For Lefebvre,

Even if one takes a pro-revolutionary stance, it is no longer easy to look upon the results of all the great revolutions as beneficial. The French Revolution ... gave birth contradictorily to the nation, the state, law (modern law, i.e: Roman law, revised and 'appropriated'), rationality, compulsory military service, the unpaid soldier, and permanent war. To this list may be added the disappearance of forms of community control over political authority. Also among the revolutions 'effects', direct and indirect, was the definitive constitution of abstract space, with its phallic, visual and geometric formants. (1991: 289-90).

Other writers on the French Revolution, although not taking the same spatial perspective, tend to agree with this formulation of the trajectory of the Revolution. Robin Blackburn, in an interview for *Marxism Today* on the 200th anniversary of 1789 commented 'It is really the birth of modernity ... based on a doctrine of secular human rights, which is bound up with the creation of a new world'. (Blackburn 1989: 24). For Simon Schama,

if one had to look for one indisputable story of transformation in the French Revolution, it would be the creation of the juridical entity of the citizen. But no sooner had this hypothetically free person been invented than his liberties were circumscribed by the police power of the state. (1989 : 858)

This chapter will look at the history of the Revolution through an examination of the theatrical spaces generated by its Festivals. Do the Festivals, their management, and the debates they stage over the production and control of space reflect the wider trajectory of the Revolution? The Festival was conceived at the time as an vital corollary to the Revolutionary process: the site in which the Revolution would be embodied, manifested and explained. For Mona Ozouf, the pre-eminent historian of the Revolutionary Festivals, they were to undertake

the work of creating the citizen of the new France: 'the festival was an indispensable complement to the legislative system, for although the legislator makes the laws for the people, festivals make the people for the laws'. (Ozouf 1988: 9) This is not just a work of imagination: of proposing the ideal citizen through a representational vocabulary. As Noel Parker adds, 'the power of the Festivals was the power to import the experience of the Revolution into the experience of individuals'. (1990: 62)

Many of the discussions of the Festivals tend to address their meanings according to their legible surfaces. As the makers of the Festivals themselves intended this emblematic and educational function, this is certainly a useful path to the understanding of the way the Revolution was being imagined at different stages of its development. Nevertheless, they are also productive of space, and it is the spatial implications of Festival enactments on which I will concentrate. For this reason, and the reasons above, I have elected to take a chronological view of the evolution of the Revolutionary Festival, rather than, for example, the categorisation of Festivals into types favoured by writers such as David Dowd.<sup>1</sup> If the Revolution is evolving into the production of abstract social space, then do the Festivals do the same?

There are two trajectories in play in the following discussion. Firstly, the battle between the riotous and spontaneous space generated by the 'people', and the organised space of the Revolutionary Festival. As Colin Lucas observes, the Revolution depended on the 'intervention of ordinary people. It is only when the Bastille is stormed by the poor people in Paris, (that) the power system, the feudal structure, collapses in a matter of weeks because the peasants simply stop obeying'. (Lucas 1989: 25)

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<sup>1</sup> David Dowd, in his 1948 text on Jacques-Louis David, treats the Festivals as exercises in propaganda, addressing the function of neo-classicism in their design. He categorises them into funeral festivals, triumphs for Republican accomplishments and religious festivals. See Dowd (1948).

Yet the Revolution then sought to regulate and bring under control this spontaneous space, substituting and dominating it with its own version of theatrical space. As Yves Berce notes, 'the Festivals of the Revolution belong to the forces of modernity suppressing that older culture: the post-Reformation Church, the centralising state, Enlightenment secularisation'. (Bercé 1976: 88-9, cited in Parker 1990: 63). The second trajectory is born of this battle. It is the increasingly abstract (and abstracting) nature of the Festival, and the social space, as the 'people' are substituted and excluded by their representatives and as their own representation.

#### The French Revolution and space.

In order for a political and social order to be established, a spatial order must also be produced, and the history of the Revolution is as much a history of the production of space as it is of political and social organisations. This process is deeply implicated in the organisation of Revolutionary Festivals, for the reasons I have explored in the previous chapter. The monumental and theatrical spaces of a particular power or interest group summarise their ideology and their space, and cannot help but intersect with other kinds of space - that of everyday life, that of the conceptual and that of the lived. Examined in this light, the history of the management and organisation of the Festivals track the history of the Revolution, and the way it articulated and negotiated its changes through its theatrical space. In the field of scholarship that has foregrounded the Revolutionary Festivals as rich sources for the interpretation of the Revolution itself, rather than as decorative adjuncts<sup>2</sup>, Mona Ozouf's work is pre-eminent. It is her (1988) *Festivals and the French Revolution* which is drawn on most consistently by scholars in the field, and my principal engagement in this chapter

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<sup>2</sup> See Hunt (1984): Chapters 1 and 2; Parker (1990); Bercé (1976). There are also several texts engaging with some of the principal events of the Revolution from a theatrical perspective. See Thévoz (1989); Huet (1982). Several useful texts engage with the theatre practice of the period, many of whose figures were involved in the production of Festivals. See Brown (1981); Hemmings (1994); Rodmell (1990); Root-Bernstein (1993).

will therefore be with her work. Ozouf links the festivals explicitly with a spatial sense. From the very beginning, the Revolution allied rediscovered liberty with reconquered space. (1988: 126) The foundational moments of the Revolution's history were rooted in the reclamation of spaces that had been forbidden, exemplified in the storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789 and the invasion of the Tuileries on 20 June 1792 that was the first step in the overthrow of the monarchy.

Furthermore, the Festivals themselves, although, as I shall explore, very much concerned with a legible and educative system of signs, were also self-conscious exercises in space. As Ozouf notes,

Belief in the educative potential of space derives directly from the idea of utopia ... very little attempt was made (at the time) to reveal the connections by which space might exert its educative function over people's minds: it seemed to impose its power in a direct, unmediated way ... an ingenious disposition of space was thought, in and of itself, to be capable of containing individual crime: placing a civic altar near an assembly hall was enough to prevent a legislator from betraying his duty. (1988: 126)

The Festival programme became a rational programme of the occupation of space, whose feeling 'seemed to emerge from a judicious arrangement of space'. This Festival space was, for Ozouf, the 'exact equivalent of the space of the Revolution itself. (1988: 127) How far these spaces were actually able to *be* this, and what their successes and failures imply, is the subject of this chapter.

Ozouf comments that ceremonial space 'must be found; sometimes invented, sometimes reshaped, both marked out and emptied, figures drawn upon it, ways made through it'. (1988: 127)

In the light of Lefebvre's insights into space, I will argue that these spaces are not just being found, they are being produced - and once produced, are inflecting the development of the entity that calls them into being - Revolutionary France. Secondly, they are not just legible, they are textured and experienced, and this provides analysis of them with a necessary tension. The journey I will trace is constitutive of the journey of the Revolution: from appropriated space, utopian,

and harking back to the kind of unity of life and festival that categorised (for Lefebvre) the sacred moment of absolute space, to abstraction. This involves abstraction of legislature, from the 'people' to the 'committee in the name of the people'. It concerns the abstraction of ceremonial vocabulary, from the production of expressions of free experience, to the provision of spectacle. Finally, it provokes the production of abstract space, from the shared communion of the early festivals, which banished division, to the state-sponsored ordering of the festival as thing-to-be-watched (and hence thing-to-be-read), cloaking again its actual spatial effects in the illusion of legibility.

Spatially, the trajectory reflects what has been called the 'split personality' of the French Revolution.

For while it is a commonplace to recognise that the revolution gave birth to a new kind of political world, it is less often understood that that world was the product of two irreconcilable differences - the creation of a potent state and the creation of a community of free citizens. (Schama 1989: 15)

This 'split personality' manifests itself in the different kinds of theatrical space generated at different moments of the Revolution: the self-consciously performative space of the popular uprising; the early utopian and communal theatrical spaces of the Federation; the production of monumental theatrical space in the Pantheon, and latterly, the abstract and representational theatrical space of the years of the Terror.

### Festival origins.

The Revolution, in its early plans for Festivals, looked back to a 'time without routine, a festival without divisions ... in which the participants found their satisfaction simply in the fact of being together'. (Ozouf 1988: 5) Drawing its imagery from French pastoral literature, the image is Arcadia; the rediscovery of Nature and the return of the people of France to natural time and space. The Festivals were idealised as a new beginning, reflecting the natural round of the

year in their classificatory order, and embracing variety without social distinction. The 'time' alluded to is parallel to Lefebvre's identification of absolute/ sacred space, in which social activity and its celebratory moments are undivided: a unity of experience in which space (conceived, perceived and lived) is unified and properly homogenous.

There was, under the ancien regime, an existing popular festival calendar, based in the ecclesiastical year, and incorporating feasts and days of inversion. These celebrations were seen by those who articulated a need for a Revolutionary programme of Festivals as 'barbarous', without point, and offensive to 'reason'. (Ozouf 1988: 5) Other celebrations derived from the activities of the monarchy. Decreed from above, they illustrated division and difference, concerned as they were with the articulation and production of social stratification.

Arcadian nostalgia was to combine with the rediscovery of the festivals of ancient Greece and Rome which articulated civil and civic virtues. The two together seemed to offer an ideal model for the Revolutionary Festival. This combination was to supersede and suppress the anti-rational space of the existing popular celebrations. As Noel Parker points out, the organised festivals arose in the context of 'rural disorders' of the late 1780's and early 1790's, and were in part an attempt to substitute orderly crowd activity for the riot. (1990: 52) The combination would also invoke, out of time, the space and values of the classical moment to challenge the dominance of the Crown.

Ultimately, they could do neither completely. The attempt to absorb the existing celebratory impulses resulted in a long conflict between the Revolutionary Festival, with its particular vocabulary of classical allegory, and the popular theatrical moment, with its inversions, personifications and tendencies towards disorder. (As I will discuss in Chapter 6, this is not so much a boundary (theatrical behaviour versus disorder) as a battle over the determination of space, but at the time it was perceived as such.) Ultimately, the Festivals became increasingly restrictive and ordered from the centre: Quinet sees, in the

succession of festivals, the gradual abandonment of liberty. Ozouf notes that the 'Revolution never managed to break with the initial violence that made it possible but also made its completion impossible'. The Festivals became 'a facade plastered onto a gloomy reality that it was their mission to conceal'. (1988: 11) This trajectory is argued in theatrical terms by Ozouf, and also by Noel Parker. The early Festivals rejected 'theatre': by this is implied a deliberately representative mode of expression, and the 'relegation' of the people to spectators.<sup>3</sup> The early Festivals used non-imitative vocabularies of allegory, and sought to involve the people as participants in a democratic and shared experience of theatrical space. Increasingly, however, the need of the Revolution to negotiate with its own history disabled its own festival agenda. The 1793 Festival of Reason has been particularly criticised for its 'theatrical character', using as it did the technical trickery of theatre performance for its transformation scenes. (Ozouf 1988: 100) As the events of the Revolution are re-incorporated into its theatrical space, with the narrative increasingly decided from the centre, the educative function of the Festival is increasingly driven through the visual. This provokes, as I will explore, a different kind of experience by producing a different kind of texture. Increasingly, the social space of the Revolution being summarised in Festival space becomes other than the actual social space which it produces. At this point, theatrical space is coercive, imposing a vision of a democratic social reality rather than producing one. The Revolution never fully made its own space - the space as it imagined it in the festival. It tried to transcend and abstract its own history, and its Festivals became the summary and condensation of something far more coercive and disciplinary than was pretended. The Festivals ended by abstracting the values of the Revolution, becoming a visually driven spectacle producing a kind of fake exaltation, rather than the fully lived space they seemed to originally propose. Spectators were

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<sup>3</sup> See Ozouf (1988) p. 207-8.

again to be controlled through spatial exclusion. This was not the reinvention of everyday life that Lefebvre suggests is needed for real life to begin.

Ultimately, the invocation of the space of the 'classical' festival proved unable to reproduce 'classical' social space, or, for that matter, 'classical' citizens.

But it was the dream of the time -

everything became possible. The Revolution ... seemed to have been set up in a field open on all sides to enlightenment and to law ... an un hoped for opportunity for realising utopia. (Ozouf 1988: 8)

### 1789: popular theatrical space.

The Revolution itself was born of a radical rethinking of social space, a shift from the feudal economic arrangements of the *ancien regime* to the representative presence of the people. The *Estates General* was convened for the first time since 1614 by Louis XVI, on 5 May, in the hope it would allow an increase in taxation in return for limited royal reforms.<sup>4</sup> It was made up of the three estates of the nation: the clergy, the nobility and the representatives of electors. Elections to this assembly, and the drawing up of lists of grievances for representation at national level, had politicised the assembly to a degree unforeseen by Louis and his advisors. By 17 June, the Third Estate had renamed itself as the National Assembly, and stated that it represented the true national interest. On 20 June, the representatives swore the Tennis Court Oath, and refused to disperse until their newly proposed Constitution was adopted. As the country began to mobilise, Louis merged the three estates on 27 June 1789. At the same time, he ordered troops to rally around Paris and Versailles. The next stage of the Revolution was to be bloody.

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<sup>4</sup> Cobb and Jones (1988). The most useful general historical texts consulted in preparation for this chapter include Lefebvre (1962); Rudé (1959); Hunt (1984); Schama (1989); Cobb and Jones (1988).

### Storming the Bastille.

The Bastille was stormed on the night of 14 July. It was a prison, armoury and the institutional site of the drawing up of Royal warrants for arrest and imprisonment. Simultaneously symbol of the arbitrary power of the King, and practical source of gunpowder, the Bastille was to retain an important role in the Festival presentations of the values and history of the Revolution.

In the weeks and days leading up to the 14 July, there were crowds converging on Paris from all round the nation, and great numbers of people in the streets. Incendiary public speeches were made by the great orators of the Revolution, utilising the rhetoric of sacrifice and patriotism, and initiating the equation of the Revolution with classical virtue that would be developed so much more explicitly later in the work of Jacques-Louis David and Quatremère de Quincy. Simon Schama gives us the following account of a speech by Camille Desmoulins, in June 1789.

Drawing on his schoolboy exercises in the classics, Desmoulins used in his peroration the same tone of Virtue Militant, but for extra effect added the patriotic martyrdom exemplified in neo-classical history paintings in the Salon and on the stage. Blood was important in these likenesses. Desmoulins compared himself with the fallen warrior Otyrhades, who wrote 'Sparta has triumphed' in his own blood on a captured standard. 'I who have been timid now feel myself to be a new man ... I could die with joy for so glorious a cause, and, pierced with blows, I too would write in my own blood "France is free"' (1989: 381)

Claiming to see the arrival of the police, Desmoulins invokes the memory of the St Bartholomew's Day massacres,

a reference point that was already becoming an important cliché of Patriot rhetoric and which would be reinforced by the most popular play of 1789: Marie-Joseph Chenier's *Charles IX*. Pointing to his breast with one hand and waving a pistol in the other (another piece of stage business that would become standard in the Convention), Desmoulins defied the stooges of tyranny. "Yes, yes, it is I who call my brothers to freedom; I would die rather than submit to servitude." (Schama 1989: 382-3)

These orations may not, Schama observes, have been of much significance to the authorities, had they not been accompanied by calls to arms. There were more

people in Paris than troops could cope with. On 12 July, at the place Vendome, matters came to a head.

The Prince de Lambesc, commanding a company of the Royal-Allemand stationed in the place Louis XV was ordered to clear the square ... the crowd ran into the Tuileries Gardens (and ) collided with troops. The skirmish went on long enough for word that "Germans and Swiss are massacring the people" to be circulated. (1989: 383)

The Garde Français came to the people's aid, and for the first time armed force was brought against the King's troops. The battle for Paris was joined.

Essentially this was riot and destruction. The key targets were the northern wall, with its restrictive customs posts, and the monastery of Sainte-Lazare, a commercial depot for the distribution of bread and grain. These targets were not only emblems of the economic organisation of society under the ancien regime, but were also directly implicated in the practice of social life, and the spatial organisation and administration of that economic power.

On Monday 13, a permanent committee was declared to take over the governance of Paris, and ordered the mobilisation of property-owners to form a civic militia. In the absence of uniforms, this group was marked by the wearing of the tricoloured cockade. On the morning of July 14, the crowd converged on the Bastille, to liberate powder for their weapons. After several hours of fighting, the vanquishers rushed in, liberated all seven of the prisoners and took command of the armoury.

It would seem to be obvious that the actual storming of the Bastille was not a 'festival' or 'theatrical' event, but a 'real' assault on a real place, with a pragmatic purpose (that of getting gunpowder), and which becomes 'theatrical' as it is memorialised by the Revolution at later times. Yet this is to accede too easily to the view that the theatrical must represent. I believe that the storming of the Bastille can be regarded as productive of a theatrical space, and that this is in no way to diminish its very real impact. To regard it as such is not to depend on a retrospective reading of it as metaphor: the encroachment on a forbidden space,

the destruction of a monarchical symbol. These are considerations which were energising the participants at the time, and investing their understanding of what was happening with a theatrical sensibility. The Bastille is exactly a restricted and forbidden space, not a metaphor for one. It is a disciplinary space in service of the execution of power by an authoritarian monarch. Secondly, there is more in play than the apparent surface of the event: different social imaginaries are also being pitted against one another - a world which recognises the rights of the King and a world which recognises the rights of the people. The Bastille stands in for (summarises) all the space in which this division is made. This condensing function theatricalises the event. After all, why the Bastille? Why not the burning of the customs posts celebrated ever after? The answer of course is in part in the retrospective selection and organisation of Festival narrative of the Revolution. But the actions of the people generate the space, and, however the event may be used later (as representative of the death of tyranny, or the sacrifice of the people, or the liberation of the victims of the King), it is determined at the time in the ways they negotiate revolutionary violence and experience it as symbolic action. The storming of the Bastille pits the force of the people against the force of the King. It may seem wilful to argue that real men and women and their real deaths are 'theatrical': again, only if the theatrical is either trivial or *only* representative. One need only think of the monumentalising of death and sacrifice in, for example, a tomb of an unknown soldier, the cults of personality that arise around martyrs, or the theatricalising of death in the form of 'sacrifice for one's country' to recognise that death too can produce theatrical space. Additionally, the awareness of the impact of one's own actions can provoke a heightened sense which is akin to Schechner's 'awareness of performance'.

Schama observes

Like Desmoulins, many of the actors in this drama suddenly felt themselves to be framed within a brilliantly lit Historical Moment. Everything they said and did took on weight as though it were being chronicled by a new Tacitus even as it was being enacted. (1989: 383)

This is an example of action producing theatrical space. This thought will be fully developed in Chapter 6, in which I will discuss the question of who gets to define or limit theatricalised expression, and the importance of this in the establishment of resistant space. In the meantime, this historical sense to which Schama alludes allows a space of representation to be produced - fully lived, and yet experienced theatrically by the participants.

Mona Ozouf is aware of the generation of festival or theatrical space through popular action. The fundamental aspect, she notes, is 'a terrified joy, a mixture of fear and power ... delight in the feeling, and display, of strength'. (1988: 37) Two elements; the festive and the riotous, are bound together in the popular uprising (for such this was):

If the first of these elements dominated ... the (event) clearly retained its festive character; but the second was always at the surface, ready to spill over ... in short, there was no riotous scene that did not have a festive element and no collective celebration without a groundswell of menace. (1988: 38-9)

She concludes these observations by noting that symbolism, at these moments, reigned supreme.

Perhaps the fact that riotous behaviour seemed so dominated by a sense of ceremony can be attributed to exhibitionism ... No sooner did these spontaneous acts of rioting emerge than they took on ritual form. (1988: 39)

I suggest that it is not so much 'exhibitionism' as the awareness of the *significance* of the action provoking a theatrical space which reciprocally scripts that action.

Noel Parker observes

Participants in the communal events known variously as *fetes* ... perform a participatory act ... their performance imparted a sense of the content of the new centre of the political-social world. (1990: 39)

There is here no real definition of what this 'performance' consists, yet the word is chosen over the more pragmatic 'did'. This indicates that the writers on the Festivals, and even the participants themselves, are aware of a heightening and framing of behaviour at the moments at which that behaviour begins to have implications that are wider than the sum of the literal actions undertaken. As I have noted, these are usually recognised as 'representational' implications, particularly when what is represented has no other material presence: the participants as 'community' for example. Certainly, this representational function, as I have explored, is part of the work of such an event, built, as it is, out of representational vocabularies. However, what is brought into being is a space made out of these representational practices which is directly experienced, and which is intimately connected to the wider space of the social as it is imagined, perceived and lived. The 'awareness' of performance is generated through being present in this space. In this way, Parker's observation, above, can be reversed. Participants awareness of the content of the new centre of the political-social world imparted a sense of performance to these summarising celebratory moments.

Parker demonstrates difficulty with the limits of performance, and repeatedly refers to the 'boundary' between representational practices and the 'real'. Festivals, he argues, 'cross this line', as they impact on 'actual' events. (1990: 61) Quite what this 'line' is made of is not detailed: peasant villagers who combine dancing the *farandôle* with an attack on the local chateau to burn legal documents may not have felt that a 'boundary' was being crossed. The 'line' is made discursively - at the time by authorities wishing to control outbursts of public direct action. It is also made by historians, who, by imposing an interpretation based on 'representation', insist that once an action ceases to be 'symbolic' it must therefore be 'real'. Ultimately, as I have argued, this discursive division ignores first of all the materiality and therefore 'reality' (and political

force) of the symbolic. Secondly, the force of this 'symbolic' space is that it re-imagines the social, proffering an alternative summary of and hence alternative model for the organisation of the social. In this way, just as authority's imagining is able to colonise everyday space, so oppositional imaginings are able to colonise everyday space. The boundary between representation and 'real' action is illusory. When, in January 1793, 'a ceremony to plant a liberty tree moved off to the Palais-Royal gardens to root out ... spies, deserters and loyalist agents' (Parker 1990: 61), the participants are extending the version of the world imagined in the ceremony into the actual social world, extending the space of representation into spatial practice. In this way, there is no 'boundary', no 'line' between representational and 'real' practices: they are both made of the same space. Parker adds 'The Festival belonged to both real life and to a world in which barely imaginable historic changes may be realised'. (1990: 66) I argue that these two are the same: the festival produces *as real life* the world in which change may be realised. It is not a precursor of 'real' action, as Parker argues, 'directing the thoughts of the participants beyond the given social reality to the imagined alternative ... embodying the hope of permanent transformation'. (1990: 65) *It is the transformation.*

Both the significance of the storming of the Bastille, in terms of re-imagining space, and the sense of popular ownership of the newly liberated prison itself, are referenced by Starobinsky, as he records Chateaubriand's account of the impromptu carnival atmosphere at the Bastille.

Temporary cafés were set up in tents; people flocked there ... elegantly dressed women, young men of fashion ... mingled with half-naked workmen demolishing the walls to the acclamations of the crowd. It was a rendezvous for the most famous orators, the best-known men of letters, the most popular actors and actresses ... the most illustrious foreigners, the lords of the Court, and the ambassadors of Europe; the old France had come there to end, the new one had come there to begin. (Chateaubriand *Memoires d'Outre-tombe* Book 5, cited in Starobinsky 1988: 243)

By 4 August, the Assembly had decreed the end of feudalism. The Declaration of the Rights of Man was made on the 26 August.

Legislative change was accompanied by the inauguration of new symbols that took their place in the condensed theatrical space of the new order, impacting again on wider social space. In October, the Deputies abolished the ceremonial costumes of their respective orders, a levelling that would form the key theme of the Festival of the following year. A group of women marched on Versailles in the same month, after hearing rumours that the Guard there were trampling the cockade. An attack on the symbols of an order is an attack on the order itself. This would not be so if the symbols were merely representative: an attack on them could not touch power's 'reality'. But that reality is in part constituted by its symbols, in the way it imagines and projects itself. Furthermore, power is most vulnerable in its condensed form, as that is where the space it proposes is made material.

1790: the Federation: producing the new France.

1790 was the year of levelling: socially, spatially, and in the theatrical space produced by the great Festival of that year, the Festival of Federation held on the 14 July. (fig.10)



fig.10: The Festival of Federation, 1790.

The unifying strategy of the Revolution was undertaken both legislatively and performatively. The significance of the emblematic in the maintenance of conceptions of social space was understood: it was made illegal that year to wear colours other than the cockade. A decree of June 19 eradicated all titles and signs of hereditary nobility: the insignia of social superiority, coats of arms on houses and carriages, livery for servants, even manorial pews or weathercocks. The destruction of symbols of social division certainly acts as a legible shorthand for the eradication of hierarchy. It also *produces* the eradication of hierarchy by disallowing social practices and expressions of its divisions. The decree also demonstrates an awareness of space and ownership of space in the maintenance of systems of domination: no citizen was to bear a name that signified his domination or possession of a place. Only the family name could serve as a badge of identity. The renaming of spaces has been a tactic of re-appropriation undertaken all over the world and in all moments: in Eastern Europe, twice; in ex-colonial territories, and as strategies for claiming space under temporary occupation. Forbidding people to be called by the name of the land they own or the space they control was a first stage in the re-taking of that space, and the incorporation of it into the new spatial production of the nation.

The Revolution intervened in the production of space on many levels. It was based on a new conception of space - as open, uncircumscribed, free of landlord/tenant relations and restrictions on movement, spatial (and therefore social) practices. This conception was, as I will explore shortly, also present in the plans for building of new places in the service of the Revolution: rational, predominantly neo-classical, and to serve as exemplifications of Revolutionary values. Lefebvre argues that all forms of space impact on each other. The conception of space that the Revolution proposed would inflect spatial practice, life as it is perceived. Through the deployment of theatrical space and ceremonial vocabulary, its spaces of representation (where the Revolution would be

imagined, and be lived) would accord harmoniously with both the conception and the practice. Utopia on earth. The plan, then, in Lefebvre's terms, was to produce a properly harmonious social space, in which all people would be equal and content.

#### Festival of Federation.

The origins of the Festival of Federation, unusually, arose 'spontaneously' out of the desire of the newly imagined 'people' to come together ceremonially, and make themselves visible in their new constitution. Although the first of a series of Revolutionary Festivals, it was presented as an end - a new beginning. It was explicitly spatial - a coming together of the nation, obliterating old boundaries and divisions, a victory over space and victory over solitude. Michelet called the Federation 'the death of geography'. (Michelet 1847-1855, cited in Ozouf 1988: 17) It was, but only the death of the geographical and spatial conceptions of the old order that had dominated experience. It produced, of course, new ones.

On the 14 July 1790, in Paris, a procession of *fédérés* from all the newly created Departments, the deputies of the national Assembly and the King and Queen made their way to the Champs-de-Mars. There, the banners of the National Guard were blessed. Bishop Talleyrand celebrated mass on the altar of the fatherland, and Lafayette administered an oath to those within the colossal amphitheatre to be faithful forever to nation, law and King. In return, Louis XVI swore to uphold the Constitution. In its legible surface, the content of the festival is clear. It stages the unity of people, church and monarchy, and frames this new social imaginary in the open air, and using new emblems of nation.

It is also an exercise in the reimagining, conquest and reinvention of space, and it is to this aspect of the work of the Festival that I will turn.

### Reimagining space.

In the early stages of the development of the Festival programme, there was much discussion over the ideal space for a Festival. Rather than holding commemorations at sites of the events of the Revolution (though, as I shall explore, the history of the Revolution did start to impact on Festival planning), what was sought was a *tabula rasa*, a 'space without memory' on to which the Revolution could inscribe its values newly.

Clearly, in line with Lefebvre's thinking of space, no space can be a *tabula rasa*, as all space and social space is inflected with both the spatial organisation of the present, and the horizons of meaning inherited from the past. The preference on the part of Festival organisers for 'empty' space led them to nature and the open air, invoking, again in Lefebvrian terms, the 'absolute' space of undifferentiated and unabstracted experience. It was a nostalgia, a beginning again, rather than a beginning.

Since the point of the Federation was to remake the space of France as one, without borders, without social rank (hierarchy as well as boundary), it was decided that the Festivals should be held in the open air. As well as departing from ecclesiastical tradition, with its churches and canopies, this manoeuvre reconfigures the citizen as subject to no spatial (or social) restraints other than themselves and God. They would recognise 'no other boundary than the vault of heaven, since the sovereign, that is the people, can never be enclosed in a circumscribed and covered space'. (Ozouf 1988: 132)

This site would be the 'open field' to which Ozouf refers, open on all sides to enlightenment, the true space of the Revolution.

How, then, would it be marked out? How would it be produced as a Festival or theatrical space, since it was not to incorporate the existing monumental spaces emblematic of earlier political formations, or even of the Revolution's own moments? In Paris, where so many of these monumental spaces were, the Champs de Mars was chosen, an open space at that time outside the city.

Processions skirted existing monumental sites, or screened them from view, obscuring them with garlands of flowers and greenery. The monumental spaces of the city were colonised by the Arcadian space of the festival. Michelet wrote at the time that 'the Revolution has as its monument ... a void'. (Michelet 1847-1855, cited in Ozouf 1988: 149) Despite 'the people being alone its own object and greatest ornament', it was nevertheless felt necessary to focus the festival space around a visual object; a column, statue, altar and later, mountain. This would demarcate the festival space from within, and provide a terminus for the procession of the people that was still, at this stage, the central image of the festival. The importance of music is not to be underestimated in this context. Parker notes that

in using music, the festival clearly pursued emotional impact along the same lines as a spectacle such as the melodrama in the theatre. (1990: 59)

Music is not just exaggerating and amplifying spectacle. It also helps to delineate festival space by filling it.

At this point in its genesis, Revolutionary Festival space was not concerned with interior space. This came later with the building of the Pantheon, and a shift from celebration and communion to memorialisation and monumentalisation. I will return to this shift shortly.

The colossal amphitheatre that was erected at the Champs-de-Mars for the Festival of Federation was built, at short order, by the hands of citizens, not decreed by the aristocracy, as had been the case in previous events. This building process became mythologised in the history of the Revolution: the Festival saved by the co-operation of free citizens. Again, the participants clearly sensed the production of a theatrical space in their adoption of performative actions. Ozouf notes that at the close of each days labour, 'everyone gathered ... linked arms and dispersed in procession'. (1988: 45).

Demoullins captures the reciprocal process of the production of theatrical space - action theatricalising space as space theatricalises action - in his boast that the citizens 'consecrated their hands by this work'. (Ozouf 1988: 45) The centrality of the people-as-object was not diminished by the presence of a focal object. This would mark the point of 'arrival'. Processions remained important elements in the Revolutionary Festival, being conceived of by David and others as akin to the classical 'frieze'. Indeed, the limits of the sacralised space itself are determined by the people, as it was decided that the external limits of the festival space should be the 'outermost boundary of the spectators themselves'. (Ozouf 1988: 131)

The King, who might have been expected to be the focal point of the ceremony and to consecrate and theatricalise its space through his presence, did not, according to Ozouf, manage to appropriate the sacred space. (1988: 49) He did not appear to take seriously what was, after all, his popular crowning. The central point of the ceremony thus became the people's swearing of the oath of loyalty.

#### Conquest of space.

This swearing marked two crucial shifts. Firstly, as Starobinsky points out, 'the revolutionary oath created sovereignty, whereas the monarch received it from Heaven'. (1988: 102)

Evidently, this is a crucial development in the establishment of the right of citizens to produce their own citizenship, and by extension, their own social (and spatial) formations. It is a theatricalised form of expression, summarising its greater social implications, and is also self-consciously performative.

For Ozouf, the swearing

celebrated the passage from private to public, extending to all the feeling of each individual as by a kind of electrical charge, after their previous experience of division and distrust under despotism. (1988: 54)

She calls it a 'wrench from everyday existence'. I think it is more the production of an authentic and arguably more unalienated 'now', which is often characteristic of the particular energisations of theatrical space. This is borne out by the second function of the oath. It was sworn in every part of the nation at the same time, unifying all the space of France. This forms a kind of spatial compression: all the disparate areas of France are joined at this moment, thus conquering distance through the theatrical moment.

This was the only aspect of the Festival that was imposed on the regions of France by the municipality of Paris for the Federation Festivals that were to happen around the country. It is very interesting to note, however, that the different Festivals, with no central guidance, nevertheless produced very similar ceremonial forms.<sup>5</sup> Drawing on existing experience (the Corpus Christi procession, for example) and the new Revolutionary emblems, the form of Revolutionary theatrical space seems to have been generated spontaneously. The theatrical act suggests its own theatrical space.

This conquest of space implied by the simultaneity of the oath swearing was replicated in the Federation itself, for the event was not limited to the ceremony at Champs-de-Mars.

*Fédérés* had set out for Paris several days before the 14 July. Initially, they journeyed between towns and villages in a region, often prompting the staging of mini-Federations and 'frontier rituals' between places that had formerly been enemies.

Once in Paris, they were given credit for the difficulty and arduousness of their journey: the Bretons, it was noted with awe, came on foot. (Ozouf 1988: 54)

The journey home often lasted even longer than the journey to Paris as the act of Federation was echoed and reiterated at every village the returning delegates passed through.

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<sup>5</sup> See Ozouf (1988) p44ff

The central symbol of the ceremony seems to have been the movement through the re-articulated space of the nation. Space was conquered by movement, and, by association with theatrical space, the whole space of France was implicated in the theatrical moment. 'The symbol was France itself, criss-crossed by participants in search of spectacle or a role.' (Ozouf 1988: 55)

A contemporary spectator observed: 'Twelve hundred internal barriers disappeared ... the old fragmented France was disappearing'. (Ozouf 1988: 56) In this way, space was transformed by a spatial practice: where, and how one could go. The natural formations of the land had not altered at all. What was different was the manner of inhabiting them: was lived experience to be determined by spatial division, or not.

In this way, the Federation joined up territories which had had little to do with each other, forming allegiances between neighbouring towns and ultimately between all the departments of France.

### Reinventing space.

The Festival of Federation was a culmination and theatrical summary of the reshaping of France itself. The Declaration of the Rights of Man had, in its sixth principle, accepted that all are equal before the law and all can hold office.<sup>6</sup> On the same principle, it was held that the Revolution must 'tear to shreds the crazy-quilt pattern of overlapping jurisdictions and cover France with a single mantle of uniform government'. (Schama 1989: 474-5) Abbe Sieyès was behind the 'startling proposal to substitute for the provinces of France a grid of eighty identical squares to be known as "departments"'. Simon Schama offers the following account.

Presented to the Assembly by the ex-parlementaire from Rouen, Thouret, this uncompromising piece of political arithmetic had as its premise that the division of France into different, capriciously overlapping jurisdictions of taxation (the *Fermes*), church (dioceses), military command (the *generalités*) and justice (the *bailliages*) was incompatible

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<sup>6</sup> The Declaration of the Rights of Man is printed in full in Cobb and Jones (1988) p. 81.

with a "representative government." Instead, France was to be rationalised; the "hexagon" - France's six-pointed shape - to be cubed ... In Thouret's plan there were to be *eighty-one* departments, each measuring 324 square leagues, the addition to the grid being made for Paris. Each would then be conveniently divided into nine districts and then by a further nine into communes. Each unit would have a local representative assembly from which the bodies of local government would be elected. (1989: 474-5)

This was not a new idea, and had been suggested under Louis XV. That it took shape under the Revolution is no surprise. As I have argued, a new social order must produce new social space. This rationalisation of everyday space, the realm of spatial practice, accompanied the rationalisation of conceptions of space in political organisation, and spaces of representation in the lived experience promised by the Festival. It was not universally popular. Some departments had been allotted fertile land while others were all rock and mountain.

Besançon was typical in its dissatisfaction at being demoted from the seat of the sovereign Parlement of the Franche-Comte to a mere *chef-lieu* of the Department of the Doubs.

Ultimately,

guided by the astronomer-cartographer the Comte de Cassini, and weathering many months of debate, each of France's *eighty-three* departments took shape, blessed by a name drawn from its native geography ... rationalism informed by sensibility. (Schama 1989: 477)

In this way, the social and geographical space of the nation was re-organised to the same ends as the theatrical space which summarised it. The reshaping of social space should have ensured that the Revolution sustained itself, at least until another force reshaped the space again. But as we have seen, spaces are always in tension - not only tension between one version of a political imaginary and another, but in the balance that is able to be maintained between the facets of space in any particular moment. The departmental divisions in France have remained the same to this day. (Hampson 1963: 116) (fig.11) But the administrative conception of space which governed them came to mean something entirely other than what had been originally intended, and this filled the new space with a radically different kind of experience - that of the Terror.



The second difficulty is in exclusions from the festival. The sanctity of the Festival was built upon the exclusion of the aristocracy, for obvious reasons. Ozouf also proposes a somewhat controversial second exclusion: that of the people. (1988: 59-60). She derives this point from the fact that the Federations were, for the most part, primarily allegiances between National Guards of neighbouring villagers against the 'outsider' or threat. For this reason, those summoned to the capital were members of the military. In some places it was only they who swore the oath. The people, spectating, were forced to demand that they be allowed to swear the oath as well. The people did participate as themselves, but often in a rigid and hierarchised ordering. Despite its rhetorical invitation to equality, the Festival formed its own hierarchy. It was, says Ozouf, 'a dynamic image of the gathering, rather than the description of an assembled community'. (1988: 58). What would seem to be being produced, rather than staged, is a military unity, which attempts to embody within it a civic unity. Military force can be aimed in any direction, however, and Ozouf foreshadows the violence to come in her observation that the Festivals 'never ceased to exclude some people and engender pariahs'. (1988: 12). She observes that Utopia, in this instance, was Sparta, and left no room for the free play of liberty. The preliminary separations of good and bad, even in this early Festival, 'became a ferreting out of saboteurs and traitors'. In 1790, however, all this is yet to come. These cracks in the Festival had yet to develop into the kinds of fissures that would split the Revolution. The Festival of Federation marked a moment of levelling, experienced as theatrical space, matched in the redrawing of social space and backed up by a conceived space of reason, equality and unity. Its legible surface presented the balance of monarchy, church, state and people. Although, as Ozouf notes, the Revolution was already under threat, from counter-revolution, and in the disagreements between parties, nevertheless, 'the Revolution still recognised itself in the mirror being held up to it by events'. (1988: 35)

1791: rational space: towards abstraction.

It became clear that the Revolution (committed to abstract principles) 'also had the deepest cravings for the heroes who embodied them'. (Schama 1989: 545) The death of Mirabeau, a former leader of the Jacobin faction, prompted a development in the production of Revolutionary theatrical space. Not only were real figures to be incorporated into it, rather than the ideals of the Revolution, but it was to see the generation of a rationally conceived secular monument: the Pantheon.

The move was made very quickly.

On 2 April 1791 news of the death of Mirabeau was brought to the Constituent Assembly. Sobbing broke out here and there as Bertrand Barere proposed that the entire Assembly, rather than just a deputation, attend the funeral ... On the following day the Assembly remained in session, which was unusual for a Sunday, purely to discuss the arrangements for Mirabeau's funeral. (Schama 1989: 545)

In keeping with the cult of patriot-heroes that had been steadily growing since the Seven Years War, it had already been determined that there should be "a Westminster Abbey for the French". The idea of a Pantheon predated the Revolution. Schama notes that 'such a monument to "*Grands Hommes*" would distinguish itself from a crypt of kings by celebrating virtue over lineage, self-invention over tradition'. (1989: 546) 1791 was the year in which these plans came to fruition.

The site selected for this Revolutionary mausoleum was Soufflot's unfinished church of St. Geneviève, which would be re-dedicated as the 'Pantheon'. That it should refer in this way to the great Pantheon of Gods in Rome was significant as a classical allusion. Also, it marked a reinvention of sanctity as belonging to the great men of the Revolution, who, by extension, would be as Gods.

Mirabeau's funeral took place on April 4. At six o'clock, the National Guard on horse and foot led a long military procession from his house. Again, it is a

military presence, rather than a popular one, which is decreed as the appropriate theatrical presentation for the Revolutionary event, and although some three hundred thousand people are said to have followed behind, their presence is as spectators as well as elements in the spectacle. The leaden urn which contained his heart was borne at the centre of the procession, his heart having been decreed 'the seat of his sovereign virtues of candour, passion and sincerity'. (Schama 1989: 546) It is interesting that his body did not form a part of the presentation, and the Assembly, despite permitting the elevation of a person rather than a value into its theatrical idiom had coped with this by causing the person to be emblematised as virtues, and the body to be reduced to a symbol - that of the heart.

The remainder of the procession was made up of battalions of veterans, children, representatives of the municipality of Paris, the Constituent Assembly and the Jacobins, whose former President Mirabeau was. These presences are clearly legible: those who have sacrificed for the Revolution, those who are the future and continuance of the Revolution, and those who administer and preserve the Revolution. All were draped in black crepe, as was the church of St. Eustache, where a halt was made for a eulogy. The procession then continued, to the accompaniment of a score composed by Gossec, who collaborated along with the scenic designer Cheniér on many Revolutionary festival events with David. It reached St. Geneviève at around midnight, and the heart of Mirabeau was set on a catafalque inside.

As I addressed in my discussion of the Festival of Federation, the focus of Revolutionary festivals in terms of space had been, up to this point, on the external, and particularly the processional; a presentation of the people designed as classical frieze.

The Pantheon is the first interior ceremonial space and the first consciously designed monumental space. Although a 'church' of Revolutionary values, it was nevertheless designed with the rational 'conceived' space of the Revolution in

mind. Its design and rationale also preempt the broader move into abstraction that marks the development of the Festival. It was designed by one of the two pre-eminent producers of Revolutionary theatrical space: Quatremère de Quincy.

The Pantheon: rational spatiality.

On July 19 1791, Quatremère de Quincy was named '*Commissaire a l'administration et direction generale des travaux de l'edifice ci-devant Sainte-Geneviève*'. (Lavin 1992: 166)

His charge was to transform the church designed by J-G Soufflot, hitherto dedicated to patron saint of Paris, into a national monument.

He wrote three lengthy reports, and, although not all of his ideas were realised, it is possible to trace the conception of space that was to come to dominate the production of the monumental space of the Revolution. His plans came under some criticism at the time, although they received the approval of the Assembly. He was not so lucky himself, and was imprisoned, temporarily, on March 2 1794. His reports demonstrate three objectives for the transformation of St. Geneviève - dechristianisation, dehistoricisation, republicanisation.<sup>7</sup>

Although the new name and the patriotic dedication were not his idea, Quatremère's plans nevertheless exemplify the new rational spatiality of the Revolution.

He would dechristianise the church through architectural means, by the suppression of the church towers and lantern, and the blocking of the entire lower order of windows - formerly flooded with light. What Sylvia Lavin calls the 'light of God', and the ecclesiastical architectural convention that supplied it, would be replaced with 'a character of severity and sobriety appropriate to its new commemorative function'. Lavin notes, perceptively, that 'in a sense, filling

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<sup>7</sup> Quatremère's 'Reports to the Directoire of the Departement of Paris' were presented between 1791 and 1793. They are used extensively in Lavin (1992), and all quotations from the reports are drawn from this source.

in the windows transformed only the imitative aspect (which varies according to use). Ideal character, on the other hand, transcended function.' (1992: 169)

In fact, Quatremère intentionally retained St. Geneviève's ideal character, for it expressed the idea of devotion. His goal was not to desacralise St. Geneviève, but to sacralise the Pantheon, with the Republic as its new divinity.

The effect of this architectural change was to concentrate illumination at the buildings upper centre, invoking a different form of the sacred building, that of the temple. Also, of course, it reconstructs the illuminative aspect of the original Pantheon.

St. Geneviève already contained classical elements, and it was Quatremère's aim to 'purify the Revolutionary classicism already implicit'. (Lavin 1992: 170) Nevertheless, it was important to Quatremère to preserve the vestigial memory of the original building in order to 'articulate its submission'. He hoped, Lavin notes, to conquer, rather than destroy, this monument. This production of monumental palimpsest had also been undertaken by Soufflot in the original design, which incorporated both classical and Gothic design elements.

The imposition of space upon space has the effect of incorporating what has gone before. In this way, history is spatialised, and the present moment conquers the past through absorbing it into its own horizon of meaning. As space can be produced, so the social can be produced. Quatremère came to see that 'social structure was an invented phenomenon that could be manipulated, rationalised, or destroyed by revolution'. (Lavin 1992: 149)

The concentration of the Revolution on neo-classicism found many avenues of expression.<sup>8</sup> In addition to the invocation of classical virtues in rhetoric, and the paralleling of Revolutionary virtue with classical sacrifice in the paintings of David and others, the rediscovery of classical architectural practices could not but help invoking a classical space. As Lefebvre insists, it is classical space which

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<sup>8</sup> For a full discussion of the impact of neo-classicism on Revolutionary aesthetics, see Dowd (1948); Eitner (1971), Starobinsky (1988)

marks the beginning of abstraction, as it imposes the facade, the column, and visual perspective as the dominant spatial paradigm. This journey into abstraction, and by extension modernity, is, for Lavin, influenced greatly by the architectural practice and spatial theory of Quatremère.

Although modernity and historicity are thought of as antithetical, Quatremère's conception of classicism as a product of convention rather than historical necessity, and his association of convention with the social, vested the function of architecture in its sociality and this initiated one of the dominant themes in modern architectural theory. (1992: 176)

His practice enacts this trajectory in two key ways: firstly, in his understanding of classicism as precisely a 'language' of abstraction, and secondly, in the freezing out of 'history' in favour of its symbolic representation.

#### The language of abstraction.

For Quatremère the classical language of architecture could, by virtue of abstraction, infiltrate the public sphere and urge development of concepts such as morality, justice and equality. He identified these concepts with social abstraction, the key generating force for modern progress. This echoes Lefebvre's identification of the French Revolution as the birth of modernity, in its rational ordering of space, but also in the ways in which it prefigures the social abstraction that will give rise to capitalist modernity.

Quatremère felt that classicism was a 'speaking' architecture (Starobinsky 1988: 91), whose 'signs and expressions must be endowed with a precise signification and be made capable of rendering ideas'. (Lavin 1992: 143) He insisted that the selection of one architectural language over another is a profoundly meaningful social act.

It is extremely important ... that if the language of architecture is to have value, if its signs are to be understood and are to have the effect of which they are capable ... if these signs are to say something, they must not be used to say nothing. (Lavin 1992: 185)

As Starobinsky observes 'form served function, but function was in turn reflected in form, to make it manifest. To function itself was added the symbolism of function'. (1988: 91)

From history to the representation of history.

Quatremère planned to decorate the Pantheon with statues representing Republican ideals. Religious images were to be replaced with 'signs of the perpetual presence of Philosophy, Patriotic Virtue, Science and Art'. (Lavin 1992: 172) In the portico, where Soufflot had placed the Ten Commandments, Quatremère would inscribe the Constitution of 1791 and the Declaration of the Rights of Man. In a space intended to sanctify and detemporalise the values of the Revolution, the events of its history had little place.

He wrote

It could be hazardous to assign to sculpture (the representation of) Revolutionary events that history has not yet disengaged from the personages who were but their instruments. Sculpture must be able to give these events completely to the people that was their motor ... Features of history copied from so near resemble objects seen through a magnifying glass. It was thus necessary to sacrifice local and accidental truths for the sake of general truths ... to sing of (the Revolution's) effects rather than its actions. (Quatremère 1791-3, cited in Lavin 1992: 172)

The distinction between 'local and accidental' truths and 'general' truths is not only a move into the abstraction of the actual experience of the Revolution into a representative version of them. It also exemplifies the attempt to separate the events of the Revolution from the people who generated them, and to impose a calm and rational space over the chaotic and uncontrolled space in which the Revolution found form. The Revolution was formed out of local and accidental events. It then attempts to frame itself as an inevitable and natural outcome of reason and principle. For Quatremère, the language in which to make this manoeuvre is allegory:

a formal language derived from history and rationalised over time to such a degree that it transcended history. Through this process of abstraction, allegory had acquired an infinite capacity for expression. (Quatremère 1791-3, cited in Lavin 1992: 173)

The allegorical text of the Pantheon would become part of the on-going public transformation, as they 'read' their lesson in its space.

Quatremère sought to protect the Pantheon from history itself.

This monument may be the product of the Revolution but it has not been specifically dedicated to the Revolution ... it is not intended to reflect a golden past or project a utopian age of the future. (Quatremère 1791-3, cited in Lavin 1992: 171)

The Pantheon's revolutionary function was to speak of an ahistorical time, as abstract and eternal as the moral sphere of the Revolution itself. As Lefebvre observes ,

time is ... solidified and fixed within the rationality immanent to space ... What disappears is history, which is transformed from action to memory, from production to contemplation. As for time, dominated by repetition and circularity, overwhelmed by the establishment of an immobile space which is the locus of ... realised Reason, it loses all meaning. (1991: 21)

In this way, through a process of historical abstraction, Quatremère used the timelessness of classical architectural convention to reconsecrate St-Geneviève, articulate the revolutionary nature of the Pantheon and eternalise the reign of the republic.

As Starobinsky observes of this rational spatiality,

it was as if the great ideas of equality by nature and equality before the law could be given immediate spatial expression by means of rule and compass. In a universe made of signs, geometry was the language of reason. (1988: 69)

The Pantheon was to work as a theatrical space in its own right, offering 'a feeling of exaltation ... to human awareness'. (Starobinsky 1988: 74) It was also to play a larger role, by adding to its own effects 'a course of habitual uses'

(Quatremère 1791-3, cited in Lavin 1992: 174) derived from its use as a Festival location. Starobinsky summarises:

it was not enough to make the eternal principles: Liberty, Equality, Justice and Patriotism ... visible in stone. They were complete only when men turned towards them in a surge of exaltation and gratitude. (1988: 92)

That the sacralised space of the Pantheon should have been chosen for the interment of the 'great men' of the Revolution must have seemed entirely appropriate, as its space was explicitly designed to take out of time the values of the Revolution. The process however, disrupted Quatremère's insistence that the actual history of the Revolution had no place in such a building. What is inside it was supposed to emblematised the Revolution in abstract. Less than two years after the apotheosis of Mirabeau, it was discovered that he had had a secret correspondence with the King. On December 5 1792, his remains were disinterred on Robespierre's orders and thrown in a common burial pit. Nevertheless, the Pantheon remained a logical end point for the interment of heroes. Despite the role of the building in the increase of abstraction in Revolutionary iconography, it was the processional which remained, in 1791, the main event of such an occasion. Heroes still needed to be acknowledged by the presence of the people. The space could not do all the work itself: the Revolution still needed the people.

#### 1792: Negotiations: whose Festival, whose space?

Anxieties about the right to control festivals were provoked by the 'debate' between the Festivals of Liberty and Law in the late spring and early summer of 1792.

The Festival of Liberty, held on April 15, was to honour the Swiss Guard, who had mutinied in August 1790, and been sent to the galleys. Organised by

'advanced patriots' and the Patriots clubs, it celebrated the rehabilitation of rioters, and was designed by David.

The Festival of Law, on 3 June, was a direct riposte to this, and honoured Simonneau, the mayor of Etampes who had been killed in a riot while defending the law on distribution of foodstuffs. This was designed by Quatremère de Quincy.

The 'debate' that they staged was clear: whether civil disorder was acceptable, or not. This is a crucial matter in the history of the Revolutionary festival and the Revolution itself, as I have argued, and one which was directly causal of both the increasing centralisation of control of the festivals, and violent control of the Revolution. Yet although oppositional in content, they were not so much oppositional in style.

The story that is usually told about these Festivals, according to Mona Ozouf, is that David's was 'realist', involving as it did the actual Swiss Guards being celebrated. The Festival of Law, being designed by Quatremère with Cheniér's help, is supposed to have been far more allegorical, and therefore 'abstract'. (Ozouf 1988: 66ff)

In fact, despite lists of contrasting features in the popular press, the two were very similar in form. The distinction between them is as much in their interpretation as their forms of presentation. For example, groups of women dressed in white formed part of both processions. In the Festival of Liberty, this group was seen by the popular paper *Révolutions de Paris* as 'simply a group of young citizenesses'. Six weeks later, this same group was greeted by the same paper with the words 'Whatever one may say, women seemed out of place on the great day'.<sup>9</sup>

Both processions followed an almost identical route through the city, both carried the emblems of the Revolution: the cap of liberty and the tables of the

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<sup>9</sup> For full citation of the relevant extracts from *Révolutions de Paris*, see Ozouf (1988) pp. 67-72

law. The centrepiece statues were both carried to the altar of the fatherland at Champs-de-Mars, where identical ceremonies with the same music were held. Certainly, the Festival of Law used more military presence and David's better realised classical idioms, but in essence, all the elements were being drawn from a common vocabulary of Revolutionary symbolism, and the crowd, familiar with these, found it difficult to distinguish the two Festivals. They produced almost identical theatrical space. The debate they sought to stage was actually played out in interpretation and discourse, not in the experience they provided. For theatrical spaces to debate with each other, they must actually be different: not only to provide a different experience, but to invoke a different social imaginary. The theatrical distinction between these two Festivals is too small to materialise their debate. With this in mind, it is the festival of Liberty which does not invoke an appropriate theatrical space, a space of liberty in which the free action of citizens is a possibility. David did not have the confidence to fully lionise the Swiss Guards, and they took their place, not in the triumphal chariot, but in the procession, as 'representatives of the emancipation of mankind'. (Ozouf 1988: 77) Thus the chance to celebrate the material presence of those who disobeyed was lost, and the rioters were recuperated into the allegorical framework of the ceremony. David staged a festival of the people in a vocabulary and logic which increasingly belonged to the state. Nevertheless, the two opposing Festivals did give rise to concern over the right to control them: the Festival of Liberty cloaked the faces of statues in Paris as its procession passed them, and Cheniér commented that 'this wretched orgy' had no right so to do. The Festival of Law was called by Robespierre 'no national festival, (but one) for public servants ... How that procession of municipal bodies, administrative bodies and juridical bodies brought back the image of the old order'. (Ozouf 1988: 72) From this point on, the organisation of Festivals, and the social space itself, was increasingly policed.

Schama observes that

At each successive phase of the Revolution, those in authority attempted to recover a monopoly on punitive violence for the state, only to find themselves outmanoeuvred by opposing politicians who endorsed and even organised popular violence for their own ends ... The core problem of revolutionary government, then, turned on the efforts to manage popular violence on behalf of, rather than against, the state. (1989: 623)

The Revolution was not able, as yet, to take over ownership of all aspects of festival space, however. The crucial event of 1792 was the overthrow of Louis XVI. This took place through another instance of the action of and production of space by the people, marked, as we have seen, by the presence of symbolic action and popular violence.

Simon Schama gives the following account:

On 20 June, a demonstration was mobilised in the *sections* by leaders of the popular societies. The ostensible aim of the crowd was to plant a liberty tree in the grounds of the Tuileries, ... the last remaining royalist redoubt. Two huge crowds formed, one at the place de la Bastille, the other at the Salpêtrière, and converged on the Tuileries ... led by Santerre, already a kind of unofficial commander of the armed sans-culottes guardsmen. At around half past one in the afternoon, they arrived at the Manège and asked permission to read their petition ... While the authorities were debating (whether to let them in) ... the crowd planted a tall tree of liberty - a poplar - in the garden of the Capuchins and were finally admitted, singing the "*Ça Ira*" to the assembly hall. But it was what followed this rowdy and intimidating parade that signified the beginning of the end of the reign of Louis XVI. (1989: 601)

Crowd massed in enormous numbers around the perimeter of the palace grounds. The gates were opened, more to avoid harm to people than anything else. The huge crowd found the King, virtually unattended in the Salon de l'Oeil de Boeuf.

He was backed into a window, pistols were brandished in his face and he was shouted at, at close range. When presented with a *bonnet rouge*, 'he donned it and proposed the health of the people of Paris and the nation'. (Schama 1989: 601)

Schama seems to imply a separation between the 'rowdy parade' and 'what followed': again, as though the protesters have crossed a line between the symbolic and the real. Clearly, however, the assault on the King, such as it was,

was expressed through theatrical means.<sup>10</sup> He is not rounded upon and killed. He must symbolically subject himself to the will of the people by donning their emblem. The effectivity of this is not reduced for being 'symbolic'. His action in donning the *bonnet rouge* actually does subject him to the will, and therefore the authority, of the people. The bonnet itself had materialised out of neo-classical imagery. The Phrygian bonnet had been given to freed slaves in the Roman period, and had cropped up in engravings celebrating American and Dutch liberation movements.

What was remarkable about the development in 1792 was the literalisation of the symbol; people were now not only expected to recognise the emblem but actually wear it. Even in 1791 when David drew his idealised man of the people in the tennis court, the hat that man was wearing was an emblem rather than a real item of headgear. A year later that was no longer true. (Schama 1989: 603)

By the spring and summer of 1792, the *bonnet rouge* had become a visible badge of patriotism to the new France. When Louis puts it on his head, he cannot reverse its effects. It creates him a subject of the people. By 10 August, he had been overthrown by the Revolutionary Convention. By 20 September, France was a Republic.

#### 1793: Disciplinary space: history as spectacle.

Louis was executed on 21 January, after being tried for treason by the Convention, whose authority he refused to recognise. The guillotine was set up in the place de la Révolution, from which the statue of Louis XV that had given the place its previous name had been removed and destroyed. Paris had been turned into a garrison.

The city gates had been shut; a special escort of twelve hundred guards had been assigned to accompany Louis' coach to the scaffold, and the streets were lined four deep with

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<sup>10</sup> It is notable that here again, music is being used to produce a sense of theatricality and to inculcate a theatrical space. Popular songs such as the *Ça Ira*, and, after 1792, The *Marseillaise*, often accompanied popular explosions of activity.

soldiers. Santerre, who was in charge of all these operations, had even stationed cannon at strategic points along the route and elsewhere in the city. (Schama 1989: 668)

This anxiety about the control of popular unrest caused the authorities to organise a militarised and disciplinary space. The symbolic performance of renewal is still detectable in the way the execution has been interpreted.

Starobinsky notes that

the scaffold on which Louis 16 was decapitated was set up (at) the ambiguous point where the new light of the Republic was to be born out of the symbolic murder of the old order. (1988: 82)

Nevertheless, from this point on, the state increasingly began to form itself as a series of disciplinary committees. After the pro-monarchical Vendée uprising on March 10, the Revolutionary Tribunal was convened, which would mark the commencement of the Terror. On March 21, the Committee of Surveillance was inaugurated, which ordered, on March 29, that armed rebels could be shot within 24 hours. April 6 saw the founding of the Committee of Public Safety. The Revolution had taken into its own hands the determination of who belonged and who did not. The preliminary division that Ozouf found in the Festival of Federation would now be manifested in a series of purges, killings and judicial executions, whose administration would be overseen, not by 'the people', but by those acting 'in the name of the people'. This abstracting of governmental authority into the institutional apparatus of state is reflected in the Festival to commemorate the overthrow of Louis, the Festival of Reunion, on August 10.

#### The Festival of Reunion. (fig.12)

As we have seen in the apotheosis of Mirabeau of 1791, once the Revolution is monumentalising people, even in the form of 'values', it cannot escape the abstraction of its own history into spectacle, which, as I have argued, produces not a participatory but a coercive theatrical space. It cannot help but allow the

interpolation of history, and the spaces of history, into the summarising spaces in which the ideal values of the Revolution are intended to be projected. 'Could Voltaire's chariot' asks Mona Ozouf 'not stop in the square in which the prison that once held him stood?' (1988: 150)

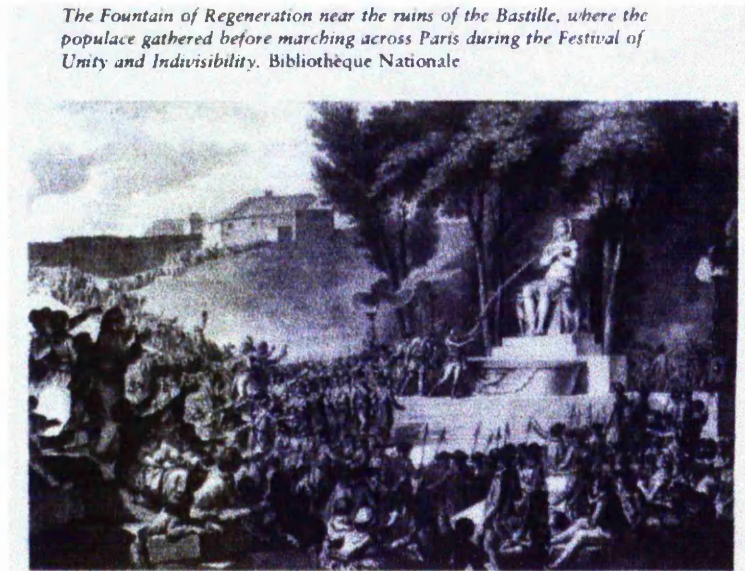


fig. 12: The Festival of Unity and Indivisibility, 1793.

Having established Revolutionary space, the Revolution has to continue to exist in it. Thus the ways in which it is able to absorb and incorporate its own history become crucial. As the administration of the Revolution is centralised, this history must be brought under control, especially since it is based in the kind of unruly popular theatrical space the production of which the state does not control. This is done, as I explored in the previous chapter, by a process of abstraction. This causes significant tensions for the space of the Revolutionary festival, which had initially attempted to invoke the absolute/ sacred space of the fully integrated and lived moment. The streets of Paris are not empty, either of the inscriptions of previous regimes of power or those of the events of the Revolution. As the Festival (the space in which the revolution summarises itself) becomes tied to the sites of Revolutionary history, so the Revolution becomes tied to horizons of meaning which in part are constituted by the violence which

produced it, and which it is now trying to repress. Utopia can only acknowledge history in its ideal form: as founding moment and as its values. Once the history of the Revolution is implicated in its representation, then its events become objects; signs which can be subject to differing inflections. As Ozouf notes in her discussion of the Festival of Reunion, 'the eruption of history ... allows Revolutionary history into Revolutionary space, and therefore historicises it'. (1988: 152). The Festival, being unable to repress the spatial presence of the memory of popular uprising, attempts to abstract it and bring it within its own determining theatrical logics. This provokes a more coercive kind of theatrical space. Decisions made about the narrative of the past lead to potentially different presents, and, as control of the Festivals is centralised, Parker notes that they increasingly 'put forward a carefully constructed account of events'. (1990: 54)

On 10 August 1793, the Festival of Reunion (also known as the Festival of Unity and Indivisibility) took place. Marking the first anniversary of the overthrow of the monarchy, and designed by David, the usual procession would consist, he wrote, of

the popular societies, then the Convention, the commissioners of the primary (electoral) assemblies of the 86 départements (and) the mass of the sovereign (people) all mixed up together, the mayor beside the hewer of wood and the masons. (David, cited in Parker 1990: 50)

Rather than the procession itself being the main object, however, a narrative of the history of the Revolution would be provided. This Festival was

a history in five acts of the Revolution in five successive places - the site of the Bastille, the crossroads at Poissonnière, place de la Révolution, Invalides and the Champs de Mars. (Ozouf 1988: 155)

Not all the places were the site of actual incidents, but broadly the route was from 'the birth of the Revolution to its harbour; from the city to nature'. (Ozouf 1988: 155)

The procession visited each of these stations on its way to Champs de Mars, now renamed Champs de Réunion. David managed to turn history into chronology, robbing events of their meaning and turning them into icons. His 'crude dramaturgy of appearance and reappearance' contained, for Ozouf, 'the signs of the time but not its meaning'. (1988: 156)

The procession passed huge statues, designed to overawe. Represented to the people, among other things, was The People. Simon Schama notes the manoeuvre of incorporation implied by abstraction: 'David would honour them with their own self-importance safely imprisoned in the calm universe of symbols'. (1989: 749)

At the triumphal Arch at the Poissonnière crossroads, actresses 'representing' the women who brought the King to Paris from Versailles on 5 October 1789 stood, crowned with laurel wreaths. Ozouf records that 'the task of recounting the story was left to inscriptions on the arch: the spectacle, empty of history (which was) relegated to writing'. (1988: 155) Historical (and spatial) experience had been removed from the site of its occurrence, and had been overwritten by signs.

The next station was place de la Révolution. Although having nothing to do with 10 August 1792, the site of the execution of January 21 was chosen for its commemoration. This tells us much about the power of place: the place in which the King actually disappeared is needed to present his social disappearance. Only the materiality of the space can effectively stage his absence. Nevertheless, representational tension is still apparent: the death of the King is abstracted as 'the end of tyranny'. In this way, authority seeks to overlay the actual theatrical space (energised by its horizon of meaning) with its own abstract theatrical space. In this way, the individual theatrical spaces of the Revolution's history are mobilised as summaries of something which they did not, in their originating moments, summarise. They are colonised and adapted and fundamentally altered. Thus the Revolution itself is fundamentally altered.

This incorporation of history, and usurpation of the meaning and experience of the original events does not just close down the possibilities that the space they produced seemed to suggest. It is also an attempt to fix the meanings and the spaces of the Revolution, once and for all, and to close it. 'Removed from the whims of time, the Revolution would discourage men both from challenging it and from wishing to continue it'. (Ozouf 1988: 168). The future is one of repetition, not innovation; of commemoration, not constitution.

This is not, of course, to say that repetitious and commemorative events do not produce a theatrical space. This space is, however, one which is functioning in a different way. No longer the utopian project, evading spectacular power and provoking a lived experience beyond and outside abstraction and representation, once authority determines and spectacularises its own history, it cannot help but produce an abstract and coercive space. Ozouf notes that 'the system of festivals had frequently to undertake the difficult task of altering the pattern they were designed to ascribe to history'. (1988: 26) Abstract theatrical space, as discussed in the previous chapter, imposes coherence through provoking experience based on excitement, spectacle and co-option, rather than experience based on Lefebvre's 'fully lived' space. It disguises the provisional nature of power by replacing it with certainty, removing it from time, and smoothing out its contradictions. It does not cease to summarise wider social space and social relations. Rather, it reveals them to be increasingly coercive, as they seek to enforce a view of them which will overlay and disguise their real constitution.

In the Autumn of 1793, Robespierre took over the chairmanship of the Committee of Public Safety. On 17 September, the Committee of Surveillance decreed 'lists of suspects'. (Schama 1989: 196) The experience of the Revolution was increasingly of the working apparatus of the Terror. Ozouf calls this stage 'the seizing up of the Revolution' (1988: 24), as it tries to preserve itself. The Festivals, too, as we have seen, become increasingly constipated in their attempts to draw a halt to the evolution of the Revolution and fix it in time.

From 1793 onwards, increasing amounts of regulation was introduced by the Convention to reduce and restrict alternative festival forms.<sup>11</sup> Those involving the gathering of groups of people and the spontaneous occupation of space were paid particular attention, despite those moments having provided the Revolution with much of its impetus, as I have argued. The dichotomy here is that in the name of a free people, the freedom of the people is being restricted. The Revolution maintains two strategies here: suppression and colonisation. The production of theatrical space begins to be dictated from the centre, and the regulation of gatherings is the other arm of this twin strategy. In a similar way, the Revolution seeks to reinvent symbolic vocabularies by substituting the use of its own symbols in place of original ones (such as liberty trees for maypoles and crosses, for example) and backing this up by banning the original ones. It is difficult to erase either habits of practice, or spatial horizons of meaning, however. It was noted with frustration at the time that people continued to gather at the places where crosses had stood, even when nothing was put in their place. In a similar way, after the introduction of the Revolutionary calendar in October 1793, people continued to get dressed up and do their hair on 'Sunday', but made no similar effort for the *decadi*.

These regulatory anxieties are not just to do with theatrical space per se, but also the wider social space whose potential practices it attempts to limit and control. The putting down of rebellion is not without its theatricality: for example, the parade of the rich and the guilty through the streets in tumbrels to the guillotine, whose time was far from over. As theatrical space summarises social space, however, in a reverse manoeuvre, social space can be made to speak in a theatrical, or exemplary way. The Convention had been shaken by the pro-monarchical uprising in the Vendée, in March of 1793. This had been swiftly followed, as I addressed above, by the establishment of the Revolutionary

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<sup>11</sup> See Ozouf (1988) p. 106.

Tribunal, the Committee of Public Surveillance on 21 March and the Committee of Public Safety on 6 April, and this affront to the Revolution was answered with great and hideous violence. The city of Lyon, too, had declared, but not in favour of the monarchy. Rather they supported the Constitution of 1791. Thus the threat posed by the declaration of Lyon was not to the Revolution itself, but to the kind of reality it should constitute.

On October 12 a decree was passed in the Convention to wipe Lyon off the map. The very houses were condemned to death by Couthon on October 26, as he oversaw the destruction of the residences of the rebels.

'May this terrible example strike fear into future generations', he said, raising a specially made silver mallet, and striking the wall three times. Over 15,000 people participated in the demolition, which was paid for by a 6 million livres tax on the rich. 1,600 houses and the old fortifications of the town were demolished, and around 2,000 people executed. On the ruins was erected a pillar with the motto 'Lyon made war on Liberty. Lyon is no more'. The town was renamed *Ville-affranchie*: Liberated Town. (Schama 1989: 779)

Marseilles suffered a similar fate, being renamed *Ville-sans-nom*: Town-with-no-name. The justification for the rebellion was said to be geographical. The Convention noted that

by its very nature, Marseilles regarded itself as apart. The mountains, the rivers which separate it from the rest of France, its own language all feed federalism ... Marseilles is their country; France is nothing to them. (Schama 1989: 785)

These places were destroyed because they refused to recognise or inhabit the new space of France. 35-40,000 people were killed in provinces that winter.

### 1794: the Republic of Virtue.

After the arrest and execution of the Dantonist faction on 6 April, according to Schama, the Convention began between the spring and summer of 1794 to try and halt the Terror, and replace it with 'an imposing and orderly programme of republican edification'. This programme would

leave no part of the citizens life untouched. It would use music, open-air pageants and theatre, colossal public monuments, libraries, exhibitions, even sports competitions ... to stimulate the great patriotic virtues ... The exaltation of collective life would be in the strongest possible contrast to the ... extreme phase of the Terror. (Schama 1989: 829)

Schama seems to see this as a change of direction for the Revolution; in fact this imagined next phase could only be built on the aftermath of the Terror, and the abstraction of the theatrical space which had come to summarise its disciplines. The Terror had sought to eradicate opposition to the Revolution; the Festival had arrived at a form which sought to eradicate truly popular space, and oppositional imaginings. This left that way clear for this 'imposing and orderly programme', which would be built on the scorched earth of the Terror. The aim of the plan to 'leave no part of the citizens life untouched' speaks strongly to this: it represents a colonisation of everyday life and everyday space just as total as that attempted by the institutions of the Terror. It is certainly a contrasting form, but it seeks to produce the same space: disciplined and disciplinary. Notably, the plans included a proposal by David to relandscape the Champs Elysées as a giant *Jardin National*, with an enormous domed amphitheatre topped with a giant statue of Liberty suitable for the 'mass spectacles and patriotic games' favoured by Robespierre. (Schama 1989: 830) This, as I shall explore in the next chapter, is precisely the sort of monumental theatrical space produced by totalitarianism. In fact, the year was to deliver not the orderly programme envisioned, but what Schama calls 'the founding charter of totalitarian justice' (1989: 836) in the Law of 22 Prarial.

On 22 March 1794, the Committee of Public Safety took over the plans to institutionalise Festivals. It sought to determine once and for all, not only the order of festivals and hence the punctuation of the Revolutionary Year, but also what a Festival could consist of. As I have argued, this has implications for the social: if theatrical space is restricted, the imagining of wider social reality is restricted also. Robespierre's scheme proposed annual Festivals on July 14, August 10, Jan 21, May 31, and the 23 *fêtes décadaire*. Virtues to be celebrated included justice, modesty and stoicism.

The first (and last) Festival under this new authority was the Festival of Supreme Being, held on June 8 1794. (figs.13/15)

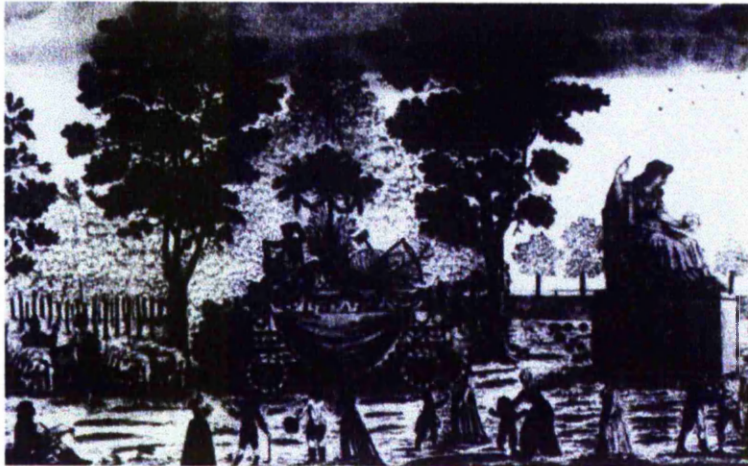


fig. 13: The Festival of the Supreme Being, 1794.

The concept of a Supreme Being is in itself, of course, an abstraction. The creed of the Supreme Being was announced by Robespierre on May 7

The true priest of the Supreme Being is Nature itself; its temple is the universe; its religion virtue, its festivals the joy of a great people assembled under its eyes. (Schama 1989: 831)

The Convention decreed that 'the French people recognise the existence of the Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul'. (Schama 1989: 831) This declaration was a direct riposte to the Festival of Reason that had tried to de-

consecrate Notre-Dame in the November of 1793, disapproved of by Robespierre. (fig.14)



fig. 14: The Festival of Reason, 1793.

The Festival of the Supreme Being, which fell on the day of Pentecost in the old Gregorian calendar was to be the least improvisatory of all the Revolutionary festivals. It was envisioned by David as a vast Revolutionary oratorio. Processions made their way to the Champs de Mars (now Réunion), including children, mothers bearing roses, fathers leading sons armed like the Horatii, and members of the Convention each carrying sheaves and bouquets. Where the altar of the fatherland had stood since 1790 was now a plaster and cardboard mountain, surmounted by a huge statue of Hercules (emblematising 'the People'), holding a model of Liberty in his hand. Huge choral groups made up of representative groups of citizens, sang of their role in the new France and were answered by their counterparts in the vast throng. After this hymn to the Supreme Being, Robespierre appeared<sup>12</sup> saying 'French Republicans, it is for you

<sup>12</sup> It is fascinating to note that Robespierre appears to have inadvertently staged his imminent downfall in the use of space he makes in his participation in the Festival. Braudel, a member of the Convention, recorded in his memoirs that 'People noticed that there was a considerable gap between his colleagues and himself. Some ascribe this to simple deference, others think that Robespierre was using it to underline his own sovereignty ... It seems

to purify the earth that has been soiled and to recall to the earth Justice who has been banished from it'. (Schama 1989: 831) He then applied a torch to the image of Atheism, which revealed the statue of Wisdom. The attendees recited the credo: 'I believe in the new French Republic, one and indivisible, in its laws and in the sacred rights of man, which the French people have received from the sacred mountain of the Convention which created them'. (Parker 1990: 67).

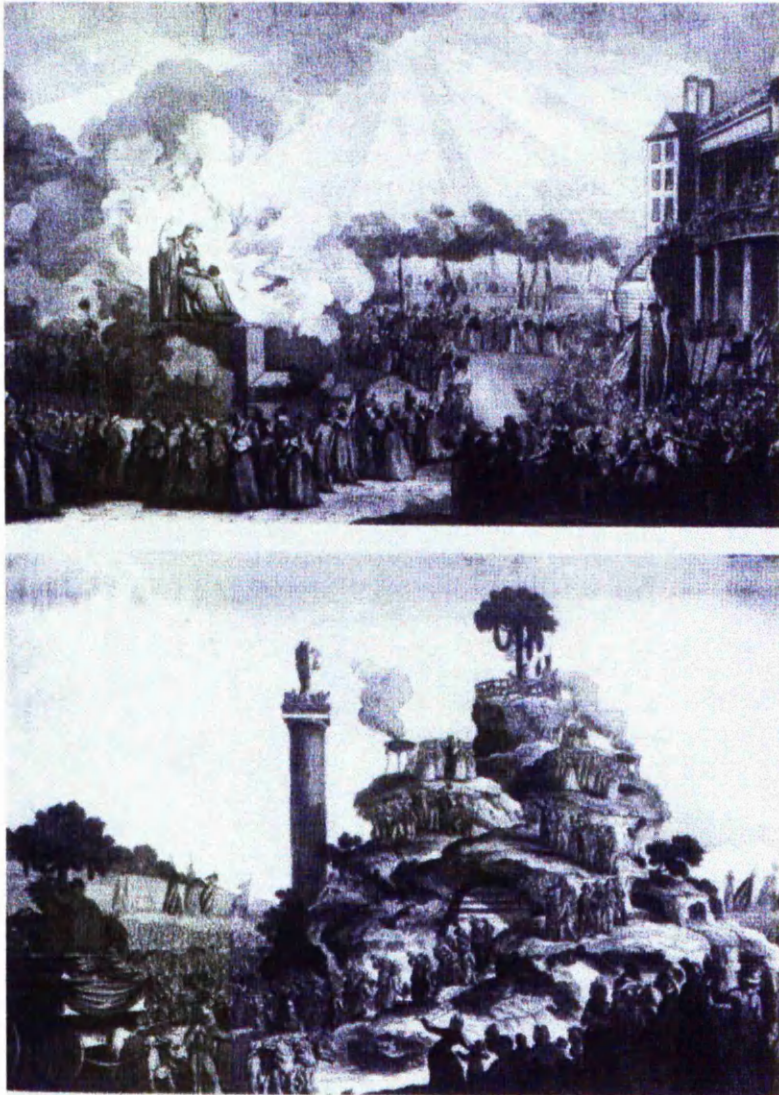


fig. 15: The Festival of the Supreme Being, 1794.

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certain that his downfall was agreed in that triumphal procession ... and if the gap was not its chief cause, at any rate his opponents made use of it to ... convince others of his dictatorship.' (cited in Cobb and Jones 1988: 224) Theatrical space can be dangerous.

The Festival staged the return to the Arcadia imagined in the early days of the Revolution, abolishing difference, celebrating the everyday. The fecundity of nature was invoked: pregnant women were instructed to attend. It staged the rediscovery by the Revolution of the principle in whose name it was carried out. All this, despite the presence of the people, despite the invocation to the new France, was a fiction. What was being staged was the image of itself which the Revolution sought to impose. 'The Revolution was there' commented one observer. It was, agrees Ozouf, and 'so close to its dream that people forgot the artificiality of its representation and the distress that followed it'. (1988: 118) This Festival, homogenous with the discourse of the Revolution, was based on a huge lie. The space produced in the name of the Supreme Being was not Arcadia, it was France under the Terror. It was not a space without distinctions, free and natural. It was disciplinary and increasingly totalitarian. The Festival replaced this social space with a theatrical space; produced a summary which misspoke it. It provided a coherence, a version, that was illusory. This is what power ultimately does: it colonises spaces of representation and uses them for its own purposes. It closes down the potential for resistance by incorporating these spaces into its own production of space.

The real theatrical space of the Convention was still the guillotine. This had no place in the visual mise-en-scene of the Supreme Being, and had been moved from the place de la Révolution, first to what would become the place de la Bastille, and, after three days of complaints from local residents, eastwards to the barriere du Trône. Its exile is indicative of the separation forced between the social space invoked by the Festival, and the actual social space of the Revolution. It was to return to the centre before the year closed.

Two days after the festival of the Supreme Being, the decree of 22 Prarial was passed in the Convention. This decreed that political crimes were far worse than common crimes, because while in common crimes only individuals are wounded,

in political crimes, the existence of free society was threatened. Thus anyone 'slandering patriotism', 'seeking to inspire discouragement', 'spreading false news' or 'depraving morals, corrupting the public conscience and impairing the purity and energy of the Revolutionary government' could be brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal. No witnesses were to be permitted, nor any defence counsel. Conviction was allowed on 'patriotic intuition'. There were two possible verdicts: acquittal, or death. (Schama 1989: 837) This was the period of the Grand Terror. Execution increased tenfold, from twenty-two to two hundred in the average week. The end was not far away. On 27 July, the Robespierrists were taken in the coup of 9 Thermidor. The next morning, the guillotine had been moved back to the place de la Révolution. 17 Robespierristes were executed that day. In the following two days, eighty-three members of the Commune and the Paris *mairie* followed them. While the Terror more or less ended here, the Revolution never found its way back to the ideal and Arcadian space it had envisioned in its early festivals. In its final years, it continued to produce large scale public events, but they were of a commemorative and memorial function; no longer constituting the free space of the Revolution. In 1799, Napoleon overthrew the Directory, and the Republic was gone. For then.

In conclusion, then, the trajectory of the Revolution into discipline and abstraction can be found reflected in the spatial history of the Festivals. The changing character and function of the 'summary' of the state in the form of its theatrical spaces was deliberately designed to produce changing effects. Their aim does not change, as stated by Mona Ozouf at the top of this chapter: to make the people for the legislature. But the nature of both the legislature, and the desired 'people' alters significantly over the course of the Revolution.

Nevertheless, as Robin Blackburn points out, while

it is very difficult not to see the whole period of the revolutionary wars and Napoleon, and even the subsequent restoration as providing a huge boost to capitalism, there is cause for

optimism. For when we look at (it) as the birth of ... modernity, it is not only because it was a watershed in the development of capitalism, but also of anti-capitalism. It provided a notion of universal human rights, and organisational forms, and a language of justification to those who wanted to resist the rich and powerful. (Blackburn 1989: 27)

The Revolution marks a parting of the ways in terms of the generation of theatrical (and social) space, and the legacy of both the abstract and the appropriated will be addressed in the next two chapters. I will return to the resistant and popular theatrical space inspired in part by the Revolutionary French in Chapter 6, after first turning to an example of the production of self-consciously conceived abstract theatrical space - that of fascism in the Third Reich.

## Chapter 5: 'The Word in Stone': Theatrical Space in the Third Reich.

This chapter engages with the theatrical spaces produced in the service of the Third Reich.<sup>1</sup> In her work on spectacular fascism, Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi argues that ritual and symbol express social and political relations, articulating either an existing, or a new, sense of community and values. She acknowledges that politics must be seen as a process in formation that is shaped by cultural factors as much as it shapes them: the cultural work of a particular regime of power, in other words, is constitutive of, not just constituted by, that power. (1992: 79ff) Symbols, ritual and allegory (the 'theatrical' means by which a regime materialises its conceptual aspects) therefore affect and channel the exercise of power. They are not 'reflections' of 'actual' power relations; they are the means through which new social relationships are constructed and alternative social relationships are excluded.

Power is not something which merely 'exists' (though this is the fiction which it most eagerly seeks to establish); the account it gives of itself is constructed out of symbolic vocabularies, and expressed in theatrical space. Since, as I have argued, these representations do not refer unproblematically to the 'real', they can, and do, constitute the 'real'. Further, they can constitute the 'real' *as it is not*. The invention and imposition of a coherent theatrical summary comes to displace knowledge of incoherence in actual social organisation.

In the case of German fascism, it is this version which endures, and is replicated and maintained in contemporary cultural production. The period of the Third Reich is treated historically as one of the most spectacular moments in the theatrical emblematisation and representation of political systems. There is a continuing fascination, not only with the extremes of its brutality, but with its

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<sup>1</sup> The most useful general historical works consulted in preparation for this chapter include Grunberger (1964); Shirer (1960); Bullock (1962); Mosse (1966); Kershaw (1985 and 1987).

aesthetic facade.<sup>2</sup> Social historical writing on the period has been hugely energetic, informing wider debates about historiography, spectacular politics, and, latterly, museum cultures in the memorialisation of the Holocaust.<sup>3</sup> In Britain particularly, where the Second World War maintains a significant role in the cultural memory, it is also a rich seam for the production of more popular cultural texts: a visit to any high street bookshop in the UK reveals a plethora of military histories, biographies and collections of photographs. Most significantly, it is the visual spectacle which continues to be referenced, in the form of film and television. There has, at the time of writing, been a recent spate of new films released on the Second World War: Spielberg's *Schindler's List* and *Saving Private Ryan*; Michael Bay's *Pearl Harbor*; Max Faberbock's *Aimee and Jaguar*, and Terence Malick's *The Thin Red Line*. Most bank and public holidays in Britain see the television screening of one or more World War Two dramas: *A Bridge Too Far*; *The Great Escape*; *In Which We Serve*. It has been said that if all the World War Two films were screened back to back, they would last longer than the war itself. Additionally, there are often several television documentary series running concurrently.

All of these repeat images of ruthless, machine-like German soldiers (who also form the inspiration behind, for example, the uniformity of the Stormtroopers in Lucas's *Star Wars* films), an efficient war-machine, and the chilling spectacle of swastikas, eagles and Nazi uniforms. In this way, these productions repeat and reinforce the way German fascism was imagining itself. This continuing interest speaks to many things: the fact that the War is, for many, still within living memory; the fact that fascism was defeated, at great cost, and with great heroism on the part of ordinary people; the fact that victory was hard-won, and by no means certain. The visual economy of German fascism particularly,

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<sup>2</sup> See Zeman (1964); Burden (1967); Taylor (1981); Stollmann (1978); Hillach (1979); Falesca-Zamponi (1992); Wykes (1970); *Storming to Power* (Time-Life 1989)

<sup>3</sup> See above, and Kerzer (1988); Eley (1988) Kershaw (1985); Blackbourn and Eley (1984); Maier (1988); Evans (1987).

however, remains important: there is comparatively much less in contemporary cultural production concerning Italy, Turkey, Burma, or, outside America, Japan.

The myth of the 'unstoppable' German military originates in the early part of the twentieth century, influencing both World War One propaganda, and the punitive restrictions on German re-militarisation imposed in 1919. This myth, re-activated in the 1930's, and spectacularised by fascism's aesthetic production of itself, leaves us with the contemporary representations described above.

What they reproduce is the kind of thinking which so enraged Terry Eagleton, in his account of Lyotard's argument that Nazism is the terminus of (modern) totalising thought.

This reckless travesty ignores the fact that the death camps were ... the upshot of a barbarous irrationalism, which ... junked history, refused argumentation, aestheticised politics and staked all on the charisma of those who told the stories. (Eagleton 1987, cited in Harvey 1989: 210)

This obliteration of incoherence in favour of a sort of Manifest Destiny for fascism, linear, rational and forcefully totalising, is precisely the narrative that Nazi propaganda attempted to produce. The terminus does, in fact, exist: not in coherent thought, but in coherent space; specifically, in theatrical space. Nazism coheres a disparate philosophy, made up of a pick and mix of anti-Semitic, anti-Bolshevik gutter nationalisms and populisms, through theatricalisation. Crucially, it is conceived from the start as theatrical politics and hence theatrical space.

As I will explore in this chapter, the aestheticisation of politics, the abstraction of state, Party, nation and people into spectacular forms of representation, and hence the production of the coercive and totalitarian space that I propose, is at every stage designed for effect as well as display. In part, these effects are to be derived from witnessing the spectacle. Importantly, however, participation and presence are also regarded as productive of 'experience'. Both of these intentions

have spatial implications: the witness is placed in a spatial relationship to the spectacle, as is the participant. While it is important to note Peter Labanyi's warning, that to assume that Nazi spectacle succeeded in achieving its intended aims is to 'risk reproducing the culture's own view of itself' (1988: 154), in this context it is precisely the *intention* that is important. (fig. 16)

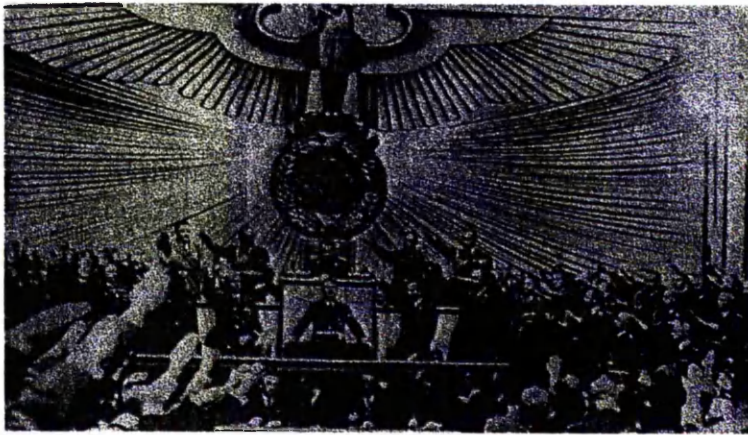


fig. 16: Hitler declares war on Poland, 1939.

Theatrical space attempts to condense and cohere the social space. In the case of spectacular fascism, it tries to *produce* the social space by effectively colonising everyday space and experience with the monumentality and barbarous force of its vision of itself. It practices what Lefebvre called 'a fake lucidity, one which misapprehends both the social practice of the 'users' and the ideology that it itself enshrines ... yet still presides over the spectacle, forging the unity into which all the programmed fragments must be integrated, no matter what the cost'. (1991: 318)

#### The aestheticisation of politics.

Walter Benjamin reflects on fascism's aestheticisation of politics in his essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'. (Benjamin: 1992) Arguing that the predominant functions of art had historically been religious, he observes that in the age of mechanical reproduction, political ideologies had become

prevalent. This would fit with Lefebvre's account of the chronology of spaces detailed in Chapter 2.

Although Benjamin welcomes the technological reproduction of art, as it enables a critical perspective on 'high' culture on the part of a broader public audience, he notes that, in the case of fascism, the introduction of ritual and mythic representation into public life effectively introduces aesthetics into political life. Group identity is therefore determined by an invented frame of symbolic reference. This is not, argues Falasca-Zamponi, a 'disguise' which fascism wears. It is 'the element within which fascism defined its goals and shaped its political identity.' (1992: 90) Of course, aesthetic organisation, as we have seen, is not new in the exercise of political agency. What is notable is that fascism has conceived of these aesthetics first, and organised political representation within their vocabulary. Rainer Stollman notes

Imperialist and fascist politics is dependent on a highly aestheticised and ritualised public sphere ... Where art should be free, there is oppressive politics and censorship. Where free expression in politics should be, there is ritual, illusion and the facade of unity. (1978: 51)

For Benjamin, the use of reproduction under fascism does not democratise art. It permits participation, but there is no access to production. In this way, the aesthetic remains mythic. David Harvey makes the spatial link.

Reactionary modernism of the Nazi sort simultaneously emphasised the power of myth (of blood and soil, of race and fatherland, of destiny and place) while mobilising all the accoutrements of social progress towards a project of sublime national achievement ... The aestheticisation of politics shifts emphasis from historical change towards national culture and destinies, sparking geographical conflicts between different spaces in the world economy. Geopolitical conflicts invariably imply a certain aestheticisation of politics in which appeal to the mythology of place and person has a strong role to play. (1989: 201)

Nazism's imagining of the space of the nation and subsequently of the Greater Germany, in both geographical and ethnic terms (as, for example, *lebensraum*), is expressed through its theatrical space. Social action, as I have argued,

produces social space: politics and political action that is aestheticised produces an aesthetically materialised space.

Aesthetic politics (and the space produced by aesthetic politics) attempts to colonise all experience. Even where it is not literally present, the conception of space that conditions the imagination of nation, and hence citizenship, rights, freedoms and so on, is conditioned by its mobilisation as theatrical space. Non-ceremonial beatings, evictions, murders, street violence, rapes; the invasion and annexation of neighbouring countries, are legitimised by what is being materialised in theatrical space. The theatrical space does not 'echo' or 'reflect' what is happening elsewhere. It attempts to justify, and produce the conditions in which the things happening elsewhere can occur.

#### Theatrical vocabularies.

The Nazis are infamous for their rigorous attention to visual and theatrical propaganda and for their control of, initially, the image of their movement, and later the nation and the military expansion of its boundaries.

The imagery of fascism, repeatedly described in 'theatrical' terms by its designers and producers, is explicitly intended to produce 'effects'. It is not merely intended to be an illustration or materialisation of power, it is to be that power *at work*. It does this work by colonising public space and theatricalising it. There are thus both political *and spatial* agendas in play. The use of symbols (swastikas, medals, yellow stars, pink and red triangles) makes visible the place of everyone in the social ordering of the state. By colonising everyday space, those newly visible 'enemies of the state' are refused space to form allegiances, mobilise, hide or escape.

Even before they came to power, this was a major concern. The discussion of the organisation and efficacy of propaganda is a recurrent theme in *Mein Kampf*, written in the early twenties while Hitler and his closest allies were in prison in the aftermath of the Munich putsch. These ideas were not much moderated over

time, and the propaganda machine that was later established followed the precepts that had been laid down in theory over a decade earlier.

The principle was always that of effect, and particularly how effects could be produced to influence, and ultimately coerce, the greatest number of people.

The art of propaganda lies in understanding the emotional ideas of the great masses and finding, through a psychologically correct form, the way to the attention and thence to the heart of the broad masses ... The(ir) receptivity is very limited, their intelligence is small, but their power of forgetting is enormous ... All effective propaganda must be limited to a very few points and must harp on these in slogans. (Hitler 1992: 165)

Hitler observed

only after the simplest ideas are repeated thousands of times will the masses finally remember them. (1992: 169)

National Socialist propaganda did indeed limit itself to simple ideas: a version of national and imperial imaginings on a grand scale, the reassertion of a military national might, racial (and political) 'purity'. It allied these ideas with simple images: the eagle, the swastika, numbers of people acting in unison, monstrous caricatures of their adversaries and enemies, and the image of Hitler himself. In some senses, this is one of the reasons that Nazism lent itself so successfully to monumentalisation: its message was already artificially legible, and the patterns of its organisation were already those of the monumental; simple, repetitious, with a superficially easy comprehensibility.

Rooted, like their political programme, in anti-communism, much of the influence for the early outlining of the spectacular vision came from the ways in which Marxist parties and organisations created spectacular effects. Hitler notes what he perceived to have won 'millions of workers' for Marxism:

Propaganda work; people's orators ... gigantic mass demonstrations, these parades of hundreds of thousands of men, which burned into the small, wretched individual the proud conviction that, paltry worm as he was, he was nevertheless part of a great dragon. (1992: 429)

The very intention was to symbolically oppose the flag of Marxism with another, equally potent, which would represent its polar opposite. In this way, theatrical vocabularies would be brought into conflict in space. Again, attention is paid explicitly to the experience of such dynamics.

What importance must be attributed to such a symbol from the psychological point of view I had even in my youth more than one occasion to recognise and also emotionally to understand ... I experienced a mass demonstration of the Marxists. A sea of red flags, red scarves and red flowers gave to this demonstration, in which an estimated 120,000 took part, an aspect that was gigantic from the purely external point of view. I myself could feel and understand how easily a man of the people succumbs to the suggestive magic of a spectacle so grandiose in effect. (1992: 448)

Importantly, it is as the NSDAP organises itself as a militia that the necessity for insignia became crucial. Thus the theatrical imagination of German fascism was from the very outset militarised, violent and destructive of individuality.

The organisation of our monitor troop clarified a very important question. Up till then the movement possessed no party insignia and no party flag ... party comrades lacked all outward sign of their common bond, while it was unbearable for the future to dispense with a sign which possessed the character of a symbol of the movement and could as such be opposed to the International. (Hitler 1992: 448)

The point about symbolic insignia is that they form communities: communities of people who wear or display them, and by extension, communities of people who do not. The flag was explicitly imagined as an expression of identity and belonging. Its impulse is to force into visibility both Party and non-Party. Equally, as a 'stirring' emblem, Hitler recognised that 'an effective insignia can in hundreds of thousands of cases give the first impetus towards interest in a movement'. (1992: 450)

... white is not a stirring colour; black not stirring either. White and blue were ruled out because they are the colours of one of the states. Black, red and gold were in themselves out of the question, and black, white and red in their previous composition ... although this is the most brilliant harmony of colours. I myself always came out for the retention of the old colours, not only because to me as a soldier they are the holiest thing I know, but because also in their aesthetic effect they are by far the most compatible with my feeling. (1992: 450-1)

In February 1920, red was finally chosen: as the most affecting colour, and also as a direct colonisation of the red of the labour movement. The final design was for a flag with a red background, a white disk and a black swastika. Arm-bands were immediately ordered and Party insignia. The swastika had been used by extreme nationalist movements in Germany since the 1890's. It was introduced to the National Socialists by Friedrich Krohn, a dentist, who left the Party in 1921 in protest at Hitler's increasing dominance.

On the experience of seeing the first flag in 1920, Hitler wrote

It was young and new, like the movement itself. No-one had seen it before; it had the effect of a burning torch ... and a symbol it really is! ... the unique colours ... attest our veneration for the past; they were also the best embodiment of the movements will ... We see our programme in our flag. In red we see the social idea of the movement, in white the nationalistic idea, in the swastika the mission of the struggle for the victory of Aryan man, and by the same token, the victory of the idea of creative work, which as such always has been and always will be anti-Semitic. (1992: 452)

Anti-Semitism also determined the design of the version of the German Eagle used under Nazism. Hitler claimed to have designed the 'eagle with the upwards striving head' after finding it described in an anti-Semitic encyclopaedia as 'the Aryan of the animal kingdom'.<sup>4</sup>

Ultimately, the very identity of the nation itself was forced into equation with these symbols, and with the Nazi writing of its history. As I argued in Chapter 3, the usual function of theatrical space is to propose a condensation of social space, thus rendering social organisation visible, and legitimising through its theatrical effectivity the continued existence of that state in that form. It is the

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<sup>4</sup> The American journalist William Shirer called Nazi anti-semitism 'this burning hatred which was to infect so many Germans in that Empire' which would 'lead ultimately to a massacre so horrible and on such a scale as to leave an ugly scar on civilisation that will surely last as long as man on earth'. (1960: 44) It is interesting to note that explicit references to anti-semitism are largely absent in the rhetoric of the Nazis between 1933 and 1939. (Kershaw 1987: 231). It is nevertheless present in the theatrical practices of the regime, which thus realise this part of their programme even as it is 'officially' disavowed.

most emphatic and legible moment of the state's expression. German fascism, as I have observed, is such a highly aestheticised form that the very institutions of the state are already conceived of in spectacular form: they are already theatrical. In this way, there ceases even to be an argument about the relationship of the 'referent' and the 'symbol'. There is no referent: the symbol is all there is. Social space is colonised by theatrically conceived and materialised power.

The force of this can be illustrated through the example of Nazi uniform. As mentioned above, the nascent fascist movement from the very outset mobilised itself militarily, both organising as an 'army', and using the ideal of military sacrifice to ground its nationalism.

The original SA uniform (Brownshirts) was copied from the black shirts of the Italian fascist party under Mussolini.

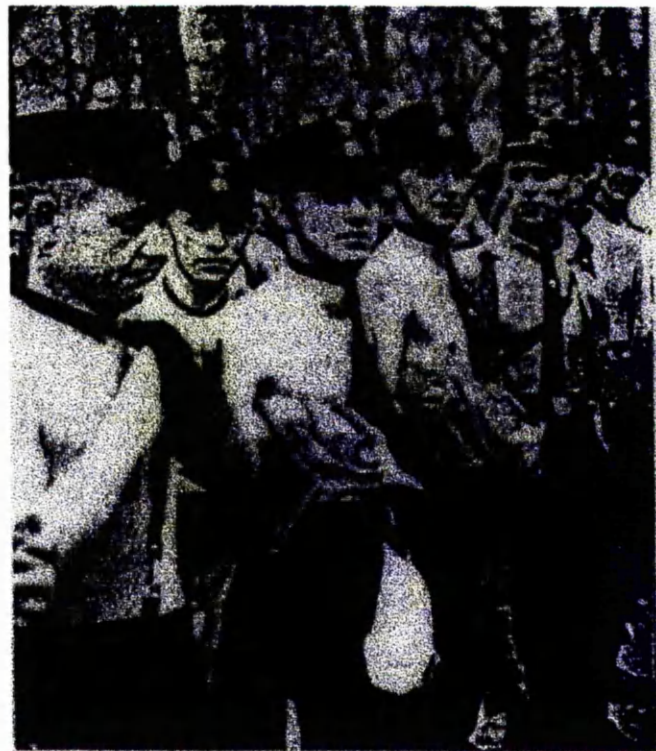


fig. 17: Brownshirts forbidden to wear uniform, 1930.

Even in the early days, the importance of visibility was not underestimated: when, in 1930, an edict forbade the Nazis from meeting wearing their brown shirt uniforms, they convened wearing everything (trousers, boots, shiny hats)

but their shirts.<sup>5</sup> The uniformity of the bare-chested men not only foregrounded the legal action that had been taken against them, but also repeated their cohesion. (fig.17)

The wearing of uniform, itself always a powerful symbol of identity and belonging, cuts people off from any other means of identifying their 'place' in social, cultural, educational, professional or class orders; from alternative ways of deciding who one is in relation to others. Eventually, to complement the uniforms, a series of medals was initiated, and, by extension, further 'communities' of medal-wearers. The members of the 'National League of Wearers of the Life-saving Medal' for example, were allotted a *Reichsstunde* or 'National Hour' in which to celebrate.

The ubiquity of uniforms meant that people were continually being shown images of themselves: any represented figure stood in for any other. Newsreel films from far-flung corners of the Reich featured men and women who looked just like each other: all were therefore part of a unified whole.

Hitler noted that

The individual who, in becoming an adherent of a new movement feels lonely ... receives, in a mass meeting, for the first time the pictures of a greater community ... which has a strengthening and encouraging effect. The individual is carried away by the powerful effect of the suggestive intoxication. The man who comes to such a meeting doubting and hesitating, leaves it confirmed in his mind: he has become a member of a community. (Hitler, cited in Kerzer 1998: 164)

Not only a member of a community; he has become the community itself.

The will, the longing and also the power of thousands are accumulated in every individual. (Hitler, cited in Lahr and Price 1973: 15).

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<sup>5</sup> These details, and those which follow in this section of my discussion, are drawn from Zeman (1964).

For the High Command, uniforms became hugely pompous. The stage designer Benno von Arent, who was to assist Speer in decorative arrangements for state events (notably the decoration of Unter den Linden (fig. 18) for the visit of Mussolini in 1938), was asked in 1939 to design diplomats' uniforms, and also a series of medals.

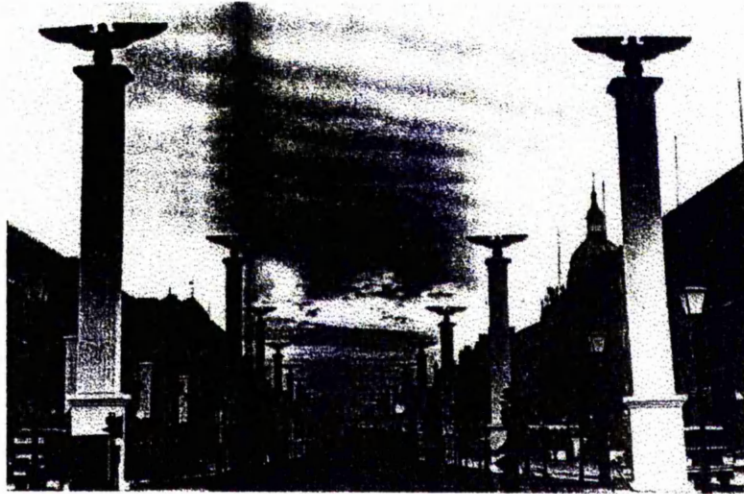


fig.18: Unter den Linden, Berlin, 1938.

He was nicknamed 'the tinsmith of the Third Reich'. (Speer 1971: 167) Speer comments on seeing his fellow Nazis at Nuremberg, this time for their trials, without uniforms.

For years I had been accustomed to seeing all these defendants in magnificent uniforms, either unapproachable or jovially expansive. The whole scene now seemed unreal; sometimes I imagined I was dreaming. (1971: 678).

Hitler himself deliberately did not wear gorgeous uniforms, preferring to provoke a deliberate contrast with those around him. 'My surroundings must look magnificent. Then my simplicity makes a striking effect.' (Hitler, cited in Speer 1971: 167). He was aware of his own increasing status as a hugely important symbol. The elections of 1933 had brought the Nazis to power, but technically, the Chancellor, Hindenburg, could have had Hitler removed from

office. This would not necessarily have occurred: Hindenburg did not intervene after the Night of the Long Knives, in which many senior members of the SA had been executed. In 1934, after the death of Hindenburg, Hitler became Fuhrer. From this point on, Hitler is presented as the embodiment of nation. As Hess cries at the end of the 1934 party rally 'Hitler is the Party! Hitler is Germany and Germany is Hitler!'.<sup>6</sup>

### Conceptions of space.

The space of the new Germany had to find conceptual form. There is in the written material from the period a strong spatial sense, which seems already to intersect with a theatricalised discourse.

The use of the term 'raum' appears not only in the now infamous *lebensraum*; the need for living space for ethnic Germans which was used as a legitimisation for the invasion of Czechoslovakia and Poland and the annexation of Austria. It also indicates a particular conceptualisation of space: a racially German spatiality.

Like the racial ideology, the first function of this is to find an ethnic past, annexing the architectural styles which were to produce the desired spatiality in a narrative of ancestry. According to Nazi histories, then, 'the 'Nordic' ancestors of the ancient Greeks migrated from the valley of the Danube, bringing with them a post-and-lintel type of construction and a rectilinear ground plan. The Greeks later brought this to perfection in their temple design as an 'expression of their racial awareness' and as a 'protest against Asia ... Oriental and Bolshevik architecture was only two-dimensional, whereas Nordic buildings were three-dimensional'. (Taylor 1974: 88) In this way, classical Greek architecture was re-ethnised as exemplary of a 'Nordic', and hence German, sense of space. The social spatiality of Greece was to combine with the spectacular spatiality of Roman architecture into the bombastic monumentalism that would both speak of and produce German fascism. The intention was to produce an architecture that

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<sup>6</sup> *Der Triumph des Willens (Triumph of the Will)* dir: Leni Riefenstahl (1934).

was 'bound by space ... conditioned by space'. (Taylor 1974: 87-8) It had to be constrained in order to function. The 'democratic' amphitheatre was rejected in favour of the parade ground, as

the circular form limits the view on all sides. It is directionless; it is, in plan, at the same time free on all sides; in the deepest sense of the three-dimensional, a round building cannot communicate a real sense of space, no matter how strong the artists hand which formed it. (Rosenberg, cited in Taylor 1974: 58)

The desire to produce spatial constraint is here revealed in the choice of language. In rejecting the 'directionless' and the 'free', the impulse towards direction and unfreedom is implicit. Democratic architecture is resisted precisely because it is not perceived to be coercive.

The stated wish to produce a three-dimensional *and directed* space allows us to circumvent the usual descriptions of fascist neo-classicism as 'facade', 'stage-set' or 'backdrop'. Firstly, as I have argued, spaces organised around theatrical or spectacular principles *are* three-dimensional and experienced, so the pejorative sense of these descriptive terms should be disregarded. Secondly, this is not a matter purely for interpretative frameworks. These 'facades' and 'backdrops' are explicitly conceptualised *at the time* for the effects they will produce from the experience of being in their presence as three-dimensional spaces.

The influence on the individual of structured space, especially the interior space in which he works, is very strong. (from the official Nazi art publication *Die Kunst im Dritten Reich*, cited in Taylor 1974: 81)

The Nazi Youth leader, Baldur von Schirach noted 'Building is something like a religion, which means that it is less to do with stone and mortar than with experience and faith'. (cited in Taylor 1974: 81) For Hitler too, architecture, as the form of art which 'stands nearest to the state ... exercises unconsciously by far the greatest direct influence upon the masses of the people'. (cited in Taylor 1974: 31)

While he did care deeply about producing his own answer to Hapsburg Vienna or Imperial Rome, it could never be maintained that power-hungry Hitler loved architecture because he admired beauty of form or the impressive work of human - or of German - hands. His 'community' architecture was designed to control a community. In 1945, he was prepared to destroy every German palace, cathedral, castle, stadium and theatre in his policy of 'scorched earth'. (Taylor 1974: 54)

Hitler's preference was for gigantic monuments in neo-classical style. As an amateur architect, he had produced notebooks and sketches from the early 1920's. Taylor notes that 'the sense of space in his sketches and plans corresponds to the apparently unlimited vistas he faced when in control of most of Europe in the spring of 1941'. (1974: 29) It was as the heart of a huge Empire that most of his monumental plans were to serve, in a programme of construction that would both produce and glorify the Nazi state. They would build 'the word in stone': monumental edifices which would be, in Hitler's words, 'the shrines and symbols of a new noble culture ... They will help to unite and strengthen our people politically more than ever before ... they will prove how ludicrous our petty differences are in the face of these mighty gigantic evidences of our community'. Nazism 'unconditionally demands the totality of all creativity ... therefore its buildings must bear witness to its will'. (Hitler, cited in Stollmann 1978: 46)

#### Materialisations of space.

Although Nazism promoted building of varying types, which I will return to shortly, the preference for state buildings was therefore for neo-classicism on a gigantic scale. Ziegler describes this 'German' style as 'thoroughly self-willed and strong, with the stress on the horizontal ... it has massive weight and is a military style, the self-assertion of the Volk.' (Zodiac2 1988: 121) Monumental architecture of this type is often discussed as though it were somehow neutral

before being put into service and given inflection by a totalitarian regime. Winfried Nerdinger observes that 'monumentality is not in itself evil. Individual architectural forms cannot convey a political programme'. (1995: 323) Albert Speer himself, in his careful distancing of himself from responsibility in his account of the Nazi years written twenty five years later, was careful to articulate that neo-classicism was not used exclusively by fascism, and was actually the predominant architectural style in Europe in the twenties and thirties, citing building projects in Paris, Rome, Moscow and Kiev.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, I argue that, if examined from the interpretative perspective of theatrical space, this kind of architecture cannot be granted such a neutrality. It produces totalitarian space. Since space is produced in relation to the social, no space can be neutral or devoid of social and political strategy. All monolithic power systems seek to invest their polity with the particular kinds of might that are entrenched in neo-classicist and monumental architectures. This style does not *speak of* a totalitarian power system; it *is* totalitarian, because it forces the viewer/ user into a particular relationship with itself, based in awe, diminishment of the self, a humbled sense of community, participation, ownership and pride, respect for the institutions of the state and so on. It is not democratic, it does not offer itself to counter-readings or counter-uses.

Louis Mumford observes

What we now call 'monumental' architecture is first of all the expression of power, and that power exhibits itself in an assemblage of costly building materials and of all the resources of art as well as in a command of all manner of sacred adjuncts, great lions and bulls and eagles, with whose mighty virtues the head of the state identifies his own frailer abilities ... to produce respectful terror. (1961: 81)

Mumford's interpretation is based once more in the visual 'message' of such architecture: it is the 'expression' of power, emblematising both state and leader.

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<sup>7</sup> See Taylor 1974: 71-2.

As I have argued, however, buildings produce space, and the experience of being in that space contributes to, indeed forms, the sum of its meanings.

For Zevi,

the fundamental characteristic of Roman space is that it was conceived statically ... the rule is symmetry, an absolute autonomy with respect to neighbouring spaces ... essentially self-contained and independent of the observer. (1974: 81)

In other words, classical and neo-classical architecture offers the illusion of being timeless. Its autonomy, from both its surroundings and its audience/ users, separates it from the flow of experience. Symmetry always halts the eye: there is no visual movement in a symmetrical edifice or facade. It is the terminus of the gaze: a completed and closed statement. Its energy draws the eye only to itself. In this way, it diverts attention from anything near it, while closing down the possibility of difference. As I have argued, for Lefebvre, this exclusion of alternatives and alternative practices is what makes monumental architecture of all styles an exercise in manipulation. The particular strategies of classical architecture work to emphasise these effects.

Zevi continues that 'classicism seek(s) to constrain man in a building defined in terms of fixed, immutable canons, where the only beauty is that of the totality'. (1974: 159)

In its heaviest, most static and severe forms, classicism was the architecture of the economic phase that goes under the name of imperialism. It was ... the architecture of compensation, offering magniloquent stones to a people from whom it has taken bread and the sun and everything worthy of man. (Zevi 1974: 168)

That an architecture of totality, 'fixed canons' and huge scale should be selected by German fascism to materialise itself is no surprise. One of the strongest trajectories of Nazi ideology was in the construction of a magnificent past which would be reflected upon in a magnificent future. The present was organised to service both.

Notably, in the light of my remarks above about the way in which fascist aestheticisation is mobilised culturally to stand for fascism itself, so Hitler was influenced by the legacy of Rome in the form of its ruins.

If Greece impressed Hitler with its racial affinities to Germany, ancient Rome impressed him with its monumentality. The size of the ruins was undoubtedly their most appealing feature, but they were also an example of 'community' building. Of ancient Rome he said, 'the first place was not taken by the villas and palaces of individual citizens, but by the temples and baths, the stadiums, circuses, aqueducts, basilicas of the state, hence of the whole people'. (1992: 265)

Neo-classicism has been implicated in all the theatrical spaces of power I have so far discussed. It was one of the two preferred styles in London in the 1890's and 1900's. It is rediscovered by the French Revolution. It is mobilised by German fascism. Although there are many differences between these forms of authority, neo-classicism seems to be invoked at moments when a state is in negotiation with its own image, and its people. These forms of power call on different aspects of the residue of the social space of Rome represented in its buildings. For the French Revolution, it is the space of the Republic. For London, it is the style for imperial imaginings, and for German fascism too, it is the space of the Empire and its historical legacy.

Bruno Zevi argues that when classicism is revived, it is not necessarily due to an aesthetic appreciation of its style, but to the wish to reproduce its effects. He details two manifestations. The first is in, for example 'the big American banks', which are cold and do not make us feel at home. This spatial construction of unease is at work in the second form of revival also, as

whenever there has been a programme of architecture-as-symbol, expressive of vain attempts at Imperial revival, at myths of military and political supremacy; the result has been buildings of static spaces, rapt in the bombast of megalomania and rhetoric. (1974: 82)

The two main sites for the German revival were to be Berlin and Nuremberg. I will return to Nuremberg shortly, in a discussion of the *Parteitag* Rallies. Berlin was to be redesigned by the same architect as Nuremberg: Hitler's favourite, Albert Speer.

Speer trained as an architect, and joined the NSDAP in 1931. He was appointed General Building Inspector for the Reich capital in 1934. He was also armaments minister, in which capacity he was tried at Nuremberg after the war.<sup>8</sup>

#### The plans for Berlin.<sup>9</sup>

The plans for Berlin exemplify several aspects of the Nazi programme. The city was to be the expression of the 'word in stone'. It was to erase the 'failures' of the past by producing a series of spatial forms that would dwarf anything that had gone before. Indeed, in his descriptions, Speer constantly indicates just how much bigger than the original model his buildings were to be. They were to produce a legacy for the future that would perpetuate the Reich for all time. They would force the spatial, and hence social, exclusion of all non-Aryan, non-Nazi people.

Demonstrating the tendency of Nazi historians to simply omit the 'liberal' period, from the late eighteenth century to post-World War One, the Nazi historian Wilhelm Hausenstein wrote in 1932 of Berlin 'It is as if it were grounded on nothing, but a nothing that is *the* nothing. Berlin has no provenance...no rootedness or history'. (cited in Boyd Whyte 1995: 258) Obviously Berlin had

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<sup>8</sup> Speer was not the originator of the aesthetic style of the Nazi building programme. Many Nazi architects drew influence from the re-discovery of a grandiose neo-classicism in the eighteenth century architectural work of Friedrich Schinkel and Friedrich Gilly, and the paintings of Joachim Winkelmann from the same period. It was Paul Ludwig Troost who 'set the tone for all Nazi public buildings (Nerdinger 1995: 324). This architect, described by Speer as 'the real initiator of the Hitler style' (Taylor 1974: 68), died in 1934, resulting in Speer's appointment as Hitler's architect. The Nazi building programme, therefore, was not original, being already based on a series of borrowings from the work of others.

<sup>9</sup> The centre of Berlin is again a building site: this time the central area, after being for so long the 'no-mans-land' between the East and the West is to be filled with the gleaming glass and chrome of corporate business and finance: the imposing forms of the spatialisation of Western capital.

provenance, history and horizons of meaning as an urban space. It had, however, nothing that was useful to fascism, except the memory, and continuing presence, of street violence.

The whole of the centre of Berlin was to be redrawn along monumental lines, and on a simply enormous scale. The key part of the plan was a north-south and an east-west axis. The east-west axis was to be built along the lines of existing streets, and some preparations were made: the *Siegessaule* (Victory Column) was moved from the Reichstag to its present site in 1938. The north-south axis was a new build, and was to be the 'climactic spectacle' and 'aesthetic embodiment' of the Nazi state. (Schache 1995: 327) (fig. 19)

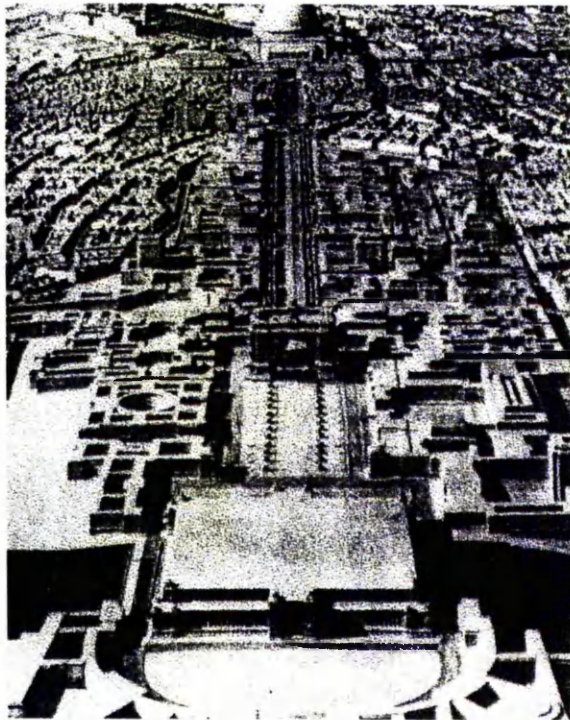


fig.19: Model of the planned north-south axis, Berlin.

The Anhalter and Potsdam stations were to be relocated south of the Tempelhof, leaving space for a three-mile avenue. It was planned to demolish 25,000 existing dwellings, businesses and other buildings to make way for it, and much of this demolition work was undertaken between 1937 and 1939. (Schache

1995: 326) Speer's office<sup>10</sup> legislated for the destruction of Jewish homes and businesses first. Initially, Jewish residents were permitted to stay with friends or relatives; later the evictions were incorporated into the forced removal of Jewish citizens, along with others, to the camps.

The boulevard was to be lined with state buildings, memorials, monuments and businesses. Scheduled for completion by the time of the planned World Fair in 1950, this moment was also to be marked by the renaming of the new, ethnically cleansed, Berlin as 'Germania'. (Schache 1995: 327) The work was to be financed by wars of foreign conquest. Thus the plans spatialise both the expansionist intentions of the regime, and the racial 'purity' of those who will be permitted to live there. Its further intentions: to subjugate and reconstitute a people through scale and abstraction, and to produce the 'time' of the Reich through producing its space can also be tracked.

Visitors would arrive at one of two railway termini: at the southern terminus, into a plaza 800 by 300 metres, bounded by 'Avenue of Captured Weapons'. (Schache 1995: 327) Their whole experience, and hence the theatrical intention of the design, was to be of sheer scale. While the north-south axis itself was to be gigantic, all of its architectural proportion was to be shattered by two enormous edifices.

The first was a domed Hall, 'into which St Peter's Cathedral would have fitted several times over'. (Speer 1971: 119) (fig.20) 825 feet in diameter, with an area of 410,000 square feet, it was intended that 150,000 people would be able to stand inside it. Modelled on the Pantheon in Rome, this Hall would have an opening for light in its roof larger than the entire dome of the Pantheon. It was to be fronted by a huge artificial lake, doubling its presence in reflection. The interior appointments were to be modest: seats, pillars, and a golden eagle. Like the Pantheon of the French Revolution, it was to be the utilisation of classical socio-religious space in the service of the state. Essentially, says Speer, this was

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<sup>10</sup> *Generalbauinspektion* or General Building Inspectorate, established in 1937.

to be a place of worship. Beneath the golden eagle, 'the very fountainhead of the grand boulevard', would be the podium from which Hitler would speak.

I tried to give this spot suitable emphasis, but here the fatal flaw of architecture that has lost all sense of proportion was revealed. Under that vast dome, Hitler dwindled to an optical zero. (Speer 1971: 222)

This is a problem inherent in the production of gigantic spaces to serve a state and a leader with gigantic ambition. While state identity can be enlarged through manifestation in enormous theatrical space, while the people can be massed in uniformed ranks to realise the might of that state, the leader himself, if he wishes to actually be there and not be present as his monumentalised self, cannot transcend the limits of his own human scale.

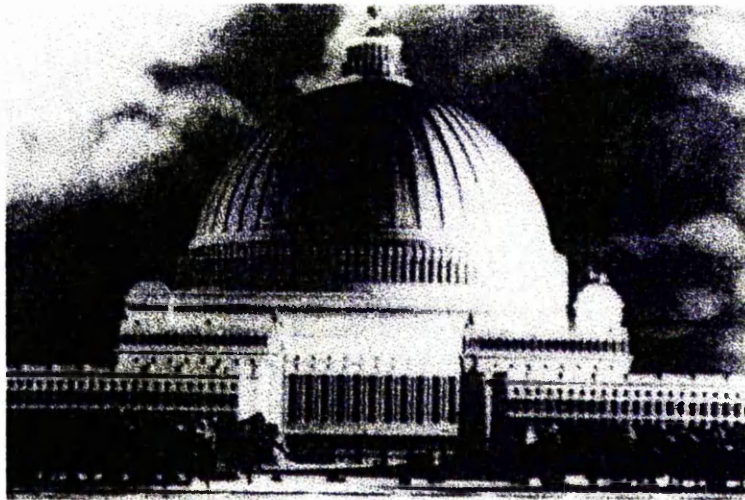


fig.20: Model of the Great Hall.

Despite his claims to modesty, the self-aggrandisement of Hitler is central to these plans. Speer notes that 'as if Hitler wanted to denigrate by architecture alone the whole process of popular representation, the Hall had a volume 50 times greater than the proposed Reichstag'. (1971: 220)

The other monument was to be an Arch of Triumph, 400 feet in height.(fig.21)  
The model for this, the Arc de Triomphe, stands a mere 160 feet high. This Arch

was envisaged as a 'worthy monument to our dead of the world war. The names of our dead, all 1,800,000 of them, (were to be) chiselled in the granite'. (Speer 1971: 119)

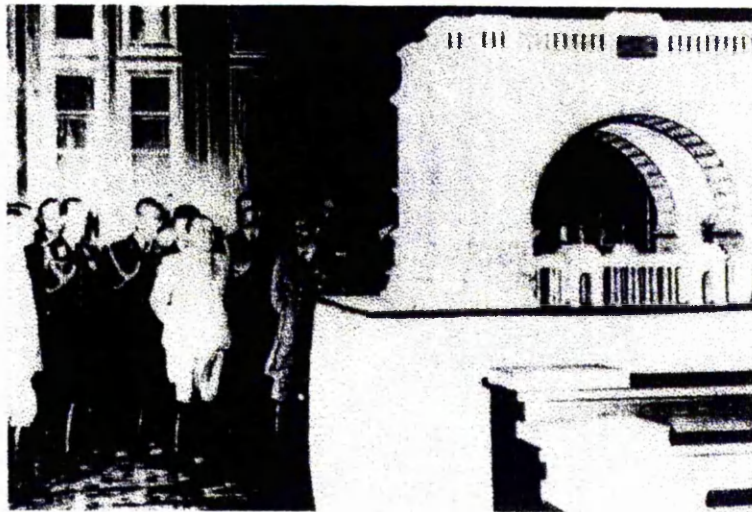


fig. 21: Hitler views the model of the Triumphal Arch.

The triumphal arch and dome had been designed by Hitler in 1925. Speer comments that

What is startling is less the grandiosity of the project than the obsessiveness with which he had been planning triumphal monumental buildings when there was not a shred of hope that they could ever be built. ( 1971: 121)

He claims to find it rather sinister that in peacetime, and while professing peaceable rhetoric, Hitler was planning buildings 'expressive of an imperial glory which could only be won by war'. (1971: 121)

The north-south axis was to culminate in a group of buildings: the Chancellery, Army Headquarters and, rather by default, the Reichstag, which was to become an archive, library and canteen servicing the proposed new Great German Reichstag. In the new Chancellery, to be built by 1950, visitors would have to

walk a quarter of a mile to get to Hitler's office, which was to be 10,000 square feet in size. Speer had added a private office of 600sq feet behind it.

(1971: 68-9)

Any visitor, therefore, is to be overawed by scale and distance. Awe can produce different kinds of effect, but to the same end. The 'believer' can experience in the spatial organisation elation, pride and belonging. The excluded experience intimidation and the spatial production of fear. Both effects are overwhelming, imposed through the theatrical staging of a mighty and emphatic power, whose scale is so great that no alternative can even be imagined. This space was intended to invent the past and police the present. It was also to make the future secure.

Hitler commented 'I myself would find a simple house quite sufficient ... but those who come later will need (this space) to sustain power'. (cited in Speer 1971: 228) The implication is not just that the architecture will be a necessary adjunct to the authority of any future leader, but that it will be necessary for Hitler to have lived there to mobilise the space properly, incorporating his charisma in the horizon of meaning. 'In periods of weakness, the architecture of former glory will speak.' (Hitler, cited in Speer 1971: 96)

It was decided that 'construction and materials are to be chosen that, now and in the future, the buildings not only serve their immediate purpose but endure for centuries to come, as witnesses to a great past'. (Schache 1995: 327)

Even where materials could not provide this endurance, plans were generated to ensure that the space of German fascism decayed in grandeur, like the ruins of ancient Rome. Speer developed this as the 'theory of ruin value'.

By using special materials and by applying certain principles of statics, we should be able to build structures which even in a state of decay, after hundreds or thousands of years would, more or less, resemble Roman models. (1971: 97)

He even prepared a romantic drawing of the Zeppelin reviewing stand in

Nuremberg in such a condition.

Ruins, according to Georg Simmel, are 'places where the past with its destinies and transformations has been gathered into this instant of an aesthetically perceptible present'. (quoted in Kern 1983: 40) In this way, the ruin acts as a monumental, and hence theatrical, space. It obliterates time and gathers the past, with all its meanings, into a single present experienced moment.

There is an extraordinary example of this attempt to pre-condition a future through the spatial organisation of the present. As part of the Armed Forces Headquarters, a Soldiers' Hall was planned 'more expressive of the oath of the living than the legacy of the dead'. It would be 'a place for those who have made their sacrifice for the cause of the homeland, national self-hood and *lebensraum* ... it will be a place of reverence, admiration and homage'. That a militarised state should foreground military sacrifice is no surprise. The innovation here, for such it was, was that the Soldiers' Hall was planned as a 'shrine for heroes' *who had not yet been killed*. (Schache 1995: 328). It was an invitation to die in the service of the state.

As well as awe-inspiring interior spaces that would aggrandise the practices of government and provoke an attitude of worship and subjugation, vast open spaces were to permit the presentation of the 'people'. The Chancellery, Armed Forces Headquarters and new Reichstag would surround the vast open space of Adolf Hitler Platz, capable of holding 1,000,000 people. (Speer 1971: 226) This is the interpretation of community architecture, as that 'used by the community and embodying powers which controlled the community'. (Taylor 1974: 34). As Hitler observed, 'The individual human being should not take himself as the measure of these buildings but should rather see in them the all-embracing will of the people'. (cited in Taylor 1974: 86)

In this way, the 'community' does not refer to the life and experience of the people of the country, *except* as they are constructed by the government. The

plans were indifferent to the social dimension. They were not based in urban renewal; implications for traffic circulation, residential areas and parks were all ignored. The people themselves can only be present in the theatrical space on its own terms: abstracted into representations of themselves. This is the intention of coercive and totalitarian spatial organisation. Nevertheless, should this strategy fall short, preparations were made to resist armed attack, or even insurrection. Bulletproof shutters were installed in all buildings facing the boulevard, and the main barracks of Berlin was to be moved to the grand southern axis, so that tanks could more easily roll up to defend the institutions of state from assault. Even Speer eventually had to acknowledge the brutality of such a space.

When I once again saw the colour photographs of the model ... after 21 years ... I was struck by its resemblance to a Cecil B deMille set. Along with its fantastic quality I also became aware of the cruel element in this architecture. It had been the very expression of a tyranny. (1971: 231)

As Zevi notes, 'the scale of Roman building is the scale of the mythos, later to become reality, still later nostalgia, and it neither is, nor was intended to be, the scale of man'. (1974: 82) It works by dominating human scale completely; diminishing people so far that their presence will only register if they convene in great numbers. Otherwise, the space will atomise the individual completely in its gigantic indifference. It refuses alternatives, it freezes both time and the imagination. It offers no way of being in it other than on its own terms, and, its own terms beat with a frightening, coercive and irresistible power. Individual life leaches away, as the 'life of the people as a whole is more important than individual lives'. (Taylor 1974: 32) Individually directed life being occluded, the space fills the void that it has itself created with its own meanings, identifications and experience. It comes to embody the force and meaning of the whole of life. Crucially, in the case of the Third Reich, the theatrical space is imagined before the state is formed: it is intended to produce the might of the state that commissions it. The theatrical and summarising space of the mighty Empire was

envisioned before the creation of the Empire it was to summarise. In this way, Peter Labanyi observes, the history of the Reich is produced in its present. The building programme is to establish stasis, as though the 1000 year Reich was always already there. (1988: 158)

The tale told at the time, as Speer records, is a nationalist one. 'In 1939 Hitler commented in a speech to construction workers "Why always the biggest? I do this to restore to each individual German his self-respect"' (1971: 115)

Yet Speer himself finds another reason:

he wanted the biggest of everything to glorify his works and magnify his pride. These monuments were an assertion of his claim to world domination long before he dared to voice any such intention to even his closest associates. (1971: 115)

The importance and centrality of the spatial summarisation of the Reich can be surmised from the control that was exercised over all architectural, and public sculptural production. As I have argued, the emblems and theatrical expressions of the identity of a particular system of authority carry a power of their own, which is vulnerable to assault or counter-gesture. For this reason, control of access was severely regulated. Only members of the *Reichkulturkammer* could be productive in cultural life. And, as Goebbels announced in a speech of 1933, 'Membership is only open to those who fulfil the entry condition. In this way, all unwanted and damaging elements have been excluded'. (cited in Boyd Whyte 1995: 261) No-one was to have access to the production of artistic, aesthetic or emblematic work but those approved by the Party.

The result was a 'strange sense of emptiness in which ... the real fabric is masked and the mask has nothing to proclaim beyond its own existence'. (Boyd Whyte 1995: 264)

Ian Boyd Whyte notes the

parallel between the silent, joyless facades ... and the banners and decorations with which the main avenues were bedecked on great public occasions ... they deaden the city rather than

articulate it, and reduce it to a bland coulisses, with no cultural referents beyond those of the flag and the party. (1995: 263)

This is conceived from the outset as a theatrical space. As Speer said, 'it was not altogether consonant with the dignity of the flag to use it for decorative purposes ... but it was always scenic drama I was after'. (1971: 102)

#### The colonising of everyday life.

This, then, is the totalitarian theatrical space of Nazism. How was it exported into everyday experience?

While the most famous of the National Socialist projects was their memorialisation and embodiment of their own power structure and ideology in monumental buildings, much of the actual construction undertaken under the Reich was of a much more utilitarian nature, and of a much more vernacular style.<sup>11</sup> This informality does not exempt these constructions, however, from complicity in the pernicious ideological agendas of National Socialism. As Lefebvre indicates, all social space forms a kind of continuum, and power systems throw up a diverse and yet cohesive social space. Paradoxically, homes, workplaces and roads embody the 'word in stone' just as much as the monumental edifices. The minor works were 'permeated with purely ideological concerns ... such as defending the health of 'Aryans' against racial pollution'. (Taylor 1974: 77) If the lived space of quotidian experience is shaped by ideological disciplines, then there is less possibility of subversion or counter-use. Highly charged moments of monumental theatricality, whether performative or architectural, lay themselves open to subversion as their message is so plain and uncomplex. They are in a sense ring-fenced from ordinary experience, heightened and emphasised. The social space of everyday life is harder to get at. Ideology embodied in non-monumental architectural space is lived before being read. In a similar way, a more pernicious example of the totalitarian discipline of

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<sup>11</sup> See Miller Lane (1985) for a full discussion of vernacular building style in the Third Reich.

Nazism can be seen in the salute that is made everyday, rather than the one executed by participants in rallies for the newscameras. (Kerzer 1998: 169) The penetration of theatrically expressive behaviour into everyday life indicates how powerful the symbolic life of the regime has become. By acting on people's everyday experience, imagination is closed down, and the interiority of the subject is restricted. Monuments are legible as bombast, everyday spaces are lived as discipline. Both are permeated with violence, militarism and terror. The colonisation of lived space is exemplified in the design of law courts. 'The Law Court ... was not a community structure in the Hitlerian sense.' (Taylor 1974: 42). Despite the space of the Reich being disciplinary and thus of the law, it was not felt necessary to incorporate the institutions of the law into the neo-classical monumentality of the state. There was no need. Judges had to wear swastikas on their robes by Fuhrer decree of 1935, and all civil servants had to take a loyalty oath after 1934: 'I swear that I shall be obedient to the leader of the German Reich and people, Adolf Hitler, that I shall be loyal to him, that I will observe the laws and that I will conscientiously fulfil my duties'. Totalitarian space is not just a series of panopticons. (Shurmer-Smith and Hannam 1994: 11)

Further, it is not necessary to unify architectures; only to unify their purpose.

As Robert Taylor notes,

only the state's representative buildings were neo-classical; its new rural settlements were 'volkish', its military schools were Romanesque. But this situation was not without significance. Inadvertently, the different styles represented different aspects of the ideology. The lack of stylistic unity ... was symptomatic of Hitler's indifference to any architecture other than the monumental ... He did not forbid other styles so long as they could be rationalised as "German". (1974: 121)

#### Everyday life as theatrical space.

The full incorporation of people into the abstract and spectacular theatrical space of the state came through their participation in festivals and rallies. In this way, too, everyday space was colonised by the theatrical imaginary. Moreover, by occupying potential festival space, alternative spaces of representation are

occluded. The mechanism is similar to the rationale hidden in the monumental plans: to call something into being by acting as though it already exists and by producing the spatial summary before the thing itself. Peter Labanyi notes that 'to dominate minds and actions was what the regime *set out* to do - it therefore arranged ceremonies and so on *as though* this was the case'. (1988: 155)

German fascism arranged the spaces that it wanted to exist. Of course, this does not necessarily change everyone's minds, but once again the possibility of dissent is reduced as orthodoxy becomes so forcefully present. Lived space, the space of representation is thus colonised and rendered totalitarian.

The Nazis instituted a programme of ritual events and celebrations which would create National Socialism as the heir to the nation's history and therefore the nation, and which would create a version of that history which led inexorably to them.

Also, they would cut across lived experience, forcing of lines of allegiance and identification. This is a very significant aspect of the function of festivals and symbols in political movements. They create allegiances which cut across normal sets of social relationships - the family, the workplace, the local community - and replace them with an allegiance which has no way of turning into opposition. Identity becomes rooted in belonging, in this instance, to the Reich. To belong to the Reich, of course, one must belong to Hitler and the Party, because they are constructed in public discourse and space as the same thing, through the use of imagery, symbols and propaganda. The division between public and private life is broken down - one belongs to the Party, first of all, and all the time. This is not consensual, but coercive.

The Nazis encouraged what became known as 'stand-by' syndrome - whereby home life was a period of leave from 'real' active service. Home life, too, was constructed as a form of service in itself. This, of course, was the intention. Clearly, many supported the party through fear, self-interest and/or expedience - not all were the fanatical adherents claimed by the regime. Whether or not

people were 'believers' becomes less important than the successful domination and administration of the state. Everything theatrical that was done, was done to promote allegiance to the regime and the state. It also, through its organisation, made it less and less possible to express dissent. In this way, the image of unity is imposed. In a spectacular state, this image is all-important. As I have argued, there was no 'referent' that the 'symbolic' life of the state referred to; the symbolic life *was to be* the life of the state.

The construction of allegiance to the state as the only allegiance possible necessitated the annexation or removal of other forms of identification. As soon as they came to power, the Nazis introduced an entire festival calendar. There was some speculation that Nazism intended to usurp the Church, and certainly alternative wedding and funeral services were published (and some indeed took place) in which loyalty to the State and duty to the family were substituted for more conventional oaths. These did not particularly take off, but it is clear from their list of festivals that it is the Christian calendar that is being challenged. Easter was to be eclipsed by the celebration on April 20 of Hitler's birthday. In December, the Day of the Winter Solstice was to become the main winter festival. Since a large part of their programme was intended to make people's first loyalty the Party and the state, it is not a wild leap of the imagination to assume that this was an attempt to unpick and supersede people's loyalty to God and the Church. There is much in Hitler's rhetoric to support his own view himself as Godlike and Nazism as a religion.

Woe to them that do not believe. The people have sinned ... today more than ever it is the duty of the Party to remember the National Socialist confession of faith and to bear it forward as our holy sign of victory. (Hitler, cited in Waite 1984: 76)

Like all religions, Nazism had its saints and martyrs. Many of the new festivals were to honour these sacrifices, and to incorporate the history of Nazism into

the celebratory calendar. January 30 would mark the seizure of power, February 24 the anniversary of the founding of the Party. March 10 became National Heroes Remembrance Day (moved from 16 March, which had been the original remembrance day). Flags were no longer flown at half mast, but high, as a sign of the military resurgence of the nation. Mothering Sunday and Labour Day were similarly incorporated into a fascist imaginary. Perhaps the most explicitly religious event was the celebration on the Anniversary of the Munich Putsch, on November 9.

The men killed in the abortive Putsch of 1923, were sanctified by Hitler when he said that their death would bring forth 'a true belief in the Resurrection of their people ... the blood that they have shed has become the baptismal blood of the Third Reich'. (Taylor 1981: 506) The Putsch, an ignominious little episode perpetrated by some of the original thugs of the fascist movement, was reinvented as a prerequisite for the victory of 1933 after the Nazis came to power. These so-called 'martyrs' are monumentalised in several ways in the iconography of the Reich. At the annual Party rallies, to which I will turn in a moment, their banner (dubbed the 'Blood-flag' ) was used to 'sanctify' the banners of the SS, by being touched to them by the hand of Hitler himself. This moment, in the rally of 1934, was incorporated into a call to arms, and in the theatrical 'resurrection' of the dead of World War One. On 9 November 1935, the first memorial day held, Hitler and an entourage marched along the route of the Putsch to the Hall of Fallen Heroes, a set of 16 sarcophagi, upright so that the heroes could reawaken at the appointed moment (rather like the Knights of King Arthur).(fig. 22) At the head of the procession was carried the 'Blood-flag' stained with the blood of the original conspirators. The 'Blood-order', survivors of the Putsch, marched alongside Hitler. On arrival, a service for the resurrection of the 16 newly-reinterred 'blood-witnesses' took place. When their names were called, massed ranks of Hitler Youth shouted 'Here'. (Taylor 1981: 506-7) The overtones of Christianity are clear: sanctity, resurrection and blood-sacrifice.

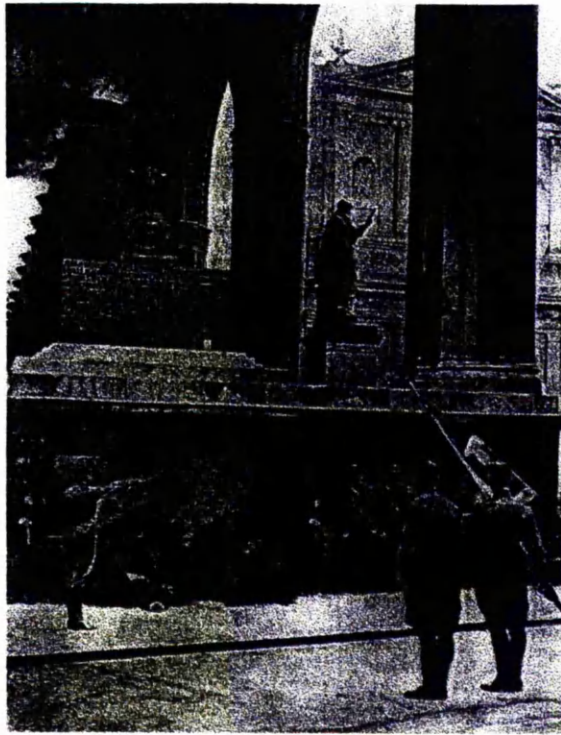


fig. 22: Ceremony: Munich Putsch, 1935.

Disconnected from the Christian precepts of forgiveness and mercy, however, the sacrifice could be incorporated into a rhetoric of militarism and nationalism. The 'resurrection' was of the military might of the state: the 'fallen' replaced by thousands who were prepared to take their place.

As well as the Christian tradition, and the re-inflection of history to 'consolidate a mythical Party history with Hitler at the core' (Adam 1992: 77), the festival calendar was to mark a 'return' to the older, Nordic and ethnic traditions and customs which fascism was seeking to annexe. Rooted in the cycle of the year, in June, the day of the summer solstice would be marked, and in September, there would be thanksgiving for the harvest.

#### The Nuremberg rallies.

The most spectacular events, and those which have come historically to stand for the aesthetic space of Nazi Germany, were the huge party rallies or congresses,

held each year in November in Nuremberg.<sup>12</sup> At the first, in 1929, 200,000 people arrived in special trains, marched in uniform and with banners for five and a half hours in front of a leader who was not yet in command. These rallies were refined and improved from year to year, becoming truly gargantuan in scale after the Nazis came to power in 1933. All aspects of the theatrical organisation of space were mobilised here: the iconography of flag, eagle and leader; the presence of massed ranks of uniformed soldiers; the religious inflections of sacrifice and resurrection, and the monumental and coercive architectural forms. Nuremberg was the site of the other great monumental architectural building programme, and, unlike Berlin, most of this was completed. This prioritising indicates the importance and centrality of the organisation of people into the shapes that the regime wished them to occupy.

Albert Speer was given the commission for the Rally ground; the Zeppelin Field. The *Marchfeld*, of 3,400 by 2,300 feet (bigger than the Palace at Persepolis) was surrounded by stands 48 feet high which would accommodate 160,000 spectators. A flight of stairs topped and enclosed by a colonnade with stone abutments was provided at one end, 1,300 feet long and 80 feet high. Speer notes that this was 'twice the length of the Baths of Caracalla at Rome'. (1971: 96) Additionally, this space was surrounded by 24 towers over 130 feet in height (46 feet higher than Statue of Liberty).

To the north was a processional avenue a quarter of a mile long and 264 feet wide. The army was to march down it in ranks 165 feet wide. This was paved with granite to bear the weight of tanks. This field, gigantic as it was, was the first of two. Behind the colonnade stood the 'Great Stadium', accommodating 400,000 spectators. Here, the eagle was 'spiked to a timber framework like a butterfly'. (Speer 1971: 61) (fig.23) The numbers of spectators would be more than matched by the numbers able to march and drill in the huge spaces. Robert

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<sup>12</sup> See Burden (1967); Riefenstahl (1990); Taylor (1981); Reeves (1999); Kracauer (1947); Barsam (1975).

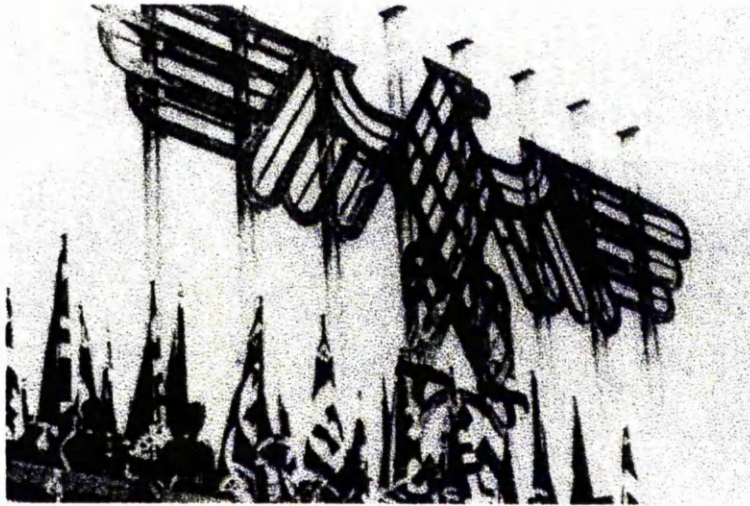


fig. 23: Speer's eagle, 1934.

Taylor observes that 'precisely because hundreds of thousands were gathered together on such occasions ... a framework of massive proportions was necessary to contain them'. (1974: 512). This observation could usefully be reversed: precisely because a framework (space) of massive proportions was provided, it was necessary to mass great numbers of people.

In fact, those masses are gathered as a theatrical or architectural feature in themselves. The incorporation of the people in the space produces two kinds of experience. The spectators are overwhelmed with a spectacle of massive force and scale, in which individuals are obliterated into the mass. Even when the choreography of the rally demands that an individual speak, their participation is as a 'representative' and hence a materialisation, of the disparate geographical parts of the state. A particular moment in the 1934 rally, memorialised in Leni Riefenstahl's film of the event *Triumph of the Will*, involves a roll call of individual soldiers. 'Where are you from, comrade?' asks the speaker. 'From the Rhine' comes one response. 'From Friesland', another. 'And, from the Saar'.<sup>13</sup> Some of these areas were contested or re-taken in the early expansions of the Nazi state. Their naming incorporates them into the theatrical and summarising space of that state.

<sup>13</sup> *Der Triumph des Willens (Triumph of the Will)* dir: Riefenstahl (1934)

The second experience is that of the participant: the masses gathered as an architectural feature, although they too are subject to the spectacle of the massed ranks of spectators. Ian Boyd Whyte calls this the 'tangible experience of the authority of the fascist system'. (1995: 329) This experience is heightened and underlined by the use of music. Riefenstahl's film is scored with the work of Hitler's favourite composer, Wagner. The space of the live event itself, however, was also emphasised through the use of military bands, the rhythm of drums and stirring trumpet calls.

Peter Labanyi observes that Nazism's substance lay in its forms. In the rally, the state is materialised as a single body: the *Volkskorper*. (1988: 170-172) (figs. 24/5)

This is the most significant aspect of the rally for contemporary commentators.

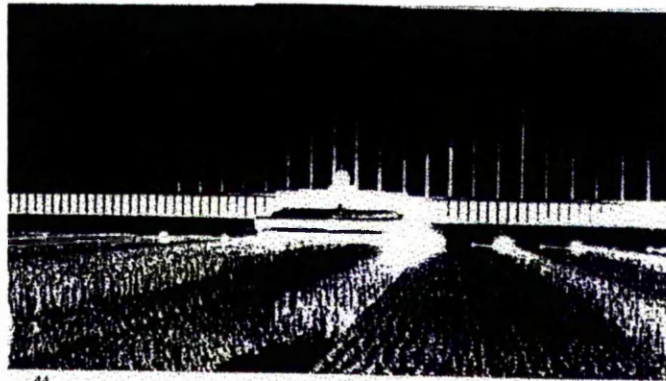
Huge masses of humanity had gathered. But these had not streamed together in unruly mobs. The summons of a shaping will ... had compelled them to subject themselves and submit to a strict form, a primal form of existence obligated to the community, a soldierly formation. It was, thus, an old soldierly custom when the Fuhrer and the Chief of Staff inspected the formations. And yet, after an epoch of disorder, it must have seemed to us as something quite new. (Art historian Hubert Schrade on the 1933 NSDAP rally, quoted in Brenner 1963 p.119)

In the words of another Nazi art historian Werner Hager,

People are no longer a mass of individuals, a formless, artless mass. Now they form a unison, moved by a will and a communal feeling. As people learn once again to move in a united manner or even simply to stand still, an invisible hand begins to mould and shape them. A new sense of the body develops, even if only in the everyday rising of the hand in the Hitler salute, but experienced in its most intense form in the compelling shape of collective bearing to be found in parades and ceremonies. The notion of a 'communal body' is becoming a reality. Noble passion is stirred up, changing what is ephemeral into something lasting. (quoted in Joseph Wulf *Die bildenden Künste im Dritten Reich: Eine Dokumentation*. 1966, cited in Taylor 1974: 241. See also Adam 1992: 87)

It is significant that the whole process is conceived in aesthetic terms: chaotic 'raw' material is 'shaped' into and ordered 'form' by a creative 'will'. The effects on the participant are conceived of in theatrical terms: through action will come feeling. Through presence in the theatrical space will come the appropriate

emotional commitment to what is being realised. Hitler called these participants 'individuals saved from atomisation; human architecture as an expression of our inner lives'. (cited in Stollmann 1978: 44)



44  
The Cathedral of Light, Nuremberg. "A fantastic thing, like being in a Gothic cathedral" (Speer). (National Archives)

45  
The Luitpold Arena, Nuremberg. The participants themselves become "human architecture" (Schröder). (Library of Congress)



fig.24: Human architecture at Nuremberg, 1934.

In my terms, drawing on Lefebvre's interpretation of the effectivity of space, it is not so much as 'expression' or representation of inner lives: it is the production of those inner lives. What is created through spatial manifestation is an

interiorised lived experience. The shape makes it visible, but it also calls it into being. The ideological work is undertaken through presence and participation. Its effects derive from being there. Its result is the willing obliteration of the self in favour of the collective. Boyd Whyte claims as the final purpose of the aestheticisation of politics 'the renunciation of individual will and ambition (such) that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order'. (1995: 265).

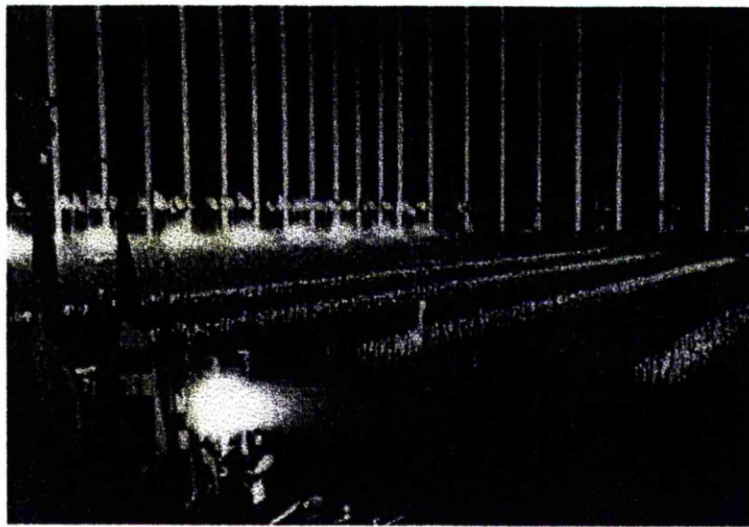


fig. 25: Human architecture at Nuremberg, 1934.

Siegfried Kracauer points out that 'the Convention could evolve literally into a space and time of its own'. (1947: 300) The architectural form meant that great masses of party members and spectators could be isolated from the outside world within a specifically National Socialist environment full of the sensory impressions of the Nazi *lebenswelt*. These were certainly present, in some of the ways I have outlined, in everyday spatial and social experience. The condensed and summarised space, however, concentrates and focuses their effect. Nazism, for Kracauer,

us(ed) life to construct their imaginary villages ... spectacular ornaments of excited masses and fluttering swastika banners serve to substantiate the sham collective that the Nazi rulers created and ran under the name of Germany. (1947: 290).

Reality was put to work faking itself. Kracauer's account of what is effectively the closing down of possibility, and the final colonisation of spaces of representation, is worth quoting in full.

Totalitarian propaganda endeavoured to supplant a reality based upon the acknowledgement of individual values. Since the Nazis aimed at totality, they could not be content with simply superseding this reality - the only reality deserving the name - by institutions of their own. If they had done so, the image of reality would not have been destroyed but merely banished; it might have continued to work in the subconscious mind, impeding the principle of absolute leadership. To attain their aim, the Nazi rulers had to outdo those obsolete despots who suppressed freedom without annihilating its memory ... it is not sufficient to impose upon the people a 'new order' and let the old ideas escape. Instead of tolerating such remnants, they persistently traced each independent opinion and dragged it out from its remotest hiding place - with the obvious intention of blocking all individual impulses. They tried to sterilise the mind ... And at the same time, they pressed the mind into this service, mobilising its abilities and emotions to such an extent that there remained no place and no will for intellectual heresy. Proceeding ruthlessly, they not only managed to prevent reality from growing again, but seized upon components of this reality to stage the pseudo-reality of the totalitarian system. Old folk-songs survived, but with Nazi verses; republican institutions were given a contrary significance, and the masses were compelled to expend their psychic reserve in activities devised for the express purpose of adjusting people's mentality, so that nothing would be left behind. (1947: 298)

This is the triumph of totalitarian theatrical space: it colonises all experience and attempts to make all places - lived, conceived, perceived - its own.

#### Legacies of space.

Appropriately enough, this spectacular and image-driven space endures as image, in Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*. Described by Riefenstahl as a purely documentary record, the film repeats and emphasises many of the effects described above. I will not undertake a full analysis of the film here, as my focus is on the space produced by the event itself, but since the film implies a third audience, the viewer, some attention to the effects on them is worth paying.

From the position of the spectator of the film, the people participating in the rally create shapes, patterns, unity: their choric speaking, for example, is highly technically accomplished. The viewer often sees the backs of participants heads, producing the sense that they are there, in the ranks. Alternatively, swastikas

march towards the camera, overwhelming. Often, swastikas are seen instead of people, rows of them marching, so that when both are in shot, the viewer is made more aware of what is making people the same than anything which might differentiate them from each other. Riefenstahl acknowledged some technical trickery to emphasise this effect. The marchers are shot from above so that they appear in patterns. This is the point-of-view of Hitler himself, who is repeatedly set apart, and shot from below so that his presence looms on the screen. As Kracauer notes, 'whenever Hitler harangued the people, he surveyed not so much hundreds and thousands of listeners as an enormous ornament consisting of hundreds and thousands of particles'. (1947: 94).

Riefenstahl reveals in her book about the making of the film that the convention was planned in concord with the planning for the film.<sup>14</sup> This, for Kracauer, results in an almost Baudrillardian cycle of overlapping realities.

Aspects open here as confusing as the series of reflected images in a mirror maze: from the real life of the people was built up a faked reality that was passed off as the genuine one; but this bastard reality, instead of being an end in itself, merely served as the set dressing for a film that was then to assume the character of an authentic documentary. *Triumph of the Will* is undoubtedly the film of the Reich's Party Convention; however, the Convention itself had also been staged to produce *Triumph of the Will*, for the purpose of resurrecting the ecstasy of the people through it. (1947: 300)

The cultural function of the film was to communicate the sense of the event to those citizens who were not present, to present something magnificent, coherent, overpowering. Inside Germany it was intended to produce a sense of involvement. Outside Germany, it is the materialisation of the new, re-militarised, coherent and powerful state. There is one document, but two messages. To the insider, it says 'do not resist, join us'. To the outsider, it says 'you cannot resist us, we will prevail'.

In the end, the fracture between the imposed and artificially legible theatrical space and the incoherent and uncontrollable space of operations was too great.

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<sup>14</sup> See Riefenstahl (1990) and Barsam (1975) for full discussions of the making of the film.

Theatrical space may be able to be dominated and regulated by a power, even the space of their jurisdiction can be made coercive and disciplined. Nazism was conquered in spaces out of their control: spaces of military engagement; the vast stretches of Russia on the Eastern Front; Stalingrad, and eventually in their own colonised space: France, Belgium, Germany. Its final and concluding space was revealed in the liberation of the camps: the secret 'word in stone' to which all their other theatrical spaces ultimately pointed.

## Chapter 6: Protests and Resistances: Some Conclusions.

The strategy of applying Lefebvre's analysis of space to the interpretation of the forms of theatrical action undertaken in the support of power has centralised them as sites where important political work is done. I will close by turning this new perspective on the theatres of resistance, which will consolidate my argument. As I have argued, the strategies of the theatrical spaces of power are to dominate and colonise social spaces. Addressing resistance in terms of their space, rather than their legibility, throws up some particular problems, but also some exciting potentialities.

I will therefore return to some of the theoretical perspectives which informed the earlier parts of this argument, to see what implications they have for the interpretation of resistance. I will then discuss the particularities of the production of resistant theatrical space.

### Resistance as theatre.

Demonstrative forms of resistance, like the examples of the practices of power covered in previous chapters, have long been recognised as being of a 'theatrical' or 'performative' character<sup>1</sup>. By demonstrative I indicate those events which take place in public space and which are intended to express or mobilise an alternative position (physical or argumentative) to a practice of power, or to a system of power in its entirety: demonstrations, sit-ins, occupations, forms of civil disobedience. Clearly, something like the commission of a crime would be an 'oppositional' act, but it may not be one which is specifically intended to serve the function outlined above. The breaking of laws by demonstrative forms of resistance has been one of the mechanisms by which their definition has been

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<sup>1</sup> See Cohen-Cruz (ed) (1999); Lahr and Price (1973); Kershaw (1999), particularly Chapter 3 : 'Fighting in the Streets: performance, protest and politics' pp. 89-125; Lebel (1969)

delineated: the point at which the action can be claimed as having 'real' effects have been used to mark the limits of its representational function, and hence the limits of its 'theatricality'. Part of the work of this chapter will be to use the interpretation of the *space* they produce to disrupt this model.

As I addressed in the introduction to this thesis, much of the work in this field has tended to start from the premise that public events of the kind under discussion here are 'theatrical' because they share attributes with theatrical practice, or that they can be claimed as 'performative' because the organisers or participants have something of Schechner's 'awareness of performance'.

While this work has contributed in productive and interesting ways to the strategic broadening of the remit of conventional theatre and performance studies, as I argued in the Introduction, the sharing of certain vocabularies with a more conventionally understood theatre practice is only a part of the specificity of these events. They are 'theatre-like' to the extent that they are organised around the symbolic production of meaning, they refer to concepts, things and ideas that are not otherwise materially present, and they are 'stage-managed' in order to be read. They are theatrical because they mobilise a series of images, moments, arrangements of bodies *as space*, within which a mode of experience is provoked, which is productive of the effect of the event. Certain forms of resistant practice share characteristics of state-sponsored theatricality in that they appear to be representations - indeed they express themselves often through representational or symbolic vocabularies - but their effect is equally not simply representational: they produce direct experience. Equally, and particularly with regard to the enactment of resistance, the consciousness of performance or demonstrativity is a perceptible facet in the interpretation of oppositional theatrical events. Yet I will argue that, like the theatrical practices of power, their distinctiveness equally lies in the forms of space they produce, and the functions of those spaces within a wider series of social spatialisations.

George MacKay, in his study of direct action, refers to the history of the public presentation of opposition: the massed demonstrations of the Chartists in the mid nineteenth century; the actions of Suffragist and 'Suffragette' campaigners in the struggle for female enfranchisement; the mass trespasses in the 1930's and so on. (1996: 128-9) Space is clearly already implicated in these enactment of resistance and opposition. Lahr and Price note that actions by, for example, excluded or minority groups are often to do with combating a literal invisibility in the social structure.<sup>2</sup> Civil Rights marches in the U.S. in the late 1950's, Gay Pride events through the 1970's and beyond, events staged by participants in the Women's Movement; all have as part of their agenda a making plain of the ways in which a dominant social organisation marginalises and hides certain members of that society, by literally making these 'invisible' groups visible. These demonstrations of presence also expose and describe the social experiences and oppressions produced by marginalisation itself: the Reclaim the Night events, for example, held through the 1970's and 80's, were ostensibly to do with anger about the sexual assault of women, and the fact that public space after dark was not safe for women to use. By extension, these events implicated the ways in which the social and cultural treatment of women was *causing* this social space to be dangerous, by 'officially' marginalising women from public space at the same time as women continued to live in it.

Struggles such as these are taking place in space. They are explicitly to do with the occupation of space, and implicitly concerned with the constitution of space. Hitherto, there has been no means of analysis which has been equipped to address how these spaces and counter-spaces are constituted through use. This is precisely the perspective which I believe Lefebvre's interpretation enables. Space, as I have argued, is not a container for events: it is produced and shaped by human action. Thus the spaces in which these events take place are already

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<sup>2</sup> See Lahr and Price (1973) p. 55

full of meaning. The battle over the right to occupy space is also a battle over the production of space.

I have looked forward at various points in this argument to the particular problematics that arise in regard to the question of resistance. The insight which the theory of the production of space offers is essentially the same for resistance as it is for power: that different forms of space produce different forms of experience - the secret effects of theatrical space which its visually driven conception and visually oriented interpretation disguise and obscure. Yet there is a key problematic at the centre of the interpretation of resistant spatiality which is radically different: power dominates space, creates and produces it in its own image, supports it by producing disciplinary theatrical spaces. Where, then, can resistance 'take place'? How can resistance produce space, as it must, in the face of a spatialisation that seeks to colonise all aspects of social expression? How can it prevent itself being recuperated and positioned within dominant paradigms of space, with their assertion of 'boundaries'; both physical (forbidden territories/ permitted routes) and discursive (the division between representation and effectivity)?

#### Locating resistant space.

As we have seen, Lefebvre's proposal for the interpretation of social space is that social actions produce space, inscribing themselves into space as they produce it. In this way, dominant modes of social organisation (power) at any given point in history must produce a spatialisation. This 'must' has two significances: firstly, they '*must*' produce a space because they *do*: they *have to* inhabit space in order to exist materially and not just as thought. They have to 'take place' in a literal sense, social actions cannot help but produce an organisation of space. Secondly, they *must* continue to produce and reproduce that spatialisation in order to survive; to continue to manage space in the way it must be managed for the

social relations that constitute that particular mode of power to continue to be able to exist. In the case of capitalism, for example, as I outlined in Chapter 2, Lefebvre argues that its development produces an evolving series of spatialisations which allow the social relations of production to *take place*: networks of exchange of goods, labour and money, private property, dispersed labour markets, consumer outlets and so on. In order for the system to continue to exist, these spatialisations must be preserved. This becomes not just a matter of protecting the geographical dispersal of objects in space (though this is a significant concern, evidenced for example by the restriction on the movement of labour today, as the freedom of movement of money is globalised), but is equally effected by the control of representational aspects of space. The abstract spatialisation of capitalism, for Lefebvre, colonises the ways in which space is thought and represented, seen and conceived, as well as lived and practised.

Abstract space, which is the tool of domination, asphyxiates whatever is conceived within it ... this space is a lethal one which destroys the historical conditions that gave rise to it, its own (internal) difference, and any such differences that show signs of developing, in order to impose and abstract homogeneity. (1991: 370)

The question of resistance is an important one for Lefebvre. His is an explicitly utopian project; that of the retrieval of a 'fully lived' space out of the abstraction and alienation of the dominated space of power. Ultimately, the goal of any resistant or revolutionary movement must be to produce a complete alternative spatialisation. This, of course, requires a *spatial* resistant strategy.

Lefebvre notes, 'space can be conquered only through the production of space'. (1991: 258)

More fully, he offers

A revolution that does not produce a new space has not realised its full potential; indeed it has failed in that it has not changed life itself, but has merely changed ideological superstructures, institutions or political apparatuses. (1991: 54)

and most emphatically,

Change life! Change society! These precepts mean nothing without the production of an appropriate space. (1991: 59)

So far in this argument I have addressed the ways in which an enlarged perspective on the theatricality of power - namely the space it produces and how this summarising theatrical space intersects with the wider space of sociality - permit both a strategic politicisation of the interpretation of public theatricality, and a re-centralisation of these forms in the interpretation of power itself.

As I have demonstrated, the theatrical space which powers of various kinds produce tends towards the abstract and the spectacular. It is visually dominated space which disguises itself as its own legible surface. It is the space which summarises the visually driven paradigms of what Lefebvre has identified as the 'abstract' spatialisation of capitalist forms of social organisation.

The space of power, as it is identified in theory and as it is mobilised in practice, proposes a totality that is hard to break through. Its visual logics, being perceived rather than lived, and conceptualised as vacancy, cause it to have an extraordinary power of incorporation.

The reading of a space that has been manufactured with readability in mind amounts to ... a sort of 'pure' and illusory transparency. It is hardly surprising that one seems to be contemplating the product of coherent activity and ... the point of the emergence of a discourse that is persuasive only because it is coherent. (1991: 313)

Lefebvre calls this 'the perfect booby-trap'. Through its ability to spectacularise social relations, dominant space attempts to reabsorb the resistant:

appropriation, which ... ought to be symbolisable, ought, that is, to give rise to symbols that present it, that render it present - finds itself signified in this space and hence rendered illusory. (1991: 310)

In other words, the very action of abstract space is to render everything within its purview into its own vocabulary. Just as it produces its descriptions of itself as abstraction (in the ways in which I have explored in previous chapters with particular reference to theatrical space), so it tries to force that which opposes it into abstract representation. Dissenting action is thus made to 'represent' opposition as state theatricality is claimed to 'represent' power, and the whole exchange is undertaken at the level of discourse, in spectacular vocabulary and on power's terms. In this way, potential sites of alternative experience: leisure sites, the sphere of private or emotional experience, and in this context, opposition and the proposal of alternative social realities or utopias, are all forced into the specular relations of alienation.

In this space, things, acts and situations are forever being replaced by representations. The 'world of signs' is not merely the space occupied by ... images. It is also the space where Ego no longer relates to its own nature, to the material world, but only to things bound to their signs and indeed ousted and supplanted by them. (1991: 311)

With an alienation this profound at the heart of experience, the first strategy of resistance, for Lefebvre, is a theoretical framework which is able to materialise the conflicts immanent in space and to reactivate and radicalise the *potential* of experience implicit in space. (1991: 365) Once it can be seen to be there, it can be acted upon and changed.

Lefebvre argues that space as actually 'experienced' prohibits the expression of conflicts (he references here his identification of practised space as 'perceived' space). (1991: 365) The theory he proposes (which is *The Production of Space*), as we have seen, relies in part on the division of space into the triad of spatial practice, representations of space and spaces of representation. Once divided, these can be used to track contradictions and fissures in the illusory coherence of space, enabling us to see where power is organising lived experience through the regulation of spatial practice, or the imposition onto physical space of representational spaces - such as the division of territory into

the 'nations' of British colonial rule. This is, of course, the manoeuvre summarised in the theatrical space of the Coronation, addressed in Chapter 3. As outlined in his chronology of spaces<sup>3</sup>, this analysis allows the excavation of abstract space in order to expose the internal contradictions it tries to obscure, and the identification of a 'differential' and potentially revolutionary space that could be carved out of these contradictions, and lived against the grain.

Clearly influenced by these thoughts, the discipline of geography has in the last ten years begun to think the question of resistance and space in interesting and productive ways. Steve Pile and Michael Keith, in the introduction to their (1997) edited collection of essays, *Geographies of Resistance*, offer the following:

By thinking resistance spatially, it becomes both about the different spaces of resistance and also about the ways in which resistance is mobilised through specific spaces and times. (1997: vii)

In this way, they add, both the myriad spaces of political struggles are implicated, and the politics of everyday spaces.

Pile and Keith argue for a spatial interpretation of resistance that can examine the ways in which 'geography makes history happen'. (1997: xiii) Developing these thoughts in his introductory chapter to the volume, Steve Pile claims that resistance can be mapped because it has visible expression, takes form as protests, demonstrations, graffiti and so on, and because these forms 'take place'. (Pile: 1997) Mapping, however, is not enough - the distinct spatialities of resistance must be addressed. For Pile, mapping only attends to the particular forms resistance takes, in other words, its physical manifestations. This is a critique of existing disciplinary perspectives<sup>4</sup>, and his point is that perspective must be shifted from the physical manifestations of resistance to the multiple spatialisations of resistance, rather in the way that Lefebvre proposes. This is a

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<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 2, above.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 2, above, on the materialist focus of institutional geography.

similar manoeuvre to that which my own project has undertaken in addressing forms of theatrical space.

Pile concurs with Lefebvre's perspective on the totalising nature of the abstract spatialisation of power. He too hopes that 'the suggestion that power relations might produce discontinuous space ... implies there might be other places in the map of resistance'. (1997: 14).

Just as space must be theorised before it can be perceived, so it must be practised in order to exist. Having located a resistant space within a theoretical framework, the question becomes how to act? And where?

The French philosopher Michel de Certeau offers the distinction between strategy and tactic as a possible model.<sup>5</sup> Strategy, he argues, is the realm of the powerful; a colonisation and occupation of physical space.

I call a strategy the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a place that can be delimited as its own (therefore proposing an exteriority, which it can then manage) ... every 'strategic' rationalisation seeks first of all to distinguish its own 'place', that is, the place of its own power and will, from an 'environment'. (1984: 35).

Although not expressed in the same vocabulary, this model is recognisably not too far distant from Lefebvre's. They diverge somewhat over the question of resistance. For de Certeau, the mode of resistance to this dominated space is the tactic, 'the art of the weak', which 'must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organised by the law of a foreign power ... it is a manoeuvre ... within enemy territory'. (1984: 36). Both strategy and tactic have particular relationships to time.

Strategies pin their hopes on the resistance that the establishment of a place offers to the erosion of time; tactics on a clever utilisation of time ... and the play that it introduces into the foundation of power. (1984: 38).

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<sup>5</sup> See de Certeau (1984), particularly chapter 3 "'Making Do" : uses and tactics', pp.29-42

While this proposal clearly has resonance for the discussion as I have, in part, framed it (the battle between the ahistoricising urge of abstract space and the temporary re-appropriation of space implied by a tactical intervention in 'enemy territory' such as a demonstration), it is necessary to note a crucial limitation in de Certeau's thought. He maintains that 'strategies are able to produce, tabulate and impose ... spaces, whereas tactics can only use, manipulate and divert ... spaces'. (1984: 29)

For Lefebvre, however,

Differences arise on the margins of the homogenised realm, either in the form of resistances or in the form of externalities ... Sooner or later, however, the existing forces of homogenisation must seek to absorb all differences, and they will succeed if these retain a defensive posture and no counterattack is mounted from their side. (1991: 373)

Thus it remains necessary for resistance not only to divert existing space, but produce new space. In fact, from a Lefebvrian perspective, resistant practices cannot help but produce alternative spaces. The territory 'occupied' by the demonstration, for example, is not, for the duration of the event, the space of power. Neither is it exclusively the space of resistance. The event itself is a battle between these two spaces, and, after it is over, a struggle played out in the horizons of meaning of the space. Pile also notes the 'unhelpful' argument of de Certeau's that resistance has no space of its own. (1997: 14) The appropriation of space, he argues, produces new space. Pile agrees with de Certeau to the extent that one aspect of resistance is to carve itself a site out of the dominant space of power, but in doing so, he insists, the other 'surface' of resistance; the one which faces, not power, but 'intangible, invisible desires and pleasures' is also taking form. The space of resistance is a dis-location, rather than an opposition. Other spaces, other worlds, are implicated in it. It can invoke spaces which may not exist yet; which may only exist for the duration of the event, but which, being materialised there, become possible.

This argument allows Pile to offer a very important new perspective in the discussion of resistance, relieving it from the obligation of 'squaring up to' power.

Geographies of resistance do not necessarily (or even ever) mirror geographies of domination as an upside-down ... map of the world. (1997: 2)

The intentions of resistant practices to 'occupy, deploy and create alternative spatialities from those defined through oppression and exploitation' (Pile 1997: 3) permit the evasion of the model of domination and resistance that see them locked together in a mutually sustaining and co-dependent relationship of the kind outlined in the work of Foucault among others. As Lefebvre notes, it is not possible to

... describe the frontiers along which battles rage ... as if they corresponded simply to the dividing line between the territory of the ruling classes on the one hand and that of the exploited and oppressed class on the other. The fact is that such disputed frontiers cross all spheres. (1991: 418)

Lefebvre's model proposes that all forms of space are interconnected: different physical spaces that 'appear' to be separate, and also conceptual, represented, imagined and lived spaces. In this way, just as a space of power may be literally physical (military parade) but acting in conceptual and imaginary ways (discipline, determination of nation, regulating the subject, restricting possibility), a space of resistance may be literally physical (demonstration, sit-in), but could be opening up other forms of space.

There are several points of significance here. Firstly, once resistance has been released from its perceived role as the always present and mutually sustaining 'other' of power, its potential to radically alter social reality is activated. Secondly, this insight offers an evasion of the re-absorption of resistance into the ocular logics of dominated space, as mentioned above.

Authority produces space precisely by cutting it up, marking it with borders and controlling and regulating movement. Pile refuses to accept, however, that resistance is 'forever confined to the authorised spaces of domination', one of whose most insidious effects is to 'confine definitions of resistance to only those that appear to oppose it directly, in the open, where they can be made and seen to fail'. (1997: 3)

This manoeuvre, therefore, echoes precisely the trajectory of my own argument: that recognising and interpreting the complex spatialisation of theatrical enactments of power and opposition enables us to look beyond the legible surfaces which they propose. In terms of resistance to abstract space, which seeks to turn everything into legible (and representational) surface, this strategy is of even more importance. It is *in the interests* of spectacular abstract space that resistance is legible. Authority actively encourages both legible resistance and the interpretation of resistance as legible. One thinks, for example, of Mayday 2000 in London, in which the unruly anti-globalisation protests caused the dislocation of a properly regulated TUC march which had intended (and had been given permission) to use Trafalgar Square. The news programmes that evening, after covering the 'outrages' perpetrated by the 'rioters', showed pictures of glum trades unionists, with comments from the Prime Minister, among others, explaining how dreadful it was that 'peaceable' and 'democratic' demonstrators had not been allowed to 'make their point'. That the Blair government has done nothing to reverse the draconian anti-trades union legislation passed by successive Conservative administrations through the 1980's can be read as indication of just how efficacious they really expected the TUC march to be. As Lefebvre notes, 'the 'real' appropriation of space ... is incompatible with abstract signs of appropriation serving merely to mask domination'. (1991: 393).

As is implied by the insight above, the case is rather, as Lefebvre has suggested, that 'the disputed frontiers cross all spheres'. Thus resistance can be mobilised in

other ways than direct and visually driven 'opposition'. Spatially speaking, power can be resisted through the production of multifarious kinds of resistant space: both conceptual and physical. One can refuse to live in the world as it is (occupying territory, digging under roads) and also as it is imagined, by, for instance, declaring an autonomous zone<sup>6</sup> such as Woodstock Nation, which I will return to shortly.

The tactics of resistance must be to intervene in the illusory homogeneity of abstract space, expose its weaknesses and contradictions, and materialise an alternative space for however temporary a moment.

At every level, forces in contention occupy space and generate pressures, actions, events ... the goal of any strategy is still, as it has always been, the occupation of space by various means. (Lefebvre 1991: 366).

For Shields, as well as Lefebvre and Pile, the question is one of actions.

How, rather than squandering their energies cruising along the predictable and neatly incised channels of the spatialisation (can) people ... be directed to act along the fractures that deeply score the unstable 'surface' of the present spatialisation? How can this homogenising 'contradictory space' become a differential space which particularises and humanises? (1999: 183)

Lefebvre observes that 'what runs counter to a society founded on exchange is primacy of use. We know what counter-projects consist of or what counter-spaces consist in - because practice demonstrates it'. (1991: 381) When a community demands something,

we can see how a counter-space can insert itself into spatial reality: against the eye and the Gaze, against ... homogeneity, against power and the arrogance of power ... against specialised spaces and the narrow localisation of function. (1991: 381)

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<sup>6</sup> The designation here is Hakim Bey's, drawn from his (1991) text '*TAZ: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism*' (Brooklyn: Autonomedia). He says 'Babylon takes its abstractions for realities; precisely within this margin of error the TAZ can come into existence'. (Bey 1991: 101)

In other words, a space of resistance does not 'speak of' an alternative mode of socialisation or politics. It materialises that alternative. Actions produce spaces. In this way, even the seemingly visually driven expressions of dissent discussed above can be retrieved: the visual is only a mode of seeing. What is *materialised* in an occupation of the space of power is an alternate spatialisation, even while the surface of the event is proposing a symbolic debate. 'War/ not war', for example, becomes in this way the definition, determination and ownership of space (and all it entails) on the part of the state, posed against the rights to determine, define and occupy space on the part of those who resist. As Lefebvre notes

The more carefully one examines space ... considering it with all the senses ... the more clearly one becomes aware of the conflicts at work within it ... which foster the explosion of abstract space and the production of a space that is other. (1991: 391)

#### Theatrical space as a space of presence.

Resistant spaces, both physical and conceptual, are lived. As I have argued, space as a totality is, according to Lefebvre, constituted from three types of space: spatial practice (perceived), representations of space (conceived) and spaces of representation (lived). Part of the strategy of this chapter is to stabilise that tricky third term by proposing that in fact lived space is a space of *presence*, and it is constituted theatrically. Lefebvre has argued that abstract space, the space of domination, colonises spaces of representation and brings them within its own construction of space as an apparent coherence built of an actual fragmentation. The theatrical spaces which I have discussed so far fall within this determination. However, what I hope I have shown is that adding analysis of the space they produce to the existing strategies of the discipline in interpreting their surface exposes them as constituting of a space built of experience, texture and a version of presence. This is however, for Lefebvre, inauthentic presence.

I will develop this idea by referring to the writings of the Situationist International, students of Lefebvre, and themselves participants in that moment of oppositional theatre that was the occupation movement in Paris in May of 1968.<sup>7</sup> They mobilise an explicit critique of what they term 'the society of the spectacle'<sup>8</sup>. Theorised consistently from the formation of the SI in 1957, the ocularity implied here is clearly reminiscent of Lefebvre's formulation of abstract space. The spectacle, the moment of commodity capitalism, was not to be seen as a product of the technology of mass images, nor as a collection of images. It was rather 'a social relationship between people that is mediated by images'. (Plant 1992: 34).

All experience is potentially implicated, potentially represented and colonised in the spectacle. Even pleasure is incorporated into the body of abstract space.

The festivals and events which the cyclical time of pre-capitalist society required to mark its passage and return are recreated in the spectacle as pseudo-festivals in which the only available roles are those of consumer, audience or star. Carnivals and festivals are outlawed when they threaten to transgress these spectacular forms. (Plant 1992: 28).

Possible ludic sites - of pleasure, enjoyment or desire - are recuperated into the world of the commodity: travel as tourism, history as theme park or heritage site, pleasure as shopping in 'temples of frenetic consumption'. (Plant 1992: 28) In Lefebvre's terms, the space of consumption is transformed into the consumption of space, as the tendency of abstract/ contradictory space to fragment itself into parcels means that leisure too must be assigned a space (and a time) within the dominant organisation and dispersal of activity. It may be fun, but it is another materialisation of alienation. Lefebvre identifies leisure sites as spaces of lived pleasure, spaces of representation, and hence potentially revolutionary, or at least capable of framing resistant imaginaries.<sup>9</sup> The

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<sup>7</sup> For a full chronology of the events of May 1968 see Posner (1970); Seale and McConville (1968); Vienet (1992).

<sup>8</sup> See Debord (1983).

<sup>9</sup> See discussion of spaces of representation in Chapter 2.

commodification of leisure spaces and their absorption into the dominant abstract spatialisation negates this potential, and also makes them doubly deceitful. They appear to liberate while they continue to enslave.

The trick is that the spectators of the cultural and ideological vacuum are enlisted as its organisers. The spectacle's inanity is made up for by forcing its spectators to participate in it. (Plant 1992: 28)

Lefebvre and the Situationists recognise that part of the work of the spaces of representation colonised by power is the production of excitement in the experience of the live event. As we have seen in previous chapters, part of the work of theatrical events staged by power is precisely that they produce the excitement of presence in theatrical space. Nevertheless, being oriented around the visual, and being essentially a strategic colonisation of ludic space in the interests, not of freedom, but of subjugation to the broader abstract spatialisation, they cannot, for Lefebvre, be seen as 'authentic'.

As I have argued, the means by which we can distinguish them is through interpreting the kind of theatrical space they produce, and the kind of social model which that theatrical space invokes and serves.

Lefebvre's model for the possibility of achieving unalienated utopian experience from inside abstract/ contradictory spatialisation was, somewhat ironically, articulated as temporal rather than spatial, in what he termed the 'theory of moments'. It took his students, the SI, to spatialise the idea of resistance.

For Lefebvre, Rob Shields notes,

moments are those instants that we would each, according to our personal criteria, categorise as 'authentic' moments that break through the dulling monotony of the 'taken for granted' ... moments challenge the limit of everyday living. (1999: 58)

In David Harvey's account,

moments are revelatory of the totality of possibilities contained in daily existence. (They are) ephemeral and would pass instantaneously into oblivion, but during their passage all manner of possibilities - often decisive and sometimes revolutionary - stood to be both uncovered and achieved. (Harvey 1991: 429)

These moments Lefebvre identified with the experience of such (supposedly) unalienated and uncommodified human experiences as love, excitement or joy. These are the moments in everyday life which redeem it, and make it worth fighting for.<sup>10</sup> Importantly for my argument, what typifies these moments is 'presence'. Presence is immediate. It is Here! and Now!<sup>11</sup> Presence is what is inalienable. Presence is the feeling of immediacy which the spectacle can only produce 'inauthentically'.

The SI extended and developed Lefebvre's 'theory of moments' into their reconfiguring of the 'moment' as the 'situation'. Debord described the construction of situations as 'the concrete construction of momentary ambiances of life and their transformation into a superior passional quality'. (cited in *On the Passage* 1991: 8).

This conception of the 'construction' of a situation which embraces a specific 'ambience' can clearly be seen to parallel my formulation of the 'production' of a space marked by 'theatrical' heightening. It is also temporally limited ( 'a unitary ensemble of behaviour in time' ) and embraces an organisational sense which can easily be claimed as theatrically informed (though not, as they state, of the 'theatre').

It (the situation) is composed of gestures contained in a transitory decor. These gestures are the product of the decor and themselves. And they in their turn produce other forms of decor and other gestures. ('Preliminary problems' 1959, cited in Knabb 1981: 43)

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<sup>10</sup> Lefebvre developed these thoughts over the course of his career, in his long-standing engagement with the radical potentiality of everyday life. See particularly Lefebvre (1947) and (1971).

<sup>11</sup> See Shields (1999) p. 63.

In other words, although the situation itself (in so far as it was conceived and directed) was temporally limited, it was explicitly intended to provoke new forms of behaviour and environments. Again, this indicates that the situation is the production of a space which influences the production of other spaces. In the same way that I have proposed that theatrical spaces cannot help but influence and impact on other forms of space (as all spaces interconnect, and are not separated in the ways that power pretends), the situation invokes alternative spaces other than the one it specifically produces.

The construction of situations begins on the ruins of the spectacle ... (it) is made to be lived by its constructors. The role played by a passive or merely bit-part playing 'public' must constantly diminish, while that played by those who cannot be called actors, but rather, in a new sense of the word, *livers*, must constantly increase. ('Preliminary problems 1959, cited in Knabb 1981: 43)

This strategy, rooted as it is in the experiential, exposes by default the dominance of the visual paradigm. By siting resistance in the lived and not in the representative, the SI is seeking, it would seem, to force the society of the spectacle to do battle where its power is really, rather than apparently, being exercised. For the SI, it is not a question of posing 'reality' against 'the spectacle'. The spectacle, they argue, as a product of real activity, *is* real. (Plant 1992: 29). Spectacular society has already split life up into reality and spectacle, in the process draining the everyday of all quality. Thus opposition must be *practised* (and, thereby, spatialised). There are two thoughts in play: how to live now, and what will become possible, for 'that which is outside the spectacle and comes to interrupt it, presents itself as irreality itself, realised'. (*Veritable Split* 1974: 16)

This was to be the ultimate form of resistance to the fake coherence of abstract space: the conscious and deliberate production of disorientation. This is self-evidently a spatial idea, but one that was to be produced by the production of

theatrical spaces of play, performativity, and awareness. Vaneign wrote in 1961,

It is a question not of elaborating the spectacle of refusal, but of refusing the spectacle. In order for their elaboration to be artistic in the new and authentic sense elaborated by the SI, the elements of the destruction of the spectacle must precisely cease to be works of art ... once again, our position is that of combatants between two worlds: one that we don't acknowledge, and the other that does not yet exist. (Vaneign, cited in *On the Passage* 1991: 9)

This echoes the observations by Steve Pile cited earlier: that resistant practices produce a specialised and distinct spatialisation, potentially that of Lefebvre's 'differential' space. Vaneign is locating his combat, effectively, nowhere - neither in the world as it is, nor, because it does not yet exist, in the world as he wishes it to be. However, since action must take place, must make space, by definition, a space of action must be being produced. Since it is not the totally realised space of the new social order, but one which alludes to it, foretells it, summarises its meaning and condenses its experience, it is a theatrical space. In contrast to the theatrical spaces of domination, however, which organise themselves around symbolic vocabularies and the illusion of legibility, this theatrical space is based in the kind of experience it wishes to provoke. It does not operate around coherence, but around discontinuity and play.

The SI imposed itself in a moment of universal history as the thought of the collapse of the old world which has now begun before our eyes. (*Veritable Split* 1974: 1)

This question of history is important. Debord notes the anti-historical tendency of spectacular power .

Individual life has yet no history. The pseudo-events which rush by in spectacular dramatisations have not been lived by those informed of them. (1983: 157).

This obstructs the self-direction of experience by individuals by creating a perpetual present that is actually evacuated of meaning, and reproduces the past

while projecting it into the future. Spectacular theatrical space inculcates and emphasises the effects of dominant social space. Sponsored by and supportive of authoritarian spatialisation, it works precisely to freeze time and history, and represent it within its own logics. This parallels exactly the arguments I made in earlier chapters, in the interpretation of the intention and effect of spectacular abstract theatrical space, and supports my argument that theatrical space acts as a summarisation or condensation of dominant social space. As Vaneigem notes, 'from Power's viewpoint, there is no such thing as lived moments ... no *now* ever materialises'. (1983: 170). It thus restricts not only possible behaviours, but also possible imaginations of the world. In this way, this spectacular theatrical space is not just a facet of the society of the spectacle: it contributes to its production. A central part of the SI programme was to replace spectacular experience with life, by returning people to their own history. Debord observes

History, which threatens this twilight world, is also the force which could subject space to lived time. Proletarian revolution is the critique of human geography, through which individuals and communities have to create places and events suitable for the appropriation, no longer just of their labour, but of their total history. (1983: 178).

In this way, through the appropriation of a space of presence, experience can be returned to authenticity, and an alternative spatialisation to that offered by authority can be realised.

Lefebvre proposes, as we have seen, that theory must find the cracks in the facade of abstract space, and practice must exploit them to provoke schisms out of which alternative modes of being can be created. Theatrical resistance has two crucial responsibilities here. Firstly, as a temporary, interventionist and strategic practice, theatrical resistance is perfectly placed to intervene in the theatrical imaginaries of power and to counter-use its space. Secondly, as it is productive of presence rather than representation, it can materialise the alternative mode of experience which it wishes to propose. Resistant practices are theatrical because

their space is summarising of a wider system of social spatialisation, in this instance of an alternative society. Again, depending on the intention of the event, this may be an alternative imagination of the dominant mode of spatialisation: a 'Britain' without racial inequality, for example; a workplace without a glass ceiling; a benign capitalism. Alternatively, there may be proposing a completely re-imagined social structure and hence spatialisation. Any of these strategies is potentially damaging to the coherence which abstract space seeks to impose. As Lefebvre notes,

The quest for counter-space overwhelms the supposedly iron-clad distinction between reform and revolution. Any proposal along these lines, even the most seemingly insignificant, shakes existing space to its foundations, along with its strategies and aims - namely the imposition of homogeneity and transparency everywhere. (1991: 383)

This observation is clearly disruptive of the discursive division of theatrical modes of opposition into the 'representational' (and hence 'safe' or 'acceptable') and the 'non-theatrical', which crosses the supposed 'boundary' into real damage of persons or property. Approaching from a different vantage point - that of space - allows us to group oppositional acts in different ways and along different trajectories. Rather than closeness to or distance from symbolic function, being less or more 'representative', we can plot actions of resistance onto a spatial frame which allows us to distinguish between them according to the kind of space they produce and the kind of space they summarise.

This unity of approach is, of course, in no way to suggest that there is only one mode of resistant theatrical space. In fact, the invocation of Lefebvre's triad of spaces (perceived, conceived, lived) actually permits the proposal of more kinds of potentially resistant space than visually driven analytical frameworks have been able to identify.

Might it be possible, as Lefebvre hopes, that

thanks to the potential energies of a variety of groups capable of diverting homogenised space to their own purposes, a theatricalised or dramatised space is liable to arise ... space is liable to be restored to ambiguity. (1991: 391)

In the next section of this chapter I will explore these points in relation to some of the oppositional practices undertaken by the resistant movements in the U.S. in the 1960's. While there are many examples of resistant practice that could be used in this context, I have chosen to focus on these events for two reasons. Firstly, they foreground a critique of the theatricalisation of power which illuminate in productive ways Lefebvre's arguments about lived space. Out of this critique, modes of action are utilised which undermine the coherence of abstract space (as it is produced in theatrical space), produce alternative theatrical spaces and ultimately point to a differently constituted social reality. This last point will be crucial, for if both power and resistance make theatre, how are we to distinguish between them? I have argued that what, in part, creates all these spaces as theatrical is that they invoke, summarise and condense a social spatialisation. Thus the distinction between them may lie, not only in the theatrical spaces they produce, but the different social spaces which they summarise. Secondly, Lefebvre is formulating his thoughts about space and spatiality during and in the immediate aftermath of the decade, which saw uprisings around the world, not least in his native Paris.

In the history of spaces which he proposes, abstract and contradictory space seem to correspond to the formal moment of modernity. Thus the late 1960s are chronologically primed to provoke the turn into differential space which his work anticipated. It is the perceived 'failure' of the resistant movements of the 1960's that is blamed for the spiralling of cultural practice into the final triumph of the postmodern spectacle.<sup>12</sup> I propose that a spatial analysis of resistance, and

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<sup>12</sup> See Harvey (1989): 'Though a failure, at least judged on its own terms, the movement of 1968 has to be viewed ... as the cultural harbinger of the subsequent turn to postmodernism' (1989: 38), which can 'only judge the spectacle in terms of how spectacular it is.' (1989: 56)

the materiality and transformative capacity of theatre, can offer hope for the retrieval of resistance from this discursive closure.

#### Woodstock Nation vs. Pig Amerika.

The United States in the late 1960's was the site of many forms of resistant and oppositional events. Groups such as the Vietnam Veterans Against The War, socialist student organisations, the Black Panthers, the Diggers, more formal theatre collectives such as the Living Theater, and the Yippies, whose activities in particular I will be examining, staged multifarious resistant actions during that decade. They had distinct agendas, but also formed a loose coalition around opposition to the Vietnam war, racial and sexual politics, and a broad pursuit of 'freedom'. Many of these actions were conceived of at the time as having a 'theatrical' character: demonstrations, parades, counter-actions, the burning of draft cards, the utilisation of costumes and props, invading sites of power such as the Stock Exchange and the Pentagon for example.<sup>13</sup>

Yet while consciously utilising vocabularies of symbol, myth and representation, these theatrical actions are conceived of as exercises in experience. This is theatricality deliberately and consciously conceived of, not as the representation it is usually held to be, but as the reality it actually is. Abbie Hoffman, regarded now as one of the leading lights in the Yippie movement (although at the time, the movement did not claim to have leaders) comments 'action is the only reality; not only reality but morality as well ... a subjective experience'. (1989: 3) This contains the real radicality of their resistant programme: subjectivity is the only reality anyway - it is being produced by power, and the only way to resist is to alter the way in which life is experienced. Theatre is at the heart of opposition, and has the capacity to lead to a different kind of life. 'Guerrilla theatre is only a transitional step in the development of total life actors.' (Hoffman 1989: 81)

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<sup>13</sup> See Hoffman (1989); Kershaw (1999); Waddington (1992); Lebel (1969); Baxandall (1969)

### The critique of theatricality.

What is particularly interesting in this period in the United States is that the theatricality of resistance is mobilised within a conscious critique of the theatricality of power. Part of the purpose of theatrical resistance was to expose the ways in which authority maintained control of existing society through theatricalisation. Furthermore, the *theatricality* of power was explicitly conceived of as materially *constitutive* of power and the exertion of power. The way in which radical voices addressed the theatricality of power in America was not as 'dressing', or 'illusion' superimposed onto a material 'real'. It was as an actual as well as a symbolic exchange. Effects of power are materialised through theatricality that cannot be materialised in any other way.

Lee Baxandall, in a piece originally published in the theatre journal *TDR* in 1969 'Spectacles and Scenarios: a dramaturgy of radical activity', writes in the guise of a 'spectacle manager'. He details, satirically, the ways in which 'dramatism' has been used to augment, and even maintain, social power. Citing 'the natural and usually wholesome tendency of our public to react strongly to events as drama', he bewails the theft of this strategy by the New Left.

Traditionally ... the social dramatism has belonged to us, it has been a key and vital bulwark of government ... the New Left has discovered the performance element of politics for its own ends. (1972: 373)

This is, of course, not entirely original - Bagehot, as I have mentioned, recognised the theatrical elements of the display of power in 1867, albeit not in a particularly critical way. Yet the preponderance of work in this field in the 1960's and early 1970's marks the generation of a particular and coherent critical perspective. Drawing on the work of Erving Goffman, Peter Berger and other 'dramaturgical theorists' <sup>14</sup>, the critical perspective of the 1960's and 70's extends

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<sup>14</sup> See Goffmann (1959); Berger and Luckmann (1967); Klapp (1964)

what is originally a metaphor to be used in the interpretation of human behaviour, by politicising 'dramatic' behaviour as a series of deliberate (and material) strategies of power. Seen in this way, these strategies can be critiqued, disrupted and opposed.

As I mentioned above, the theatricalisation of politics is not seen as an adjunct or decorative aspect of the exercise of power; Baxandall raises the question 'can we discern a function of theatricalising politics not to be had by government in any other way?' (1972: 373) As I have explored in the course of this argument, there are several functions of theatricalised politics that cannot be achieved through any other means. In themselves, these events produce a space (or series of spaces) which is directly experienced, and which contributes to and indeed conditions the effects that they produce, often aside from or in contradiction to the 'message' of their 'legible surface'. Not only do they materialise ideas that have no physical existence elsewhere, their production of these 'ideas' contributes to the constitution of social formations and spatialisations. These spaces of theatricality have a particular role to play in the invention, materialisation and perpetuation of broader social spatialisations, both physically and conceptually.

Thus theatricalisation can be centralised as a strategy of resistance. It is through theatricalisation that power imposes itself on society and space. Therefore, theatricality used against it can disrupt its coherence and restore life to ambiguity, as Lefebvre proposes. Recognising the effectiveness of power's manipulation of theatricality provides resistance with practical strategies. The shows of state do not conquer because we read their message: they conquer because we inhabit the disciplines of their space *while* we read their message. The insight that the symbolic has a material reality is not just a means of interpretation, but a tool of the struggle.

On May 20, 1967, eighteen Yippies took a tour of the New York Stock Exchange.

When we went in, the guards immediately confronted us. 'You are hippies here to have a demonstration. We can't allow that in the Stock Exchange'. 'Who's a hippie? I'm Jewish and besides we don't do demonstrations, see we have no picket signs.' I shot back.

The guards decided to let them in. Once inside, they began to throw money over the railing onto the floor of the Exchange.

The big tickertape stopped and the brokers let out a mighty cheer. The guards started pushing us and the brokers booed. (Hoffman 1989: 21)

It is interesting in this account of the event that the guards appear to be fooled by the absence of the conventional theatrical markers of demonstration. In fact, this event not only stages as theatrical event two opposing value systems: one based in commodity capitalism and one organised around essentially anti-capitalist principles. It also pivots around the materiality of money as symbol. Abbie Hoffman notes that you destroy property in a literal and material way by destroying it as a symbol. Money, as a concrete abstraction, loses power if you do not recognise its value. The action at the stock exchange, as a piece of theatre, stages a space in which money has no power.

Change is destruction. Give it away free. Fuck with money. Theatre gets attention. Destruction of the monetary system brings the country to its knees. (Hoffman 1989: 18)

A refusal to recognise money and commodity value as an organising principle of social life and hence social spatialisation is a significant ramification of an event of this kind. The Yippies, together with a group known as the Diggers, further developed this materialisation of an anti-monetary space in their establishment of shops in which everything was free. Hoffman notes 'The free store lies at the centre of our Revolutionary vision'. (1989: 78)

Clearly the alternative world envisaged by Yippie is nevertheless dependent to an extent on the 'straight' world. You don't have anything to give away free if no-

one is producing and distributing goods. The utopian space which their events invoke is therefore limited to a considerable extent as a realisable and viable social alternative. Yet an alternative space, however tenuous and transitional, is nevertheless being materialised in their demonstrative events.

Disrupting the discursive 'line' between materiality and symbolism is implicit again in some of the events held in protest against the Vietnam War. Two days after the event at the Pentagon, three clergymen walked into an induction centre in Baltimore and dumped blood in the files. (Hoffman 1989: 32) (fig.26)



fig.26: Draft card burning ceremony.

This is a 'symbolic' gesture to the extent that it is a theatrical shorthand and expression of a larger field of concern: opposition to the war in all its complexity. Its intention is legible through its employment of this shorthand function and the use of blood to signify death, waste, destruction and disgust. Yet the material aspects of the 'symbol': literal blood, bring into the space of authority the 'actuality' of war. In this way, an alternative war to the one implied by army rhetoric, patriotism and Uncle Sam is made *present* in the space.

The many ceremonies of the burning of draft cards, held at similar centres in the US throughout the duration of the war, have a similar function. Often organised as quite formal events, echoing and thus exposing the theatricality of induction itself, these are again legible as 'symbolic' opposition to the war. Yet the gesture of burning a draft card is not only symbolic: it is the 'actual' destruction of an item which has real legal force. In this instance, the demonstrators are determining its 'symbolic' meaning: it becomes a document in which the state expresses and attempts to enforce its legal rights over its citizens. The question becomes one of who has the right, who has the power to draw an object into their symbolic imaginary. Whose theatrical space is dominant? Who is in charge of the production of space? I will develop these thoughts shortly. In the meantime, it is crucial to observe that these theatrical gestures alter space. Built in the theatrical spaces which power has already constructed, they turn those spaces into theatrical reflections of something other than the social organisation of power. In this way, they destabilise abstract space, and expose both it and the theatres it produces around itself as provisional and contradictory.

#### Destabilising the theatrical space of power.

As I have argued, the theatres of state produce particular forms of space, which intersect with the wider social spatialisations which that particular form of power need to continue to exist. They condense the experience of being in the dominant spatialisation, exalting their ideological conceptions of nation, state, ruler through the dispersal of people in space and the production of spectacle. These theatrical spaces are not, as they appear to be, separate moments of the exertion of power: they are central to its working, materialising, as they do, concepts, values and social relationships which are then carried into everyday life. Because of this privileged and heightened status, they are particularly vulnerable to disruption by counter-theatre (and hence counter-space) and for this reason that often, but not exclusively, it is the sites of power or of power's theatrical staging

of itself that will be utilised as locations for theatrical resistance. Resistance can use their theatrical force against them - power makes the stage, but opposition can re-write the script.

On 21 October 1967, a demonstration was held at the Pentagon in Washington D.C. Groups of VVAW, Yippies, hippies and others gathered, joined hands around the building and levitated it, some said ten, some said fifty feet in the air.<sup>15</sup>

The Pentagon as a site of power is what causes it to be energised as a site of resistance. Events mobilised as opposition produce theatrical space in different ways. The theatrical spaces of power, which I have identified as a key site at which the homogenous and artificially coherent surface of abstract spatialisation is invented and produced, are particularly vulnerable to disruption. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, highly charged moments of monumental theatricality, whether performative or architectural, lay themselves open to subversion as their 'message' is so plain and uncomplex. They demand that behaviours accord with their delineation of space and routine. They can be disrupted by a gesture itself enlarged by its presence in monumentalised and heightened theatrical space.

In all these ways, resistant theatrical strategies intercede in the horizons of meaning which, in part, constitute the meaning of the space: the superimposition of moments which abstract space, and particularly the spectacular monumental spaces of power, try to obliterate with a continuous present.

As Lefebvre proposes in his discussion of monumental space, looking for 'texture' rather than 'text' exposes to view the historicity of spaces. It then becomes apparent how power tries to draw the history of a space into a cumulative narrative leading inexorably to the present. My discussion of the ceremonial spaces of London, in Chapter 3, implicates this kind of process. A

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<sup>15</sup> See Hoffman (1989) p. 28-9.

resistant event disrupts the smooth account, and marks the space with its own meanings. Although the event may be temporary, may be repressed and put down, or merely come to an end, the impact it has had on such a space is permanent, because the meanings of such a space are built on all of its history. Repeated gestures, and the establishment of a history (or horizon of meaning) of resistant use can then be called on in the future: a demonstration at the Pentagon today, for example, would invoke the alteration in the meaning of space produced by the actions in the 1960's<sup>16</sup>. Theatricality transforms the space. In this way, the Pentagon, primarily produced as a space of power, becomes also a space of resistance. The space produced by the demonstration is therefore a hybrid, born of a conflict between two productions of space, which are located physically in one space, but are actually two. It is to the theatrical construction of the boundaries between these spaces that I will now turn.

#### The theatrical construction of boundaries.

Physical boundaries such as barricades, police cordons, temporary railings, lines of demonstrators arm-in-arm, materialise the symbolic division between opposing forces.

In terms of the legible surface of the event, they demonstrate the visible separation of groups which hold different views. In terms of the production of theatrical space, however, they function in two ways. The first is the staking out of territory, in much the way that de Certeau proposes: a carving out on the part of demonstrators of a place to be, a temporary autonomous zone, in Hakim Bey's formulation. Abbie Hoffman declared at the Pentagon, 'we claim this land for free America'. (1989: 28) The construction of such boundaries is an interesting question: on occasion, as we have seen in discussion of the Coronation event in Chapter 3, the cordon is established by authority before the

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<sup>16</sup> It must be noted that it is unlikely in the wake of September 11 that the Pentagon would be allowed, either by the authorities, or public opinion, to be the site of an oppositional demonstration again.

event, and the corralling of people into designated areas is a crucial part of the way in which the event produces its theatrical space and organises the experience of participants spatially. Cordons that are created in the course of an event are of particular interest, as they are entirely theatrically constituted.

In August 1968, a huge Festival of Life was held in Chicago, while the Democratic Convention was being held in that city. Participants asked permission to sleep in the park. It was refused by Mayor Daley. Running battles with police ensued, resulting in the indictment on charges of conspiracy to riot of Yippie activists Abbie Hoffman, Rennie Davis, Jerry Rubin, Tom Hayden, the Black Panther activist Bobby Seale, and three moderate anti-war activists.<sup>17</sup>

Abbie Hoffman later wrote

When I left Chicago I felt we had won a great victory. The lines between 'us' the people in the streets, and 'them' the people in authority, had been clearly established; the police had seen to that. (1989: 146).

The opposition in space of police or army and demonstrators provided some of the most enduring images of the anti-Vietnam protests: people often of an age, but inhabiting completely opposing political worlds. These are, of course, not just still images: they are lines constructed out of the evolution of the event. The way to understand their formulation is, I believe, through examination of the kinds of space mobilised. It is certainly, in part, as I have mentioned, a question of control or occupation of physical space, and the manoeuvres on the part of authority to retain 'control' of space in terms of the rule of law, and the restriction of activities that 'breach the peace'. However, as I have argued, theatrical spaces implicate and summarise different social organisations, and hence the question of the boundaries established in face-offs between authority and opposition is also to do with who dominates in the production of space.

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<sup>17</sup> See Hoffman (1989); Waddington (1992); Kershaw (1999); Burgess and Marowitz (1970); Seale (1970).

Theatrical space, as we have seen, is central to the ability of power to materialise itself. In order to function, it is therefore necessary for authority to retain control of the symbolic vocabulary of a theatrical space as well as its physical organisation. As I argued earlier, the demonstration, while oppositional to the ideas of authority, is able to be incorporated into its administration of space. Permits are issued, police escorts provided. Direct action does not obey this implicit right of power to administer access to space. By extension, it does not obey the implicit right of power to determine symbolic vocabularies. The issue of the riot, which I flagged in the Introduction, foregrounds such a perspective. As I discussed in Chapter 4, for participants, the extension of a symbolic action into a material action is not necessarily evoking the kind of boundary between representation and reality which critical work has sought to establish. Rather, both 'forms' of action are evocative of the wider social space being condensed by the action, which in itself is partly what is designating it as theatrical. Thus, as a demonstration 'spills' into violence, the forces of authority (police, army) continue to be perceived from within the symbolic vocabulary, which the oppositional theatrical space maintains, as 'symbols' of state, repression and coercion. For the police, the moment at which a 'demonstration', or representational action, 'spills' into violence is the moment at which it ceases to be symbolic, and must therefore be repressed. (fig. 27) At this point, the authorities declare that this is no longer theatrical space. The demonstrators/rioters are still maintaining that it is theatrical space. The battle, therefore, is over the control of the production of theatrical space.



fig. 27: The police vs. the people.

As I have indicated, however, there is more at stake. Theatrical spaces, as we have seen, summarise, condense and invoke wider social spatialisations. The second level of dispute therefore, is over what kind of social reality is constituted. In the demonstrative practices which I am addressing here, there are two Americas in play.

David Kerzer notes that 'anti-war demonstrations (in the US) in the late 1960's were frequently greeted by pro-war counter-demonstrators, each waving their sacred symbols - often the same symbols, such as the American flag'. (1988: 119) Abbie Hoffman notes, in his description of an action in 1967, that the police 'grab our American flags and rip them up'. (1989: 16).

If both state and opposition are using the same symbol, then what makes them different is what that symbol is being used to invoke, both in terms of the theatrical space it serves, and also the wider space of the social which those theatrical spaces condense.

As I have argued, the battle is ultimately between two possible spaces: that imagined and produced by power in its domination and organisation of social activity, and that imagined, foretold and *temporarily materialised* in the theatrical moment of opposition. For the Yippies, this was the Woodstock Nation, described by Abbie Hoffman during the Chicago Conspiracy Trial as

a nation of alienated young people. We carry it around with us as a state of mind, in the same way as the Sioux Indians carried the Sioux nation around with them. It is a nation dedicated to co-operation versus competition, to the idea that people should have a better means of exchange than property or money, that there should be some other basis for human interaction. (Burgess and Marowitz 1970: 118)

Ultimately, this is the power of the resistant theatrical event. It may take place in the spaces of power, but through its presence it changes those spaces and produces them in different forms. It may be temporary, it may be restricted or put down, but in its spatial materialisation of an alternative social reality, it introduces new possibilities which evade the attempts of power to make everything in its own image. Finally, while engaging with symbolic discourse, resistant theatricality is productive of 'lived', rather than visually driven, experience - the experience on which Lefebvre's new world can be built.

As the SI point out in their discussion of the Paris Commune,

theoreticians argue that the Commune was objectively doomed to failure and could not have been fulfilled. They forget that for those who really lived it, the fulfilment was already there. (Knabb 1981: 316)

### In Conclusion ...

Although the spaces produced by resistant acts, as we have seen, are different from those of power, they can be claimed as theatrical because the same frameworks of analysis which have allowed us to so determine the theatres of state also apply to the interpretation of spaces of resistance.

As I have shown, once attention is paid to the kind of space produced by 'theatrical' events of power, it is possible to move away from the model of analysis which sees them as merely making visible a concept or series of concepts (state, citizen, empire, government) which would otherwise remain intangible. In a similar way, the interpretation of resistant acts can be equally released from an interpretation based in representation. It becomes clear that power's acts do not 'represent' unproblematically the dominant social structure in whose name and at whose behest they are made. They *produce* that wider social spatialisation by making it visible in a summarised and condensed form.

Likewise, resistant acts infer and construct an alternative social spatialisation; one in which, at the very least, they themselves are possible. Further, this 'summarisation' is more than symbolic, although symbols are an important part of the vocabulary. The summarisation is something 'experienced' while appearing to be 'read': its effect is born of its spatial organisation and texture.

While the spaces of power and the spaces of resistance can both be claimed as theatrical due to their condensing function (they absorb and materialise an entire vision of the social), it is in this regard that they really diverge from each other. For while the social theatres of power support and maintain the status quo through producing a theatrical space whose excitement is based in spectacle and whose participants are incorporated into abstracting vocabularies, the social theatres of resistance point to an alternative mode of existence, and an alternative spatialisation. The space which a theatrical event summarises is what gives it its specificity.

Part of the strategy of this argument has been to re-centralise theatrical enactments of power or resistance as central to the execution and expression of political positions. The perspective offered by spatial analysis acts, I have argued, rather like a sort of x-ray, exposing as it does two things. Firstly, an aspect of the effectivity of such enactments, which tends to remain hidden behind the surface of significant meaning which they produce, is available to analytical view. The mysterious behaviour of the University of Glamorgan Porter can be explained. Secondly, having once established the events *as spaces*, they can be positioned within a wider frame of interconnected spatialities: physical, conceptual and imaginary. They can be seen as central to power and resistance.

Henri Lefebvre's *Production of Space* is an explicitly hopeful document. I hope, ultimately, that this argument is, too. As George MacKay points out, the 'creation of a climate of autonomy, disobedience and resistance' must act as 'a positive pointer to the kind of social relation that could be'. (1996: 126) Spatially expressed, this 'climate' is a mode of theatrical space that opens up the possibility for an alternative social spatialisation. The battle being waged now, with global protests against the despoilation of the planet, and the exploitation of millions of workers around the world by global capitalism, can be sited within this analysis: the theatricality of resistance, in this struggle, could change everything.

Walking where you are not meant to walk is a pleasure. The gamble that revolution takes is that it will remain a pleasure when it is no longer transgressive. For, as Paul Eluard notes, 'There is another world: it is this one'.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Paul Eluard, quoted in Nield (1990) p. 31.

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