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Atmosphères en scène : Introduction au premier volume

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Beginners on stage¹

- 1 This special double issue of *Ambiances* on Staging Atmospheres is marked by multiple acts of translation. As ever, the journal migrates between French and English as its languages of publication. Alongside this linguistic shift, and the eddies of meanings it sets off, the issue also sets out a number of disciplinary movements. Although metaphors of staging have become widespread within atmosphere studies under the considerable influence of Gernot Böhme (2017), the phenomena and critique of atmospheres within theatre and performance studies have, by contrast, received very little attention. While atmospheres are often invoked in relation to the aesthetic or affective power of performance, their mention is rarely followed by a sustained critical effort to examine what makes them so.
- 2 There are of course, notable exceptions to this, not the least being Erika Fischer-Lichte, who – following Böhme – observes in *The Transformative Power of Performance* that “performative space also always creates an atmospheric space” (2008, p. 115), and proceeds to list a number of significant works that might evidence this. “Since atmosphere is constituted both by the actor’s presence as well the ecstasy of things” she argues, “it impresses itself particularly intensely onto the perceiving subjects. Atmosphere [sic.] envelops the subjects who become immersed in them, penetrating the subjects’ bodies as light, sounds, or odors” (2008, pp. 165 and f.). Such contentions will of course be familiar to regular readers of this journal, and might be said to form something of the standard line of how these apparently in-between phenomena are constituted. Even if we accept that atmospheres immerse, envelope and impress as ecstatic presences, holding this to be so does relatively little to tell us how it comes to pass. Given the complex weave of sensory, spatial, semiotic and social information that

constitutes both the production and reception of a theatrical performance, even before narrative, aesthetic or political meanings are determined, a more focussed attention to *how* performative space becomes atmospheric, and for whom, seems necessary. Importantly however, the notion of atmosphere should not be entirely subsumed by (or reduced to) spatiality and although “atmospheres may indeed be without place, and yet poured out spatially” (Fischer-Lichte, 2004, p. 201), we understand that the production of atmospheres also encompasses elements such as sound, music and tonality in and of themselves.

- 3 Accordingly, this issue of *Ambiances* – stemming from a conference on Staging Atmospheres held at the close of 2017² – has invited papers from colleagues in theatre and performance studies that give attention to the valence of theatre, staging and so on as a metaphor or heuristic through which to explain a more widespread phenomenon, but also to the detail of performance *per se*, in its conduct and its experience by its participants. To be clear, while we acknowledge and to some extent draw upon the metaphorical extension of theatre as a mode of understanding, we look to staging, throughout this issue in terms beyond the analogical, or the metaphorical, and as it relates to the concrete actions that form aesthetic experiences as they are lived through. At the same time, the editors have sought contributions which apply theatrical concepts and practices to circumstances beyond the stage itself. While ‘performance’ has become something of a ubiquitous term within the humanities and social sciences beyond the remit of the performing arts themselves, the specifically theatrical modality invoked by Böhme and others in reference to staging, places aesthetic practice on an equal footing with the social. By staging, we refer to the acts involved, supported by an overall activity that organises events, situations, objects, relations and affects on stage (or any given representational space). Thus, staging is understood here as an operation: that is, as a set of actions and gestures that organise a complex event so as to be seen, perceived and experienced by others.

Theatricality and the theatrical mundane

- 4 Even if, as Mikkel Bille and Kirsten Simonsen have recently proposed, attending to atmospheres means “attending to mundane as well as spectacular situations, collective or in solitude, that has an impact on our lives [*sic.*]” (2019, p. 11), determining their staging demands an attention to theatrical particulars, including their mode of communication and codes of representation within set parameters (time and space) and so forth. In doing so, it is of course worth remembering that theatre is also as mundane as it is spectacular (Rae, 2019). Quite apart from its capacity to bore or to sustain much more than a narrow interest, as a place of work and as an institution, it is as much a part of the quotidian fabric of life as any other. For its workers (stage managers, box office clerks, stewards and cleaners as much as actors, directors and designers) rehearsals, get-ins, shows, ticket sales and marketing meetings are as often the stuff of quotidian detail as they are of spectacular exception. Accordingly, we suggest, before any appeal to their metaphorical permutations, the staging of atmospheres is already extensive with the fabric of social life and its sensibilities. This is in contrast to the role played in Western thought by what the historian Jonas Barish termed “the antitheatrical prejudice” (1981) that has tended to cast theatre as other to the business of daily life, and extends even into aesthetics, as exemplified by art

historians such as Michael Fried (1998) who railed against the “theatricality” of Minimalist art as preventing the viewer from engaging in an experience of absorption. Theatre is all, and theatre is nothing in such terms it seems.

- 5 As editors, we insist upon the importance of the recognition that theatre is ‘of this world’: made out of actions, materials, and objects that are part of the fabric of both our daily lives (it is work for some, as well as leisure for others) and a component of our socialised existence (it is a building, an architectural network and place of encounter in a city, a political and symbolic institution). In consequence of this, we have sought to encourage an enquiry that goes beyond illusionist or naturalistic aesthetics and schools of thought that posit the theatre space and its objects, agents and activities as always operating in reference to others, elsewhere.
- 6 By contrast, the acts of translation across theatrical and other social contexts that make up this special issue are marked by both accretions and losses of meaning. What is subtle and complex in one regard risks becoming blunted and simplified in its rendering elsewhere. Equally however, unforeseen insight and perspective can be discovered under the pressure of the effort to pursue meaning. The very word *translation* gives evidence to this, referring not only to the journeys of meanings across different lexicons, but also between practices, disciplines, and media. In the act of translation, as well, displacement and transformation occur. While multiplying disciplinary perspectives on the staging of atmospheres, we also hope to encourage and facilitate a multi-faceted approach where glitches and slips-ups might be generative and help to refine our understanding of the forming of atmosphere in theatrical as well as in societal and political contexts. Across the various papers that make up both the first and second parts of the issue, we find efforts to explain and examine theatrical events in terms of insights gained from theoretical, methodological and practical examples from atmospheric scholarship in other disciplinary areas including social geography, interior architecture, organisational studies and phenomenology. Rather than a refining of theatre and performance studies in terms set by other disciplines however, the notion of staging here finds itself on the move from its service as a useful explanatory tool and instead forms part of a wider discussion of the production, composition and experience of atmospheres across a range of examples of theatrical practice.

Mise-en-scène and the theatrical milieu

- 7 For Böhme, staging is largely synonymous with scenography, as a material shaping of space through structure, light and sound. As the papers in this issue attest, although this lends a ready intersection with comparable concerns within architecture, geography and so on, what is missing in this heuristic is the sense of staging afforded by the French term *mise en scène*. Setting the scene in this respect refers not only to the placement of scenery in order to indicate somewhere that the stage itself is not (a drawing room, a forest, the battle of Agincourt and so on), but also to the production of a sense of milieu or lived conditions that are peculiar to our experience in the here and now. Thus, the study of atmosphere within the set parameters of theatre requires taking into account a global understanding of how *mise en scène* and dramaturgy operate, and, more precisely, how their physical and symbolic actions organise, formally, the unfolding of events, affects, and situations on stage. Without a precise

understanding and analysis of these factual and tangible elements, the study of atmosphere might remain elusive and abstract. Indeed, as Patrice Pavis has observed: “We are in a paradoxical situation as we face, or rather as we enter, the work: it is material, sensuous and physical. But at the same time, what counts is no longer this materiality, but rather the experience into which we find ourselves plunged” (2013, p. 27).

- 8 Despite the rhetoric of ‘plunging’ or ‘entering’ into experience invoked by Pavis (2013), alongside the elevation of the sensuous over the textual, and of physical presence in place of the allusive, this is not necessarily a nod to the fashionable trope of immersion, despite its widespread uptake within theatre practice and criticism as elsewhere. Even seated in an auditorium, separated from the stage, the sensuous, material and physical properties made apparent in the dynamic forming and movement of light, gesture, sound, word and so on are contributory factors of *this* experience (i.e. the one that I am having), as much as they are evocative of those of others, and of other places. This brings us to another point, which is the shared concern that atmosphere studies and theatre and performance studies bear with the issue of spectatorship. To perceive an atmosphere, one needs a perceiver – a subject already embedded, as we have already noted – in that very same atmosphere. Spectatorship does not only engage with intellectual understanding but also and foremost with kinaesthetic practice and psychological empathy. The study of spectatorial empathy must therefore take into consideration how our own experiences are situated, and subjectively and culturally constructed. The contributors of this issue have all engaged with the importance of recognising how situated subjectivities have informed their own understanding of particular atmospheres within specific circumstances (in Spring, in Summer, during a pandemic, during bushfires, on the col du Lautaret in the French Alps, in an atrium in the Danish town of Furesø, or within in-between states of human and animal). Beyond the acts of translation that the circulation between the texts of this issue requires, the reader encounters different forms of embodied knowledge throughout the writing. It is, in fact, we suggest, quite striking how the reading experience can come close to a circulation through different spatial experiences and thresholds; through tangible material environments, and sensual experiences, all precisely described and equally affective.
- 9 This then, we propose, is less a reflection of the atmospheric operations of staging, than it is of those of theatricality – what Thomas Postlewait and Tracy C. Davis have described as “not only that which is quintessentially the theatre, but the theatre subsumed into the whole world” (2004, p. 1). As Barish elucidated, from Plato to the present day, theatre’s capacity to draw attention to itself has been a source of both pleasure and anxiety. For Saint Augustine, the awareness of this separation was a source of an almost ontological anxiety: “What is this but a miserable madness? ... [W]hat sort of compassion is this for feigned and scenical passions?” (1907, p. 33). However, as materialist trends of theatrical critique begun by Diderot, and continued in concerns for performance as an act within the ‘real world’ by the likes of Victor Turner and Erving Goffman make plain, what could be more real than feigning – an act of conscious attention to one’s circumstances? Lest we appear to suggest that this might be an antithetical position to the states of belief invested in ‘becoming the character’ famously attached to the theatrical tradition ascribed to Konstantin Stanislavski, it is worth remembering that the great Russian director, like his presumed materialist rival

Bertolt Brecht, saw himself as the inheritor of Diderot's concern for theatrical aesthetics as something to be carefully, and consciously constructed.³ It is, incidentally, interesting to note that Stanislavski (2008) was amongst the first within the history of theatre to refer directly to the notion of atmosphere in constructive terms, albeit in a very different meaning and context to that which we aim to explore with this issue. As such, what Stanislavski referred to as a "theatrical atmosphere" (*nastroyenié*), when evoking the writing of Anton Chekhov, for instance, was associated with an ambiance heavily influenced by the character's psychology without leading to any substantial theoretical grounding or definition.

Theatre as ecosystem

- 10 So far, so twentieth century. So what? Hasn't the theatrical milieu, now excitingly "postdramatic" (Lehmann 2006), (apparently) left such concerns behind with the rest of the detritus of modernism? Perhaps. In keeping with the efforts elsewhere in the Humanities to wrestle with the displacement of the Human as the measure of all things in the wake of a self-inflicted environmental crisis, scholarship of the theatre (what Alan Read (2008) describes as "the last human venue") is increasingly concerned with the 'stuff' it is made of in material and affective terms; or what Böhme might describe as "the art of bringing something to appearance" (2017, p. 33). However, what if we turn to conceive of the theatrical milieu in terms more actual than metaphorical? That is: as an environment that happens to be defined by the apparatus of theatre (machinery, scenography, etc) but which produces its own ecosystem and its own living organisation.
- 11 This is not without precedence within theatre history, and certainly one should not overlook the modernist idiosyncrasies offered by Gertrude Stein's "Landscape plays" (1992) and the focus that they give to space over time, and to 'atmosphere' over dramatic action. Although this can be seen as merely an intuition of the theatrical perspectives offered in this issue, it is interesting to observe this notion emerging early in the 20th century in Stein's efforts to offer an alternative model of perceptual experience for the spectator (Fuchs, 1996). Similarly, it seems necessary to recognise the significance of theatre's atmospheric potential presented by the earlier outdoor, open-air history of the European stage, by the profound aesthetic shifts wrought by the arrival of powered light in the nineteenth century, and by the return of the audience to the action in the contemporary trend for immersion. Even so, while both historical and contemporary performances are often claimed to be *atmospheric*, it is an observation that is rarely then made sense of, either as a set of conditions peculiar to theatrical events, buildings or institutions, or their imbrications with those of the climates, affects or assemblages beyond them.
- 12 Although theatre has long sought to represent or invoke climatic conditions,⁴ and to contain or amplify their sensory and affective impact (Welton, 2012), to what extent can atmospheric perturbations themselves be understood as theatrical events? In 1933, the meteorologist Napier Shaw's *The Drama of Weather* (by his own admission a 'book of unconventional essays') explicitly set out to delineate the science of meteorology in theatrical terms, and to align the animate aesthetics of weather with that of the theatre: "The whole stage is full of action, the action which carries on the life of the world" (1933, p. 4). What part do other 'prevailing conditions' – social, political,

historical – play in determining and mediating such experience, both inside the theatre and beyond it? With performances regularly staged and inferred in contexts beyond its buildings, what are the markers and methods by which theatrical atmospheres might be gauged in the world beyond institutions or situations which announce themselves as theatre (Read 2008)? Returning to the theme of translation, the papers in this first part of the double issue begin to establish what the philosopher François Jullien refers to as the “plenitude” that arises when differing perceptions and modes of understanding encounter one another (2004). Crucially however, Jullien argues that this is not a matter of identifying and thus eliding difference in an effort to establish sameness, but instead demands that we pay attention to ‘divergence’ (*écart*): “Because instead of baldly assuming some unity or specificity of principle, on each side, one which we might know beforehand (although where did this projection come from?) divergence (*écart*) sets what it has separated in tension and *discovers one through the other*” (2011, p. 27).

- 13 We find this principle explored in practice in Rachel Fensham’s paper which opens the issue. Fensham traces the sweeping devastation of bush-fires over the Australian landscape, and reflects upon the entwinement of ecological and affective movements that they have wrought on and over the country. As so many media reports of the terrible burning of the bush in late 2019 and early 2020 attested, the scale and extent of the devastation is hard to make sense of. However, while such conflagrations are greater than, and indeed consume the human, Fensham looks to the means by which ‘the last human venue’ – in this case dance theatre – might provide conditions for making sense *with*, in Jullien’s terms, “one through the other”. Fensham uncovers an Australian choreographic history in which dance artists have sought to use the dynamic kinaesthesia choreography affords to dancers and audiences to give form to the animate but immaterial condition of fires. Drawing from Gaston Bachelard, she proposes that fires are atmospheric as not only the thermodynamics and pollution of air, but also as acts and experiences of cultural memory.
- 14 From an early example of modern dance as an aesthetic departure from classical tradition to more recent ‘post-modern’ choreographies, Fensham considers a series of works of performance that, both individually and collectively, exemplify how “events that register the affective remains of fire may provide us with ways to examine and assess our relationship with nature as one with constant potentiality for combustion” Tellingly, it is the abstraction of the affective atmospheres of fire (atmosphere here being a crucial aspect of fires’ remains alongside charred materials, ash and so on) into the theatre that allows a feeling for the environment to be made present and made malleable and moveable with as a means of entering into an otherwise painful experience. In this, Fensham’s paper also contrasts with the latent anti-theatricality discernible in a good deal of eco-critical perspectives on performance, by stressing not only the relevance but also the necessity of the theatre as a “venue” (to borrow, again from Read) in which such atmospheres can be entered into and made meaningful. In this, her perspective is perhaps in keeping with the ‘weakness’ recently identified by Carl Lavery as an ethically necessary position: “one in which more might be gained by recognising our helplessness in the face of a violent earth, in surrendering to our lack of knowledge, in not being so militant in our compulsions to act, save, restore...Here, the strength of theatre and performance resides in its weakness, and its openness to chance, contradiction, and disappointment” (2020, p. 164).

- 15 The second paper of this first part of the double issue by Jamie Harper displays a common interest with Rachel Fensham in the relationship between natural landscape, performance and engineered play, and resolutely stems (like her's) from a practice-led research perspective. Following the development of two participatory community performance works that took place in 2017-2018 (*Ridge Walk*, Milton Keynes, 2018; *Passage*, Cambridge, 2017), Harper's paper defends a critical practice that supports temporal reflexivity and agency in participatory performance practices. Rather than staging atmospheres in the manner of conventional theatrical presentations, the works Harper helped create function as "designed frameworks that provide[d] the conditions for new atmospheres to be co-created by the participants themselves". In contrast with contemporary forms of immersive performance which tend to overvalue the immediacy of presence, the article, developed with reference to Spinoza's theory of affects, offers an alternative aesthetics that is grounded in live action role-play (LARP) drama.
- 16 Following Harper's stance, the use of LARP can not only heighten its participants' awareness of the relational connections they bear within the atmospheric conditions of play, but can also nurture and stimulate the participants' creative capacities to generate their own atmospheres. LARP in that sense, is akin to an ecological performative organisation in which players relationally construct the fabric of play as it emerges in real time. Drawing on Gregory Bateson's theories of ecology, the paper posits that the production of atmospheres by the participants of a performance can equally increase their own ecological awareness and capacity to establish and multiply their relational connection with their environment. As a result, this enables them to undertake volitional action and purposefully shape the atmospheres that they play and live within.
- 17 Where Harper draws performance out into the open, the better to consider eco-social relations, Lydia Jørgensen invites our attentions inside, not to a theatrical interior *per se* this time, but to the aesthetics of staging in the organisation of a public space. Like Harper, Jørgensen also situates herself within the paper, both as she takes up and experiences the space and as she does so across time and the social interactions she has participated in and observed. Where Harper, like Fensham, offers an understanding of performance events from something of an 'insider' or practitioner perspective, Jørgensen approaches her chosen space - the atrium of a public building in the Danish town of Furesø - from something more akin to that of a spectator. Although spectatorship is sometimes presented as if a matter of passive receipt, Jørgensen's perspective here is one of active practice and engagement. In approaching the atrium as a staged space, she examines how the atmospheric experiences it affords "impacts on the work practices, the affective qualities of organizing and employee's understanding of the organization itself".
- 18 In common with other papers across both parts of the special issue, Jørgensen unpicks the various intellectual and methodological threads that are woven together in the interdisciplinary project of atmosphere studies in order to make space for theatrical approaches that might lend them a new texture. She proposes a number of interesting means by which the staging of atmospheres in public spaces offer a new potential for designing and understanding social practices that attend to the needs of citizens as well as institutions. As she suggests, "putting citizens first" by staging the everyday practices of and encounters with the public sector, offers a means of enhancing the

relationship between citizens and the state, as well as inviting a revived notion of citizenship as an atmospheric experience in practice. Previously in this editorial, we have attended to the implications for theatre and performance studies of engaging with the material reality of atmospheric conditions. By contrast, in attending to staging and theatricality, Jørgensen here presents a compelling account of how organizational studies might deepen their account of how social situations are formed and experienced, in keeping with Christian Julmi's contention that "[r]esearch into atmospheres in organizations is...always research into sociality" (2017, p. 16).

- 19 Although differently configured, the role of theatre in mediating sociality is also taken up by Molly McPhee in her paper concerning the carceral atmospheres of Clean Break Theatre Company's production of Vivienne Franzmann's play *Pests*, at the Royal Court Theatre in London in 2014. Carcerality – the quality, feeling or experience of prisons and imprisonment – allows McPhee to propose a quite particular mode of atmospheric engagement and encounter that she explores through the reconstitution of the historical notion of miasma: "a set of ideas that have been circulating within western societies for thousands of years, and which encompass air, seepage, pollution, social normativity within dynamics of performance, in both social and theatrical senses". As McPhee discusses, Franzmann's play, although drawing on her experience of working with women in prisons, was deliberately staged with a view to presenting a privileged, middle-class audience with "the opportunity to negotiate, experience and reflect on one of the most frightening and pervasive features of our contemporary society: carceral power". As a miasma, or 'bad air', carceral atmosphere not only pervades within prisons themselves, but as Franzmann's play shows, seeps into, and pollutes the lives of those subject to this power well beyond the constraints of imprisonment itself.
- 20 McPhee's paper provides a useful opportunity to remember that considerations of atmosphere in terms of aesthetics return us to sensory conditions that may not only offer pleasure, but also discomfort, dis-ease and animosity. In doing so, her paper also serves as a useful reminder that for all their capacity to immerse and envelope, atmospheres are not experienced equally, that they are excluding and oppressive as often as they are engaging or absorbing. Carceral miasmas allow her to point to the disparities of gender, race and class in social affordances and experiences of atmospheres. Their staging in the theatre enables the ethical "weakness" of spectatorship identified by Lavery (2020), as a means of presenting what she calls "the discursive, interpretative and aesthetic modes of miasma, as it seeks to articulate how carceral society performs". Without pretending that carceral circumstances themselves were staged, McPhee shows how *Pests* did not simply point to conditions elsewhere, but produced a miasmatic atmosphere that 'infected' its audience in order to "problematize their sense-making capacity" and enabled them in "an undoing of the composition of the carceral subject".
- 21 Like McPhee, Aurore Després is concerned with the historical, sensory constitution of subjectivity in terms that are at once bodily and atmospheric. Examining a historical reconstruction of the solo of the 'Chosen One' in the *Rite of Spring* initially choreographed and danced by Nijinski (1913) and re-imagined for the dancer Julie Salgues by Dominique Brun (2014), Després draws on dance and performance studies, phenomenology and kinaesthetics to offer in-depth analysis of 'spring' as an atmospheric gesture within the overall aesthetic atmosphere of the ballet. This enables her to elaborate an 'atmospheric theory' informed by the notion of the gesture as a

‘geste-milieu’. In doing so, she elaborates and conducts a close somatic and kinaesthetic analysis of gestures such as springing, breathing, stomping and growing at a time of writing (in Spring 2020) that was both defined by the promise of an awakening and by a looming sense of threat (the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic). Similarly to the other pieces that form this issue, the paper appeals to the bodily experience of others (as with Fensham’s paper, dancers from the early 20th century; dancers that live today) and tries, subsequently, to leave a sense of bodily experiment with the reader. While the essay manifests a constant effort to return to the experience of the body – different bodies, the one of the dancer that leaps; the one of the dancer that re-enacts; the one of the archivist that excavates; the one of the choreographer that reconstructs, the one of the writer that uncovers – there is an active staging in the writing. The writing produces its own atmospheric and tonal intelligibility, and, as it emerges and unfolds from a known, situated perspective, we witness a critical act that does not content itself with abstracting ideas from theory but that actively engages with bodies: bodies that move and breathe, bodies that are socialised and historically constructed, bodies that are affected and that impact others.

- 22 This sense of a collective ‘bodying’ across historical, environmental and social contexts in practices of performing and perceiving atmospheres is integral to the papers of this first part of the special issue and of those that follow in the second. If theatre rests on the possibility of a transfer of feeling from one kind of person, place or situation (performer, stage, mise-en-scène) to another (spectator, auditorium, the social), then the collective, plural account of these translations is one in which bodies and atmospheres are mutually entwined. As the papers gathered together here attest, staging atmospheres is much more than a matter of putting and perceiving things in place. Rather, it is a dynamic process, culturally and historically mediated, where material, social and sensory forces find forms in which – to paraphrase Tim Ingold (2011) – they do not simply exist separate to bodily experience, but occur and are produced within its ambit, affectively, environmentally, and atmospherically.

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ENDNOTES

1. In British theatrical tradition, this is the final call given by the stage-manager before the start of a performance, inviting the actors who will be in the opening scene to take up their positions.
2. *Staging Atmospheres*, held at Queen Mary University of London in December 2017, was supported by Réseau International Ambiances.
3. In his seminal work *The Player's Passion*, Joseph Roach details both how Brecht had hoped to establish 'The Diderot Society' dedicated to 'scientific research in theatrical art', and how Stanislavski, forever seeking to 'objectify the phenomenon of spontaneity' (1985, p. 197), had been inspired by reading Diderot's *Le Paradoxe sur le Comédien* during an inspirational holiday in Marienbad in 1914.

4. A brief, and far from comprehensive list might include the ‘blasted heath’ of Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, the thunderstorm in Chekhov’s *Uncle Vanya*, the ‘rain’ soaking the performers in Pina Bausch’s *Vollmond*.

ABSTRACTS

This special issue of *Ambiances* seeks to address issues raised by the emerging theatrical paradigm within international scholarship on atmosphere and ambiance. On the one hand, the issue seeks to investigate why the theatre seems to present itself as such an acute example of what Thibaud (2015) has termed the ‘affective tonality’ of aesthetic experience for scholarship that does not necessarily attend to the study of performance per se. On the other hand, it concerns what, in turn, the practice and study of theatre has to learn from enquiries across a range of other disciplines in which features of theatre and the theatrical as aesthetic, spatial and/or social generators of atmospheres have been regularly deployed by scholars in architecture, geography and philosophy. What might greater insight into the production and reception of theatre’s atmospheric conditions lend to enquiries that draw upon it analogically and/or in exemplary terms? How can the staging of atmospheres within theatre and associated practices offer concrete examples and methods to broader concerns for sociocultural, political, and ecological climates? Similarly, what lessons should theatre and performance take from the considerable efforts within the atmosphere studies to address its own affects, aesthetics, and environments?

Ce dossier thématique d’*Ambiances* aborde les questions soulevées par le paradigme théâtral qui émerge dans le cadre des recherches internationales sur les atmosphères et les ambiances. D’une part, le dossier cherche à comprendre pourquoi le théâtre semble se présenter comme un exemple aussi aigu de ce que Thibaud (2015) a appelé la « tonalité affective » de l’expérience esthétique pour des travaux scientifiques qui ne s’intéressent pas spécifiquement à l’étude de la performance. D’autre part, il s’agit de savoir ce que la pratique et l’étude du théâtre doivent apprendre des enquêtes menées dans d’autres disciplines et au sein desquelles les caractéristiques définitoires du théâtre et du théâtral en tant qu’indices générateurs d’atmosphères esthétiques, spatiales et/ou sociales ont pu être régulièrement déployées par des chercheurs en architecture, en géographie et en philosophie. Que pourrait apporter une meilleure connaissance de la production et de la réception des conditions atmosphériques du théâtre aux recherches qui s’en inspirent de manière analogique et/ou exemplaire ? Comment la mise en scène d’atmosphères au sein du théâtre et de pratiques associées peuvent-elles offrir des exemples et des méthodes concrètes à des préoccupations plus larges concernant les climats socioculturels, politiques et écologiques ? De même, quelles leçons le théâtre et les spectacles doivent-ils tirer des efforts considérables qui sont déployés dans le cadre des études sur les atmosphères et ainsi réévaluer leurs propres effets esthétiques et environnementaux ?

INDEX

Keywords: atmosphere, staging, mise en scène, theatricality, spectatorship, ecology, materialism, embodied knowledge

Mots-clés: atmosphère, représenter, mise en scène, théâtralité, spectateur, écologie, matérialisme, savoir incarné

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